

Conquering and to Conquer

by George Kulp

The sermon highlights the transformative power of Christ and the necessity of faith, prayer, and community in living a victorious Christian life.

Scripture: Judges 6:14, Psalm 145:21, Isaiah 58:1, Zechariah 4:6, Matthew 28:20, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:19, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 10:23

Topics: "Christian Strength", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

George Kulp preaches about the power and strength we receive through Christ, emphasizing the importance of relying on Him for all things and surrendering our own will to His. He shares the message of 'Not I, but Christ' and reminds us of the comforting promise that 'Lo, I am with you always.' Kulp encourages believers to go forth in the strength that God provides, trusting in His guidance and provision for every step. He highlights the joy and fulfillment found in proclaiming the name of Jesus and sharing His salvation with others, even unto death.

Transcript

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"Not I, but Christ."

"Lo, I am with you always."

"Go in this thy strength, that I have sent thee."

"Happy if with my latest breath

I may but gasp His name,

Preach Him to all and cry in death,

Behold, behold the Lamb."

In the early part of the year 1818, a revival of the work of God took place in his native village. On this occasion, he writes to his father as follows:

"I am glad to hear of your prosperity at Cudworth. Only keep the people in action, and you will get on. There is no standing still. Oh, let us come to God for great blessings: He is willing to save the world. We must make a noble effort in the name of God, and we shall not labor in vain. The Gospel, preached in faith, must do execution. 'Cry aloud, spare not; sound an alarm in the holy mountain.' Offer a present, free, and full salvation, and you will see signs and wonders. Blessed be God, He is doing great things for us at Barnard Castle. On Sunday last, four souls got into liberty; on Tuesday night, at the prayer-meeting, seven more. Many, I believe, are awakened; and I expect the work will go on. My soul is alive to God. I am longing for more of the life and power of godliness. I wish to feel what I preach."

To the same, April 7, 1818:

"Blessed be God, He is carrying on His work in my soul. Of late, I have had some precious seasons, both in public and private. I want more of the spirit of prayer. There is nothing like getting filled with the Spirit before we go to the house of God, and then pleading with God in the presence of His people. The Lord is deepening His work in the hearts of professors among us, and awakening and converting sinners. Last Tuesday night, at the prayer-meeting, there were six souls set at liberty. On Sunday night, I preached a funeral sermon, from John 9:4. At the prayer-meeting afterwards the Lord brought three into liberty, and I believe many others were much affected. 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.'"

To the same -- "April 27, 1818:

God is still carrying on His good work among us. I was much pleased with a woman at Staindrop, who was converted as clearly, and in as scriptural a way, as ever I knew any one. I saw her the next day; she was still praising God. I asked, 'How was it that you were made happy?' She said, 'While you were showing Christ as a Savior, and telling us to believe on Him, I thought, I can believe, I can believe. Something said, I was to repent longer yet; but I said, I think I can believe -- I do believe. IT CAME, and I believed that God had pardoned all my sins.' On the Tuesday following a woman came from the same place; at the prayer-meeting after preaching, she was enabled to believe on Jesus Christ to the saving of her soul, and she went home rejoicing in God. Oh, let us go on in the name of the Lord and expect present effects; yea, let us be restless for the salvation of souls. We shall not labor in vain. What condescension in God to use such unworthy creatures in the accomplishment of His designs. The walls of Jericho fell at the blowing of rams' horns. Of late I have had many visits from the Lord. I can venture on Christ for deliverance from sin; but I want to be filled with all the fullness of God, to have the mind of Christ in me. Oh, urge your members to purity of heart! Much will be done by a single act of faith in the blood of Jesus."

Mr. Smith this year attended the Conference, which was held at Leeds. A principal reason which induced him to do so, was a wish to converse with, and receive instructions from, the venerable William Bramwell. Of the manners of this eminently useful minister, Mr. Smith's prepossessions were rather unfavorable; and he thought it not improbable that his inquiries would be met with something like austerity. At every expense, however, he resolved, if possible, to gain the information which a man of Mr. Bramwell's character would alone be able to communicate. Like the Athenian who said to his opponent in council, "Strike, but hear me," so he, with his characteristic disregard to everything but improvement, was willing to be rebuked if he could but be instructed. He had several opportunities of being in Mr. Bramwell's society. On one occasion, if not oftener, he was accompanied by Mr. Stoner, and in this interview the distinction between the two friends must have been sufficiently marked. Mr. Smith asked a variety of questions on the subject of Christian experience, and the best methods of carrying on the work of God. He stated at large his own difficulties and plans, proposing inquiries on each as it was mentioned. Mr. Bramwell looked

surprised, but replied in a concise and generally in a satisfactory manner. Mr. Stoner in the meantime sat by, listening with profound attention, and in unbroken silence; and, as he afterwards confessed to him, wondering at the readiness with which his friend succeeded in drawing forth the lights of an experience so deep and varied. In the course of a few days after this conversation, the treasures of Mr. Bramwell's ardent and manly heart were forever sealed to all earthly inquiries by the hand of death; and it was an act worthy the close of so signally useful a life, thus to cast his garment on one who already emulated his spirit, and who subsequently to so great a degree inherited his success.

To a man of nervous mind and resolute decision nothing seems to give so great an increase of determination as the absence of all encouragement from without. A feeble spirit will falter in such a situation; but the having to rely on his own resources, makes him who is capable of elevation truly great. Where mighty interests -- the interests of truth and eternity -- depend upon the principles which such an one has espoused, or the plans which he has adopted, his perseverance under discouragement is the highest moral sublimity; the truest and most illustrious heroism. No test of strength of mind is so severe, or so infallible. An obstinate man may be rendered confirmedly pertinacious by contradiction; but it is the attribute of nobleness and greatness alone, to triumph over neglect, indifference, or neutrality.

