

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

MORE THAN CONQUERORS.

A Sermon

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“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”—Romans viii. 37.

THE distinguishing mark of a Christian is his confidence in the love of Christ, and the yielding of his affections to Christ in return. First, faith sets her seal upon the man by enabling the soul to say with the apostle, “Christ loved me and gave himself for me.” Then love gives the countersign, and stamps upon the heart gratitude and love to Jesus in return. “We love him because he first loved us.” “God is love,” and the children of God are ruled in their inmost powers by love; the love of Christ constraineth them. They believe in Jesus’ love, and then they reflect it; they rejoice that divine love is set upon them; they feel it shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them, and then by force of gratitude they love the Saviour with a pure heart, fervently.

In those grand old ages, which are the heroic period of the Christian religion, this double mark was very clearly to be seen in all believers in Jesus. They were men who knew the love of Christ, and rested upon it as a man leaneth upon a staff whose trustiness he has tried. They did not speak of Christ’s love as though it were a myth to be respected, a tradition to be revered; they viewed it as a blessed reality, and they cast their whole confidence upon it, being persuaded that it would bear them up as upon eagles’ wings, and carry them all their days; resting assured that it would be to them a foundation of rock, against which the waves might beat, and the winds blow, but their soul’s habitation would stand securely if founded upon it. The love which they felt towards the Lord Jesus was not a quiet emotion which they hid within themselves in the secret chamber of their souls, and which they only spake of in their private assemblies when they met on the first day of the week, and sung hymns in honour of Christ Jesus the Crucified, but it was a passion with them of such a vehement and all-consuming energy, that it permeated all their lives, became visible in all their actions, spoke in their common talk, and looked out of their eyes, even in their commonest glances. Love

to Jesus was a flame which fed upon the very marrow of their bones, the core and heart of their being; and, therefore, from its own force burned its way into the outer man, and shone there. Zeal for the glory of King Jesus was the seal and mark of all genuine Christians. Because of their dependence upon Christ's love they *dared* much; and because of their love to Christ they *did* much. Because of their reliance upon the love of Jesus they were not afraid of their enemies; and because of their love to Jesus they scorned to shun the foe even when he appeared in the most dreadful forms. The Christians of the early ages sacrificed themselves continually upon the altar of Christ with joy and alacrity. Wherever they were they bore testimony against the evil customs which surrounded them. They counted it foul scorn for a Christian to be as others were; they would not conform themselves to the world: they could not, for they were transformed by the renewing of their minds; their love to Christ compelled them to bear their witness against everything which dishonoured Christ by being contrary to truth, and righteousness, and love. They were innovators, reformers, image-breakers, everywhere; they could not be quiet and let others do as they pleased, whilst they followed out their own views, but their protest was continual, incessant, annoying to the foe, but acceptable to God. In every place the Christian was a speckled bird, because love to Jesus would not allow him to disguise his convictions; he was everywhere a stranger and an alien, because the very language of his everyday life differed from that of his neighbours. Where others blasphemed, he adored; where others used oaths habitually, his "yea" was yea, and his "nay," nay; where others girt on the sword, he resisted not evil; where others were each man seeking his own and not his brother's welfare, the Christian was known as being one whose treasure was in heaven, and who had set his affections upon things above. This love to Jesus made the Christian a perpetual protestor against evil for the sake of Jesus. It led him yet further—he became a constant witness to the truth which he had found so precious in his own soul. Christian men were like Naphtali, of whom it was said: "Naphtali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words." Tongue-tied Christians, silent witnesses, were scarcely known in apostolic days. The matron talked of Christ to her servants; the child, having learned of Jesus, spake of him in the schools; whilst the Christian workman at the shop testified, and the Christian minister (and these were many in those days, for all men ministered according to their ability) stood in the corners of the streets, or met in their own hired houses with tens or twenties, as the case might be, always declaring the doctrine of the resurrection, and of the incarnation of Christ, and of his death and resurrection. and of the cleansing power of his blood.

