

# Conqueror in Death

by George Kulp

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*The sermon emphasizes the triumph over death through faith in Jesus Christ and the peace it brings to believers at the end of life.*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 2:12, 1 Corinthians 15:54, 1 Corinthians 15:57, 2 Timothy 4:6, Revelation 22:20

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Salvation Assurance"

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## Description

George Kulp delivers a sermon reflecting on the testimonies of dying saints and sinners, illustrating the stark contrast between their final moments and expressions of faith or despair. The sermon emphasizes the peace and assurance found in surrendering to God, as seen in the examples of various historical figures facing death with either hope or dread, ultimately pointing to the victory and salvation through Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"The time of my departure is at hand."

"Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Death shall be swallowed up in victory."

"My father, my father, the horsemen of Israel and the chariots thereof."

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate, is privileged beyond the common walks of life, quite on the verge of Heaven," while the candle of the wicked is snuffed out. A short comparison of the testimonies of dying saints and sinners prove this to be true. Balaam, the mad prophet who loved the wages of sin, said, "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh. Let me die the death of the righteous." The Emperor Julian, the apostate, who, to falsify the Savior's word attempted to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, died in despair, shouting, "O Nazarene, thou has conquered;" "I shall go to Hell, and you shall go with me," said Voltaire to his doctor. Paine, on his death-bed, alternated between blasphemous oaths and his piteous cries to the Lord for mercy. "Remorse, remorse!" were the last words of Randolph. "It is the last of earth; I die content," said John Quincy Adams, as he passed away. "This unworthy right hand," said Cranmer, as he thrust it into the flames. "Welcome this chain, for Jesus' sake; welcome, life everlasting," said Saunders, as he was bound to the stake. "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley," said Bishop

Latimer, as he was burning in the flames. "I am dying," were the closing words of Whitfield. "Death can never take me by surprise," said Judson, as he was dying. "The best of all is, God is with us," said John Wesley. His brother's testimony was, "I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness." "The victory is won," said Payson. "I will now go to sleep," said Neander. Mozart wrote his requiem under the conviction that it was for himself. "I shall be saved as a pardoned sinner," said John Howe. "I am abundantly satisfied," said Calvin. Baxter said, 'I have peace, I have peace.' Humboldt exclaimed, "These rays beckon earth to Heaven." "Die a man, die a man, Paine!" said one of his hardened associates, who saw the infidel shivering in his bed. Lord Byron said, "Come, come! no weakness! let's be a man to the last." It was Hobbe's wish that he might find a hole to creep out of the world at. The death to come is more bitter than this; the life to come more sweet. Polycarp, on the edge of martyrdom, said, "O Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, I bless thee that thou has counted me worthy of this day, to receive my portion in the number of the martyrs in the cup of Christ!"

It was not until the last week of Mr. Smith's life that the truth broke on his mind, and he felt that he was now to die. But it was no shock to him: his spirit did not for a moment quail in the solemn certainty. He rested in Christ, and calmly awaited the end. To a friend he said, "It appears that I shall die." "Yes, sir," was the reply, "there is no other prospect." "Well, God can carry on His work without me." "I want more prayer," and he begged his friend to pray with him. "What shall I pray for? I cannot pray for your life." "Pray," said Mr. Smith, "as the Spirit may direct. Prayer, as Mr. Bramwell once remarked, 'always brings one out on the right side.'" They then prayed together, and the Lord blessed the soul of His afflicted servant. At another time he said to one of his medical attendants, with his accustomed promptness of expression, "Shall I die, doctor?" Observing that Dr. Young hesitated, he added, "You need not fear to tell me: I am not afraid." Mr. Wild, his other medical friend, observed, "You must keep your mind constantly fixed on eternal things:" to which Mr. Smith answered, "My mind is constantly fixed there."