The removal of Mr. Smith to the south of England was, at this period of his life, the most happy arrangement which could have been made for the establishment of his principles, and the completion of his character. The societies to which he was now introduced, it is true, were able to discern and value ministerial zeal and diligence. They possessed many members of great personal devotedness, whose piety was silently but powerfully influential, and whose hearts longed for the prosperity of Zion. But the appearance among them of a man of Mr. Smith's peculiar views and singular modes of operation was in many respects a phenomenon. They had no previously formed standard of ministerial character by which he could be measured, there was no class under which he could be ranged. They required time to fully comprehend the man and his principles. They were at first startled and confounded, and, as a consequence, unable to come to any correct or even sober judgment concerning him. Meanwhile he was, of course, without any considerable co-operation on their part. He was alone; -- "a man to be wondered at." It was now to be tried whether he would sink into an ordinary character, or become more established and eminent than he could have been with the assistance and the encouragement which in other places he might have at all times to a considerable extent secured. It was a crisis of fearful importance. Is it too much to say that the destinies of immortal men were suspended on its issues? And if those philanthropic spirits who serve "the heirs of salvation" contemplate with the deepest concern the moral crisis of the history of an individual, with what anxiety must they watch the turning-point in the character of a minister, and especially such an one as John Smith! All glory to God, the decision in this case was worthy a strong and enlightened mind. How many will forever adore that grace which at this time wrought effectually in him, the revelation of the great day alone can determine.

The following extract from his private papers will serve to show with what pious and humble feeling he entered upon his new situation:

"Brighton, Sept. 1, 1818. -- I am ashamed before the Lord on account of my unfaithfulness; yet I feel encouraged to put my trust in Him. He is a God of boundless mercy. I have an affecting sense of my own inability; the Lord must undertake for me. I wish to be useful. By the grace of God. I will aim at souls. The people here seem very kind, but the place is very gay. I know not how to proceed. Lord, direct and strengthen me, and deliver me from the fear of man. Oh, that this may be a growing year to my soul, and a year of general prosperity throughout the circuit!"

At the commencement of his ministry at Brighton, Mr. Smith seems particularly to have dwelt upon the high calling of believers with the hope of producing among them that quickened feeling which he deemed essential to permanent prosperity in the Church of God. He particularly insisted on The Necessity of Christian Perfection, and that so frequently that at the conclusion of one of his sermons on this subject a member of the congregation met him at the foot of the pulpit stairs, and accosted him with,

"So, Mr. Smith, you have given us the old thing over again!"

"Yes," said he, with his accustomed benignant smile, "and till all your hearts are cleansed from sin you shall have it still over and over again."

Nor were his labors in this respect without encouragement. In one of his first letters to his parents, dated October 8th, he says:

"I trust we shall have a revival of the work of God. We have had a few drops. Several seem to be longing for heart purity."

The following interesting testimony of the state of his own experience, and the fullness and force of his views of evangelical trust, is also from the same letter:

"Blessed be God, He is carrying on His good work in my soul. He has of late poured upon me a spirit of wrestling prayer. He has also astonishingly answered my prayers. I hang upon Him continually, and He keeps my soul in peace. There is nothing like getting into, and keeping in, action. Let us be constantly at work; we shall soon have done; -- the night is coming on apace. If our work be done, we shall have a calm night. The Lord still inclines me to offer -- and urge a present and full salvation. The Gospel offers nothing less than a full salvation. We want the faith that cannot ask in vain; a holy panting, laboring, hungering, thirsting; and this constantly. Self-denial is absolutely necessary. Do not hear much of, 'I am unworthy,' in your class. God does not save us because we are worthy, but because He is bountiful. God knows that we are unworthy, and therefore offers us the blessings of salvation freely. Should we not be nearer the truth if we were to say, 'I will have a little sin to remain, a little pride, anger, love of the world, etc.'? Oh, let us say as God says, "destruction to sin." And we must have the whole man engaged constantly in the service of God, or we shall soon be tainted again."

The Word of God, when faithfully preached, will accomplish that whereunto it is sent, and reach hearts that to human vision seem so hard and unapproachable.

A protracted meeting was held in a town, that attracted much attention. Crowds came in from the region round about, and many turned unto the Lord. A farmer a very worldly-minded man, was greatly exercised about the meetings. He believed in the literal command, "Six days shalt thou labor." He was offended at the fanaticism which could devote working days to religion. More than all, his family became interested in the work of grace. In following out his plans, it became necessary that he should spend a day in plowing in the vicinity of the meetings. He was not a Christian, but he was not an opposer of religion. He attended church regularly, paid his subscription, and was a regular supporter of religion. He did not want any revival. The old-fashioned way of seeking the Lord suited him. When he saw the crowd around the church, looked at the well-known teams hitched in the shed and at the fences, and as the singing was wafted over the field where he was at work, he was stirred up marvelously. The windows of the church were opened, and a sentence or two of the sermon struck his ear. The voice of the preacher was sonorous and clear. As the farmer came up and turned his furrow, he heard again and again the text repeated, "Turn ye to the

stronghold," "Turn ye to the stronghold." So again and again he heard the invitation, which sometimes sounded like a warning. The Word finally took effect. The plough was left on the furrow; the oxen were unhitched and unyoked, and seemed to look with astonishment, as they cropped the grass, that the burden was lighter for an hour. In his working clothes, the farmer stood in the vestibule of the church, leaning, with a sad expression, on the lintel of the door. He was one of those who asked for prayers. He went to his labor a renewed man. The golden text in that family is, "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope."

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