The love of Jesus, I have said at the commencement, was a real passion with those men, and their confidence in Jesus was real and practical; hence their testimony for Jesus was bold, clear, and decided. There was a trumpet ring in ancient Christian testimony which startled the old world which was lying in a deep sleep, dreaming filthy dreams; that world loved not to be so aroused, and turning over in its sleep, muttered curses deep and many, and vowed revenge against the disturber who dared break its horrible repose. Meanwhile believers in

Jesus, men not satisfied with witnessing by their lives and testifying by their tongues in the places where their lot was cast, but were continually commissioning fresh bands of missionaries to carry the word into other districts. It was not enough for Paul to preach the gospel at Jerusalem or Damascus, he must needs journey into Pisidia and Pamphylia, he must journey to the utmost verge of Asia Minor, and then, so full of Christ is he, that he dreams of eternal life, and when he falls asleep, he hears in a vision a man of Macedonia across the blue Ægean, entreating him, "Come over and help us." And with the morning light Paul rises, fully resolved to take ship and preach the gospel among the Gentiles. Having preached Christ throughout all Greece, he passed over to Italy, and though chained, he entered as God's ambassador within the walls of the imperial city of Rome; and it is believed that after that, his sacredly restless spirit was not satisfied with preaching throughout Italy, but he must needs cross into Spain, and it is said even into Britain itself. The ambition of the Christian for Christ was boundless; beyond pillars of Hercules, to the utmost islands of the sea, believers in Jesus carried the news of a Saviour born for the sons of men. Those were days of ardour. I fear these are days of lukewarmness. Those were times when the flame was like coals of juniper, which have a most vehement heat, and neither shipwreck, nor peril by robbers, nor peril by rivers, nor peril by false brethren, nor the sword itself, could stay the enthusiasm of the saints, for they believed, and therefore spake; they loved, and therefore served, even to the death.

Thus I introduce to you our text. Behold the men and their conflict for Christ! It was natural, it was inevitable, that they should provoke enmity. You and I do not love Christ much, nor believe much in his love—I mean the most of us. We are a sickly, unworthy, degenerate generation. We let the world alone, the world lets us alone. We conform a great deal to worldly customs, and the world is not annoyed by us. We do not dog the world's heels, perpetually declaring the truth as we ought to do, and therefore the world is not impatient with us—it thinks us a very good sort of people, a little whimsied, crazed about the head perhaps, but still very bearable and well behaved—and so we do not meet with half the enemies which they did of old, because we are not half such true Christians, nay, not one-tenth such saints as they. But if we were more holy, in proportion as we were so, we should meet with the same battle, though it may be in another shape. Though I spoke thus censoriously of all, there are some few here, I trust, who have been enabled by divine grace to know the power of the love of Jesus, and who are living under its influences, and contending for the sovereignty of the thorn-crowned King—these are they who will endure the same fight in other forms as the conflict of apostolic days, and these are they who may use without falsehood the language of my text: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

I will ask you, this morning, as we are assisted by the Holy Spirit, first, to consider *the victories already won*; secondly, *the laurels of the fight*; thirdly, *the men who won them*; and fourthly, *the power by which their conquest was achieved*.

I. First, this morning, we shall view THE VICTORIES ALREADY WON by those who have been possessed by the love of Jesus.

Look attentively at the champion. It needs no stretch of imagination to conceive this place to be a Roman amphitheatre. There in the midst of the arena stands the hero. The great doors of the lion's dens are lifted up by machinery, and as soon as the lairs are open, rushing forth with fury come bears and lions, and wild beasts of all kinds, that have been starved into ferocity, with which the champion is to contend. Such was the Christian in Paul's day, such is he now. The world is the theatre of conflict: angels and devils look on; a great cloud of witnesses view the fight—and monsters are let loose against him, with whom he must contend triumphantly.

The apostle gives us a little summary of the evils with which we must fight, and he places first, "*tribulation*." The word "*tribulation*," in the Latin, signifies threshing, and God's people are often cast upon the threshing-floor to be beaten with the heavy flail of trouble; but they are more than conquerors, since they lose nothing but their straw and chaff, and the pure wheat is thus separated from that which was of no benefit to it. The original Greek word, however, suggests pressure from without. It is used in the case of persons who are bearing heavy burdens, and are heavily pressed upon. Now, believers have had to contend with outward circumstances more or less in all ages. At the present day, there are very few who do not at some time or other in their lives meet with outward pressure, either from sickness or from loss of goods, or from bereavements, or from some other of the thousand and one causes from which affliction springs. The Christian has not a smooth pathway. "In the world, ye *shall have* tribulation," is a sure promise, which never fails of fulfilment. But under all burdens, true believers have been sustained, no afflictions have ever been able to destroy their confidence in God. It is said of the palm-tree, that the more weights they hang upon it the more straight and the more lofty doth it tower towards heaven; and it is so with the Christian. Like Job, he is never so glorious as when he has passed through the loss of all things, and at last rises from his dunghill more mighty than a king. Brethren, you must expect to meet with this adversary so long as you are here; and if you now suffer the pressure of affliction, remember you must overcome it, and not yield to it. Cry unto the strong for strength, that your tribulation may work out for you patience, and patience experience, and experience hope that maketh not ashamed.

