

The Conflict of the Christian

by Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray's sermon explores the dual nature of the Christian conflict, emphasizing the importance of faith and reliance on Christ as the source of victory.

Scripture: Exodus 14:14, 2 Chronicles 20:15, Luke 13:24, Ephesians 6:10, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 4:7, 1 John 5:4

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "Conflict of Faith"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the twofold conflict of the Christian life, beginning with the immediate need for the unconverted to strive to enter through the narrow door of salvation. Once inside, believers face a lifelong battle characterized by faith, as they contend against spiritual enemies. Murray clarifies that true conflict arises not from struggling against God, but from the ongoing fight of faith, where believers must remain in Christ, their stronghold, to overcome. He highlights that victory comes through faith in Jesus, who empowers believers to stand firm against the enemy. Ultimately, the sermon calls Christians to understand their position in Christ and to rely on His strength for the battles they face.

Transcript

"Strive to enter in by the narrow door" Luke 13:24.

"Fight the good fight of faith" 1 Timothy 6:12.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" 2 Timothy 4:7.

These texts speak of a twofold conflict. The first is addressed to the unconverted-- "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." Entrance by a door is the work of a moment. The sinner is not to strive to enter during his whole lifetime. He is to strive and do it immediately. He is not to allow anything to hold him back--he must enter in.¹

Then comes the second, the lifelong conflict--by the narrow door I come upon the new way. On the new way there will always be enemies. Of this lifelong conflict Paul says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." With respect to the continuous conflict, he gives the charge, "Fight the good fight of faith."

There is much misunderstanding about this twofold conflict. Many strive all their life against the Lord and His summons. Because they are not at rest, but feel an inner conflict, they think that this is the conflict of a Christian. Assuredly, it is not. This is one--not willing to abandon everything and surrender himself to the

Lord--who struggles against God.² This is not the conflict that the Lord would have. What He says is that the conflict is concerned with entering in--but not a conflict for long years. No, He desires that you should break through the enemies who hold you back, and immediately enter in.

Then follows the second conflict, which endures for life. Twice Paul calls this the fight of faith. The chief characteristic of it is faith. He who well understands that the principal element in the battle is to believe, and who acts accordingly, will certainly succeed. In another passage Paul says to the Christian combatant, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the firey darts of the wicked one."³

And what then does it mean, this "fight of faith"? That, while I strive, I must believe that the Lord will help me? No, it is not so, although it is often misunderstood as such.

In a conflict, it is of supreme importance that I be in a stronghold or fortress which cannot be taken. With such a stronghold, a weak garrison can offer resistance to a powerful enemy. Our conflict as Christians is now no longer concerned with going into the fortress. No, we have gone in, are now in, and so long as we remain in it, we are invincible. The stronghold, this stable fort, is Christ.⁴ By faith we are in Him. By faith we know that the enemy can make no progress against our fortress. All of Satan's wiles go forth on the line of enticing us out of our fortress--engaging us in conflict with him on the open plain. There he always overcomes. But if, in faith, we strive and abide in Christ, then we overcome Satan, because he has to deal with Him who fights and overcomes.⁵ "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Our first and greatest work is thus to believe. As Paul said before he mentions the warlike equipment of the Christian, "My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).

The reason why the victory is only by faith, and why the fight of faith is the good fight, is this--it is the Lord Jesus who purchased the victory, and who alone gives power and dominion over the enemy. If we abide in Him, surrender ourselves to live in Him, and by faith appropriate what He is, then the victory is in itself our own. Then we understand-- "The battle is not yours, but God's. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (2 Chronicles 20:15; Exodus 14:14). Except that we be in Christ, pleasing Him, opposition to Satan can achieve nothing good. In ourselves we achieve nothing, but ⁷⁷in Christ we are more than conquerors. By faith we stand in Him, righteous before God, and likewise so in Him, we are strong against our enemies.⁶

In this light we can read and understand all the noble passages in the Old Testament--especially in the Psalms--where the glorious conflict of God in behalf of his people is spoken of. Fear or spiritlessness or uncertainty weakens and cannot overcome. Faith in the living God is equal to everything.⁷ In Christ this truth is now still more real. God has come near. His power works in us who believe--it is really He who fights for us.

Lord Jesus, who is the Prince of the army of the Lord, the Hero, the Victor, teach me to be strong in You, my stronghold, and in the power of Your might. Teach me to understand what the good fight of faith is. Teach me that the one thing I need is to always look to You, the supreme Guide of faith. And consequently, in me, too, let this be the victory that overcomes the world, namely, my faith. Amen.

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