The friend to whose communications this work has already been so much indebted, remarks: "The prospect of meeting in Heaven with Wesley, and Whitefield, and Fletcher, and Bramwell, and Nelson, and others, whom he loved for their distinguished excellence, was peculiarly dear to his thoughts, and often furnished matter for enlargement and glad anticipation in his acts of devotion. The thought of not recognizing the saints in the eternal state never appeared to have any place in his mind; as it is, in fact, one of those refinements which busy speculation has built upon the silence of Scripture respecting subjects which are only not distinctly enunciated, because nothing but the credulity of unbelief could have ever called them in question. 'By faith, when he was dying, he gave commandment concerning his bones,' that they should lay them beside those of his friend Nelson; thus attesting not only his assured hope of a joyful resurrection, but of a glad recognition, also, of him whom he had known and loved on earth."

To a person who visited him, he said, "Mind your business, and take care of your family; but, above all, see that you keep the love of God in your soul. Be firm; and let nothing for a moment lead you to think of giving up your class, or declining any exertion in behalf of the cause of God." To a young man whom he believed to be called to the ministry, he said, "Do, my brother, be diligent; play the man; play the man." Of his own experience and feelings, he remarked, "I rest in the atonement; I am hanging on the cross of Christ; this is my only hope." To one of his colleagues, he said, "All is clear. I have had some success in my labors, but my happiness does not result from that; but from this, -- I have now hold of God. I am a very great sinner, and am saved by the wonderful love of God in Christ Jesus. I throw my person and my labors at His feet."

When on one occasion Mrs. Smith was speaking of his being taken from her, he replied, "The widows and the fatherless in Israel are God's peculiar care." Then clasping his hands and lifting them upward, he exclaimed in the most impressive tones, "I commend to the care and protection of the Triune God my dear wife. May she be supported and consoled. I commend to the same God my Ellen Hamer Smith." And then he proceeded to name all the dear ones separately and to place them under the charge of a faithful and merciful God. He continued, "This body I give to be committed to the dust, in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. This immortal spirit I commend into the hands of Him who gave it."

The salvation of souls was almost constantly the subject of his meditation and conversation. One day when he supposed himself alone, he was engaged in fervent mental prayer, and at length he broke out, "Glory be unto our God Glory be unto our God. What god can deliver like unto our God!" Then extending his arms, while his countenance was lighted up with joyful confidence, he exclaimed, "Glory be to God! Sheffield circuit shall rise! Sheffield circuit shall rise!" -- a prediction which the following year was most happily fulfilled.

On Thursday, November 3rd, some of the brethren visited him, and while they engaged in prayer a heavenly influence filled the room. Prayer was turned into praise, and although Mr. Smith was in the last agony, his spirit caught the strain, and an expression of sacred joy lighted up his pale countenance. When prayer was ended, he beckoned Mr. McLean to him, and labored for several moments to give expression to something which he wished to say. After a repetition of unsuccessful efforts, he abandoned the attempt as hopeless, and, condensing what he had purposed saying into the fewest possible terms, and concentrating his whole strength to the single effort of expressing them, he exclaimed, with an energy almost equal to his former self, "You said, Praise God; and I said, Amen." This was the last articulate sound that he was heard to utter. It was the sealing of the volume; the closing testimony of an unwavering spirit, the echo of which he was to catch from myriads of immortal and redeemed intelligences, in a world where the song shall never languish, nor the festival ever terminate.

In the course of the morning, the medical gentleman called. Mrs. Denton, an affectionate friend, who was present, followed them out of the room. Dr. Young then told her that it was probable that Mr. Smith would not live an hour longer. Upon her return, he beckoned to her to tell him what they had said. For a moment she was silent. She then replied, "In less than an hour, sir, it is likely that you will be in eternity." A heavenly and triumphant smile played on his emaciated face; he turned his head on his pillow; and about a quarter before ten o'clock, while several of his friends, in an attitude and spirit of prayer, commended his soul to God, he entered the realms of eternal praise.

"Oh, may we triumph so

When all our warfare's past,

And dying, find our latest foe

Under our feet at last."