The next in the list is "*distress*." I find that the Greek word rather refers to mental grief than to anything external. The Christian suffers from external circumstances; but this is probably a less affliction than internal woe. "Straitness of place" is something like the Greek word. We sometimes get into a position in which we feel as if we could not move, and are not able to turn to the right hand or to the left: the way is shut up; we see no deliverance, and our own consciousness of feebleness and perplexity is unbearably terrible. Do you never get into this state in which your mind is distracted, you know not what to do; you cannot calm and steady yourself; you would if you could consider calmly the conflict, and then enter into it like a man with all his wits about him; but the devil and the world, outward trial and

inward despondency combined, toss you to and fro like the waves of the sea, till you are, to use John Bunyan's Saxon expression, "much tumbled up and down in your mind." Well, now, if you are a genuine Christian, you will come out of this all right enough. You will be more than a conqueror over mental distress. You will take this burden as well as every other to your Lord, and cast it upon him; and the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to be the Comforter, will say to the troubled waves of your heart, "Be still." Jesus shall say, as he walks the tempest of your soul, "It is I, be not afraid;" and though the outward tribulation and the inward distress meet together like two contending seas, they shall both be calmed by the power of the Lord Jesus.

The third evil the apostle mentions is "*persecution*," which has always fallen upon the genuine lovers of Christ; their good name has been slandered. I should blush to repeat the villanies which have been uttered against the saints of the olden times. Suffice it to say, there is no crime in the category of vice which has not been falsely laid to the door of the followers of the pure and holy Jesus. Yet slander did not crush the church; the fair name of Christianity outlived the reputation of the men who had the effrontery to accuse her. Imprisonment followed slander, but in prisons God's saints have sung like birds in cages, better than when they were in the fields of open liberty. Prisons have glowed into palaces, and been sanctified into the dwelling places of God himself, more sacred far than all the consecrated domes of gorgeous architecture. Persecution has sometimes taken to banishing the saints, but in their banishment they have been at home, and when scattered far and wide, they have gone everywhere preaching the word, and their scattering has been the gathering together of others of the elect. When persecution has even resorted to the most cruel torments, God has had many a sweet song from the rack. The joyful notes of holy Lawrence, broiling upon the gridiron, must have been more sweet to God than the songs of cherubims and seraphims, for he loved God more than the brightest of them, and proved it in his bitterest anguish; and holy Mr. Hawkes, when his lower extremities were burnt, and they expected to see him fall over the chain into the fire, lifted his flaming hands, each finger spurting fire, and clapped them three times, with the shout of "None but Christ, none but Christ!" God was honoured more by that burning man than even by the ten thousand times ten thousand who ceaselessly hymn his praises in glory. Persecution, in all its forms, has fallen upon the Christian church, and up to this moment it has never achieved a triumph, but it has been an essential benefit to the church, for it cleared her of hypocrisy; when cast into the fire the pure gold lost nothing but its dross and tin, which it might well be glad to lose.

Then the apostle adds "*famine*." We are not exposed to this evil so much nowadays; but, in Paul's time, those who were banished, frequently were carried to places where they could not exercise their handicraft to earn their bread. They were taken away from their situations, from their friends, from their acquaintance; they suffered the loss of all their goods, and consequently they did not know where to find even the necessary sustenance for their bodies; and no doubt there are some now who are great losers by their conscientious convictions—who are

called to suffer, in a measure, even famine itself. Then, the devil whispers, "You ought to look after your house and children; you must not follow your religion so as to lose your bread." Ah! my friend, we shall then see whether you have the faith that can conquer famine; that can look gaunt hunger in the face; look through the ribs of the skeleton, and yet say, "Ah! famine itself I will bear sooner than sell my conscience, and stain my love to Christ."

