

The Manliness of the Man

by George Kulp

The sermon explores the attributes of a godly minister, emphasizing grace, humility, and the call to lead others to Christ.

Scripture: Acts 26:16, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 12:4, Ephesians 3:2, Ephesians 3:7-8, 1 Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 4:16, 1 Peter 5:5, 1 John 5:14

Topics: "Christian Leadership", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

George Kulp preaches about being a minister according to the gift and grace of God, emphasizing the importance of attaining a state of mind where one is drawn to duty by delight rather than afflictions. He exemplifies extraordinary humility, profound faith, and a deep unity in theology, bridging the gap between the depravity of sinners and the high calling of saints. Kulp's character is marked by a perfect harmony of religious feeling, kindness, humor, and a constant communion with the Trinity, making his preaching vivid, powerful, and hortatory, appealing directly to the hearts and consciences of his listeners.

Transcript

"A minister according to the gift of the grace of God."

"A minister according to the dispensation of God."

"Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me.

"I have appeared unto thee to make thee a witness."

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given."

At a love-feast which he conducted several persons spoke of their trials doing them good by driving them to prayer. At the close Mr. Smith made some striking remarks on what had been said. He thanked God on behalf of those whose afflictions had been so beneficial to them. "But," said he, "there is a more excellent way: that state of mind is to be attained, in which a man shall not need to be whipped to his knees, but shall go to his duty, attracted by the delight which he feels in it." He then exhorted all to seek this happiness, at the same time assuring them that he himself enjoyed it.

And while his views of the omnipotence of faith gave to his own experience the aspect of simplicity and ready attainableness, they also supplied a singular unity to his theology. Hence, his profound and painful

discoveries of the depravity of the sinner were combined with the most lively and practical perceptions of the high vocation of the saint. The sinner and the saint, in some schools of theology, are two isolated characters; and generally it is impossible to perceive, with any degree of clearness, how one individual can, at different periods of his life, sustain them both. The impression on the mind of a partially instructed reader, after rising from the perusal of some popular evangelical treatises, is of a fearful and insurmountable distinctness between man in his natural condition, and the elevated privileges of the New Testament. Heaven and earth could not have been more remote, before the promise of a Mediator beamed from the one, to enlighten the despair of the other. But Mr. Smith's faith, boundless, untiring, undelaying, perpetually grasping a present promise in its illimitable breadth, brought the deepest depravity into contact with the fullness of evangelical purity, and seemed continually to cry, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart."

His extraordinary humility gave a peculiar charm to all the other graces of his character, and not infrequently assumed a most affecting prominence. During the time he was at Windsor, he had a rather severe illness; and with emotion he directed that; should it terminate fatally, his coffin should have no inscription but "UNFAITHFUL JOHN SMITH."

There was in his mind, to use a happy phrase of one of his friends, "a springing forth to meet instruction;" and with it was combined a prompt and extensive sympathy for the infirmities and even unbelief of others. Of the tenderness of his spirit, mention has already been made; and this rendered him a peculiarly welcome visitant to the chamber of affliction. "I remember accompanying him," says a friend, "to see one of our leaders in Nottingham, a poor but pious man, who was near his end. When we arrived at his house, he was in the article of death. His eyes were glazed, and there was in his throat that awful sound which announces the immediate and inevitable approach of the king of terrors. We stood for some time gazing in stillness, but not in sadness, on the solemn spectacle. I looked on my dear friend: the tears were chasing each other over his face, his chest was heaving, and the whole of his athletic frame was agitated by irrepressible emotion. At length he broke the silence, and in a tremulous voice repeated, with a pathos and freshness with which I could scarcely have conceived it possible to have invested so hackneyed a passage,

'The chamber where the good man meets his fate.

Is privileged beyond the common walk

Of virtue life, -- quite in the verge of Heaven:'

and truly it was so at that hour, as we successively commended the soul of the departing saint to the hands of God."

And this susceptibility Mr. Smith preserved at all times to a remarkable degree. No sort of personal gratification seemed to have the power to shut up his heart in selfishness, or even at all to take off the sensitiveness of his feelings. Walking, for example, one day in the streets of London with a friend, the conversation took some turn which he highly enjoyed. In the midst of his full flow of pleasure, he casually turned his head, and saw, slowly moving along, a young man who appeared to be in the last stage of a consumption. The smile instantly forsook his face, and he burst into a flood of tears.