In closing this account of the man of callused knees, we would subjoin the following poem, by Frances Eastwood, that gives a beautiful description of the last days of

THE AGED JOHN

I'm growing very old. This weary head  
That hath so often leaned on Jesus' breast,  
In days long past that seem almost a dream,  
Is bent and hoary with its weight of years.  
These limbs that followed Him, my Master, oft  
From Galilee to Judah; yea, that stood  
Beneath the cross and trembled with His groans,  
Refuse to bear me even through the streets  
To preach unto my children. E'en my lips  
Refuse to form the words my heart sends forth.  
My ears are dull; they scarcely hear the sobs  
Of my dear children gathered 'round my couch;  
My eyes so dim they cannot see their tears.  
God lays His hand upon -- yea, His hand,  
And not His rod -- the gentle hand that I  
Felt those three years, so often pressed in mine  
In friendship such as passeth woman's love.  
I'm old, so old I cannot recollect  
The faces of my friends, and I forget  
The words and deeds that make up daily life;  
But that dear face, and every word He spoke,  
Grow more distinct as others fade away,  
So that I live with Him and holy dead  
More than with living.  
Some seventy years ago  
I was a fisher by the sacred sea.  
It was at sunset How the tranquil tide

Bathed dreamily the pebbles! How the light  
Crept up the distant hills, and in its wake  
Soft purple shadows wrapped the dewy fields!  
And then He came and called me. Then I gazed  
For the first time on that sweet face. Those eyes,  
From out of which as from a window shone  
Divinity, looked on my inmost soul  
And lighted it forever. Then His words  
Broke on the silence of my heart and made  
The whole world musical. Incarnate Love  
Took hold of me and claimed me for its own;  
I followed in the twilight, holding fast  
His mantle.  
O! what holy walks we had,  
Through harvest fields and desolate, dreary wastes;  
And oftentimes He leaned upon my arm,  
Wearied and wayworn. I was young and strong,  
And so upbore Him. Lord! now I am weak  
And old and feeble. Let me rest on Thee!  
So put Thine arm around me closer still!  
How strong Thou art! The twilight draws apace;  
Come, let us leave these noisy streets and take  
The path to Bethany, for Mary's smile  
Awaits us at the gate, and Martha's hands  
Have long prepared the cheerful evening meal.  
Come, James, the Master waits, and Peter, see,  
Has gone some steps before.

What say you, friends?  
That this is Ephesus, and Christ has gone  
Back to His kingdom? Aye, 'tis so, 'tis so.  
I know it all; and yet, just now, I seemed  
To stand once more upon my native hills  
And touch my Master! O! how oft I've seen  
The touching of His garments to bring back strength  
To palsied limbs! I feel it has to mine.  
Up! bear me once more to my church -- once more  
There let me tell them of a Savior's love;  
For by the sweetness of my Master's voice,  
Just now, I think He must be very near --  
Coming, I trust, to break the veil which time  
Has worn so thin that I can see beyond  
And watch His footsteps.  
So, raise up my head.  
How dark it is! I cannot seem to see  
The faces of my flock. Is that the sea  
That murmurs so, or is it weeping. Hush,  
My little children! God so loved the world  
He gave His Son; so love ye one another;  
Love God and man, Amen. Now bear me back.  
My legacy unto an angry world is this,  
I feel my work is finished. Are the streets so full?  
What call the folk my name, The Holy John?  
Nay, write me rather Jesus Christ's beloved,  
And lover of my children.

Lay me down  
Once more upon my couch, and open wide  
The eastern window. See! there comes a light  
Like that which broke upon my soul at eve,  
When, in the dreary isle of Patmos, Gabriel came  
And touched me on the shoulder. See! it grows,  
As when we mounted toward the pearly gates.  
I knew the way. I tread it once before  
And hark! it is the song the ransomed sang  
Of glory to the Lamb! Now lend it sounds!  
And that unwritten one! Methinks my soul!  
Can join it now. But who are these who crowd  
The shining way? Say! -- joy 'tis the eleven!  
With Peter first; how eagerly he looks!  
How bright the smiles are beaming on James' face!  
I am the last. Once more we are complete  
To gather 'round the Paschal feast my place  
Is next my Master. O my Lord! my Lord!  
How bright thou art, and yet the very same  
I loved in Galilee! 'Tis worth the hundred years  
To feel this bliss! So lift me up, dear Lord,  
Unto Thy bosom. There shall I abide.

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