Then comes *nakedness*, another terrible form of poverty. The Christian banished from house to house, and prevented from working at his trade, was not able to procure necessary funds, and therefore his garments gradually fell to rags, and the rags one by one disappeared. At other times the persecutors stripped men and women naked, to make them yield to shame; but nakedness, even in the case of the most tender and sensitive spirits, though such have been exposed to this evil in the olden days, has been unable to daunt the unconquerable spirit of the saints. There are stories in the old martyrologies of men and women who have had to suffer this indignity; and it is reported by those who looked on, that they never seemed to be so gloriously arrayed; for when they were stood naked before the whole bestial throng, that they might gaze upon them with their cruel eyes, their very bodies seemed to glow with glory, as with calm countenance they surveyed their enemies, and gave themselves up to die.

The apostle mentions next to nakedness, *peril*—that is, constant exposure to sudden death. This was the life of the early Christian. "We die daily," said the apostle. They were never sure of a moment's mercy, for a new edict might come forth from the Roman emperor to sweep the Christians away. They went literally with their lives in their hands wherever they went. Some of their perils were voluntarily encountered for the spread of the gospel; perils by rivers and by robbers were the lot of the Christian missionary going through inhospitable climes to declare the gospel. Other perils were the result of persecution; but we are told here that believers in Jesus so steadily reposed upon Christ's love, that they did not feel peril to be peril; and the love of Christ so lifted them up above the ordinary thoughts of flesh and blood, so that even when perils became perils indeed, they entered upon them with joy, out of love to their Lord and Master.

And to close the list, as if there were a sort of perfection in these evils, the seventh thing is *the sword*, that is to say, the apostle Paul singles out one cruel form of death as a picture of the whole. Ye know, and I need not tell you, how the noble army of my Master's martyrs have given their necks to the sword, as cheerfully as the bride upon the marriage day gives her hand to the bridegroom. Ye know how they have gone to the stake and kissed the fagots; how they have sung on the way to death, though death was attended with the most cruel torments; and have rejoiced with exceeding great joy, even to leaping and dancing at the thought of being counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. The apostle tells us that the saints have suffered all these things put together. He does not say in *some* of these things we are conquerors, but in *all*; many believers literally passed through outward want, inward trial, persecution, want of bread, want of raiment, the constant hazard of life, and at last laid down life itself; and yet in every

case through the whole list of these gloomy fights, believers were more than conquerors. Beloved, this day you are not, the most of you, called to peril, or nakedness, or sword: if ye were, my Lord would give you grace to bear the test; but I think the troubles of a Christian man, at the present moment, though not outwardly so terrible, are yet more hard to bear than even those of the fiery age. We have to bear the sneer of the world—that is little; its blandishments, its soft words, its oily speeches, its fawning, its hypocrisy, are far worse. O sirs, your danger is lest you grow rich and become proud, lest you give yourselves up to the fashions of this present evil world, and lose your faith. If you cannot be torn in pieces by the roaring lion, you may be hugged to death by the bear, and the devil little cares which it is so long as he gets your love to Christ out of you, and destroys your confidence in him. I fear me that the Christian church is far more likely to lose her integrity in these soft and silken days than she was in those rough times. Are there not many professing Christians whose methods of trade are just as vicious as the methods of trade of the most shifty and tricky of the unconverted? Have we not some professed Christians who are worldly altogether? whose non-attendance at our meetings for prayer, whose want of liberality to Christ's cause, whose entire conduct indeed proves that if there be any grace in them at all, it is not the grace which conquers the world, but the pretended grace which lets the world put its foot upon its neck. We must be awake now; for we traverse the enchanted ground, and are more likely to be ruined than ever, unless our faith in Jesus be a reality, and our love to Jesus a vehement flame. We are likely to become bastards and not sons, tares and not wheat, hypocrites with fair vineyards, but not the true living children of the living God. Christians, do not think that these are times in which you can dispense with watchfulness or with holy ardour; you need these things more now than ever, and may God the eternal Spirit display his omnipotence in you, that you may be able to say, in all these softer things as well as in the rougher, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