Mr. Smith's manners, though plain, were kind and inviting. His good nature was unbounded; and in his conversation there was often a quiet, and harmless, but shrewd humor, which gave to his remarks on

human nature an unusual vivacity. His relation of incidents, principally those which respected the work of God, were strikingly graphic, though no one had a greater contempt for the stringing together of anecdotes, merely for the purpose of amusement. Yet, with all the playfulness of his natural disposition, it was impossible not to perceive -- that there was a constant and powerful undercurrent of religious feeling; and he never allowed himself to diverge from the most solemn topics to a degree which rendered his instant return to them either difficult to himself, or harsh and startling to those who enjoyed his society. In this respect, his character was marked by a perfect harmony. He was...

"A creature not too bright or good

For human nature's daily food:

And yet a spirit still, and bright,

With something of an angel light."

In common with some other eminent Christians, he enjoyed distinct intercourse with the blessed Three; and it was not unusual for him to commence his prayers in public with adoration, severally and successively, of the Persons in the Godhead, and acknowledgment of the proper divinity of each. Nor was this species of distinction confined to the exordium of these addresses. Other passages in his prayers were addressed to the Savior and the Spirit, as well as to the Father; and to these no one who had spiritual ears could listen, without perceiving that the mind of the speaker was engaged in clear and distinct communion with the glorious Being on whom he called.

To this practical recognition of the mystery of the Trinity, may possibly be attributed, in part, the peculiar impressiveness which frequently accompanied his administration of the ordinance of baptism. Such services were often with him seasons of unspeakable unction. One gentleman states, that the Divine influence which attended the baptism of one of his children by Mr. Smith exceeded anything he ever witnessed. Another similarly memorable incident occurred at New Basford, when Mr. Smith baptized one of the children of Mr. H. Beeson. Having, with deep solemnity, dedicated the infant to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, he lifted it up towards Heaven, as far as his arms would extend, and with abundance of tears presented it to the Holy Trinity. The impression upon the crowded congregation cannot be described.

One writing of him at this time, says: "Of his style and diction in preaching, I will only add, that it was chaste and unaffected, simple, and perspicuous; and, on subjects which had much exercised his thoughts, eminently vigorous and energetic. Clear and acute in his conception of any subject, he was distinct and intelligible in his enunciation. In general, his discourses were distinguished chiefly by their vivid exhibition of the fundamental truths of the Gospel, and an earnest and powerful application of them to the cases and consciences of the hearers. Accordingly, they were hortatory rather than didactic: characterized by the force and persuasiveness of their appeals, rather than by any regular exposition of doctrines or discussion of principles.

"Whenever I have had an opportunity of hearing him, his discourse has been regular and systematized, and the most correct, simple, and unadorned taste. Some short time before his last illness, he destroyed almost the whole of his manuscripts, lest they should afford him any sort of apology for inattention to the composition of his sermons. I am therefore unable to offer the reader any adequate specimens of his preparations for the pulpit. The few skeletons which still remain, however, cursory and meager as they

are, afford sufficient evidence of his regularity and coherence in the treatment of his subjects. He was accustomed to remark, that 'thought only could produce impression;' and he was convinced that arrangement and unity were necessary to give thought its proper and intended effect."

Having an experimental knowledge of God's power in his own life, he was the more earnest to bring others to Jesus. And why not?

A well-known physician was riding through the streets. He heard the crying of a little dog, who was lying in the gutter, apparently in great pain. The kind doctor left his carriage, and lifted the dog up. He had been run over by a passing carriage, and his leg badly crushed. The doctor bore him to his office, tenderly set his limb, and cared for him from day to day. The dog became a great favorite in the family, and seemed very much attached to his kind friend, the doctor. One day, the office door being open, the dog darted out and disappeared. "That's the way," the doctor said, "it is with dogs and men. They get all they can out of you, and when you can do no more for them they disappear. There is no gratitude in the world."

The dog and his relations to the family had nearly passed out of mind. One morning, the doctor was sitting in his office, when he heard a whining at the door. He opened it, and there stood the little dog whom the doctor had treated, bringing with him another little dog who had been run over. He had communicated his relief to a suffering friend, and, in the spirit of a true missionary, had brought the sufferer to a skillful physician whom he knew was ready to aid. Nor did his instincts mislead him. He came occasionally to see his companion, but no persuasion could induce him to make the doctor's house his home.

That is the true missionary spirit. Get relief yourself. Then go out and tell the suffering, and bring them to the Great Physician.

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