II. I shall with great brevity turn to the second head of the discourse. Let us inspect **THE LAURELS OF THE FIGHT.**

Hitherto believers have been conquerors, but the text says they have been "*more than conquerors.*" How is that? The word in the original is one of the apostle Paul's strong expressions; it might be rendered, "more exceeding conquerors." The Vulgate, I think, has a word in it which means, "over over-comers," over and above conquering. For a Christian to be a conqueror is a great thing: how can he be more than a conqueror? I think in many respects, first, a Christian is better than some conquerors because *the power by which he overcomes is nobler far.* Here is a champion just come from the Greek games; he has well nigh killed his adversary in a severe boxing match, and he comes in to receive the crown. Step up to him, look at that arm, and observe the thews and sinews. Why! the man's muscles are like steel, and you say to him, "I do not wonder that you beat and bruised your foe; if I had set up a machine made of steel, and worked by a little watery vapour, it could have done the same, though nothing but mere matter would have been at work. You are a stronger man and more vigorous in

constitution than your foe: that is clear; but where is the particular glory about that? One machine is stronger than another. No doubt, credit is to be given to you for your endurance, after a sort; but you are just one big brute beating another big brute. Dogs, and bulls, and game-cocks, and all kinds of animals, would have endured as much, and perhaps more. Now, see the Christian champion coming from the fight, having won the victory! Look at him! He has overcome human wisdom; but when I look at him, I perceive no learning nor cunning: he is a simple, unlettered person, who just knows that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; yet he has won the victory over profound philosophers: then he is more than a conqueror. He has been tempted and tried in all sorts of ways, and he was not at all a crafty person; he was very weak, yet somehow he has conquered. Now this is being more than a conqueror, when weakness overcomes strength, when brute force is baffled by gentleness and love. This is victory indeed, when the little things overcome the great things; when the base things of this world overthrow the mighty; and the things that are not bring to nought the things that are: yet this is just the triumph of grace. The Christian is, viewed according to the eye of sense, weak as water; yet faith knows him to be irresistible. According to the eye of sense, he is a thing to be trampled upon, for he will not resist; and yet, in the sight of God, he becomes in this very way, by his gentleness and patience, more than a conqueror.

The Christian is more than a conqueror again, because the conqueror fights for victory—*fights with some selfish motive*. Even if the motive be patriotism, although from another point of view, patriotism is one of the highest of worldly virtues, yet it is only a magnificent selfishness by which one contends for one's own country, instead of being subject to the far more generous cosmopolite thought of caring for all men. But the Christian fights neither for any set of men nor for himself: in contending for truth he contends for all men, but especially for God; and in suffering for the right he suffers with no prospect of earthly gain. He becomes more than a conqueror, both by the strength with which he fights and the motives by which he is sustained, which are better than the motives and the strength which sustain other conquerors.

He is more than a conqueror, because *he loses nothing even by the fight itself*. When a battle is won, at any rate the winning side loses something. In most wars, the gain seldom makes any recompense for the effusion of blood; but the Christian's faith, when tried, grows stronger; his patience, when tempted, becomes more patient. His graces are like the fabled Anteus, who, when thrown to the ground, sprang up stronger than before, by touching his mother earth; for the Christian, by touching his God and falling down in helplessness into the arms of the Most High, grows stronger by all that he is made to suffer. He is more than a conqueror, because he loses nothing even by the fight, and gains wondrously by the victory.

He is more than a conqueror over persecution, because *most conquerors have to struggle and agonise to win the conquest*. But, my brethren, many Christians, ay, and all Christians, when their faith in Christ is strong, and their love to Christ is fervent, have found it even

easy to overcome suffering for the Lord. Look at Blandina, enveloped in a net, tossed upon the horns of bulls, and then made to sit in a red hot iron chair to die, and yet unconquered to the close. What did the tormentors say to the emperor—"Oh! emperor," said the tormentors, "we are ashamed, for these Christians mock us while they suffer thy cruelties." Indeed, the tormentors often seemed to be themselves tormented; they were worried to think they could not conquer timid women and children. They devoured their own hearts with rage; like the viper, which gnaws at the file, they broke their teeth against the iron strength of Christian faith; they could not endure it, because these people suffered without repining, endured without retracting, and glorified Christ in the fires without complaining. I love to think of Christ's army of martyrs, ay, and of all his church, marching over the battle-field, singing as they fight, never ceasing the song, never suffering a note to fall, and at the same time advancing from victory to victory; chanting the sacred hallelujah while they tramp over their foes. I saw one day upon the lake of Orta, in northern Italy, on some holyday of the church of Rome, a number of boats coming from all quarters of the lake towards the church upon the central islet of the lake, and it was singularly beautiful to hear the splash of the oars and the sound of song as the boats came up in long processions, with all the villagers in them, bearing their banners, to the appointed place of meeting. As the oars splashed they kept time to the rowers, and the rowers never missed a stroke because they sang, neither was the song marred because of the splash of the oars, but on they came, singing and rowing: and so has it been with the church of God. That oar of obedience, and that other oar of suffering—the church has learned to ply both of these, and to sing as she rows: "Thanks be unto God, who always maketh us to triumph in every place!" Though we be made to suffer, and be made to fight, yet we are more than conquerors, because we are conquerors even while fighting; we sing even in the heat of the battle, waving high the banner, and dividing the spoil even in the centre of the fray. When the fight is hottest, we are then there most happy; and when the strife is sternest, then most blessed; and when the battle grows most arduous, then, "calm 'mid the bewildering cry, confident of victory." Thus the saints have been in those respects more than conquerors.

More than conquerors I hope, this day, because *they have conquered their enemies* by doing them good, converting their persecutors by their patience. To use the old Protestant motto, the church has been the anvil, and the world has been the hammer; and though the anvil has done nothing but bear the stroke, she has broken all the hammers, as she will do to the world's end. All true believers who really trust in Jesus' love, and are really fired with it, will be far more glorious than the Roman conqueror when he drove his milk white steeds through the imperial city's streets; then the young men and maidens, matrons and old men gathered to the windows and chimney-tops, and scattered flowers upon the conquering legions as they came along; but what is this compared with the triumph which is going on even now as the great host of God's elect come streaming through the streets of the New Jerusalem? What flowers are they which angels strew in the path of the blessed? What songs are those which rise from yonder

halls of Zion, conjubilant with song as the saints pass along to their everlasting habitations?

III. The time has almost failed me, and therefore, in the third place, but two or three words. Who are **THE PERSONS THAT HAVE CONQUERED?**

Attentively regard these few words which I utter. The men who conquered in the fight up till now have been known only by this—the two things I mentioned at the first—men who believed in Christ's love to them, and who were possessed with love to Christ; for there has been no other distinction than this. They have been rich: Cæsar's household yielded martyrs. They have been poor: the inscriptions on the tombs of the catacombs are few of them spelt correctly; they must have been very poor and illiterate persons who constituted the majority of the first Christian churches, yet all classes have conquered. At the stake, bishops have burned and princes have died, but more numerous still have been the weavers, and the tailors, and the seamstresses. The poorest of the poor have been as brave as the wealthy; the learned have died gloriously, but the unlearned have almost stolen the palm. Little children have suffered for Christ; their little souls, washed in the blood of Jesus, have also been encrimsoned with their own; meanwhile, the aged have not been behindhand. It must have been a sad but glorious sight to see old Latimer, when past seventy, putting off all his garments but his shirt, and then standing up and saying, as he turned round to Mr. Ridley, "Courage, brother! we shall this day light such a candle in England as, by the grace of God, shall never be put out." Oh! if you wish to serve my Master, old men, you have not passed the prime of your days for that. Young men, if you would be heroes, now is the opportunity. You who are poor, you may glow with as great a glory as the rich; and you who have substance, may count it your joy if you are called in the high places of the field to do battle for your Lord. There is room for all who love the Lord in this fight, and there are crowns for each. O that God would only give us the spirit and the strength to enlist in his army, and to fight till we win the crown! I leave that point, beloved friends, hoping that you will enlarge upon it in your thoughts.

IV. And now to close. The apostle distinctly tells us, **THE POWER, MYSTERIOUS AND IRRESISTIBLE, WHICH SUSTAINED THESE MORE THAN CONQUERORS,** it was "*Through him that loved us.*"

They conquered through Christ's being their captain. Much depends upon the leader. Christ showed them how to conquer, by personally enduring suffering, and conquering as their example. They triumphed through Christ as their teacher, for his doctrines strengthened their minds, made them masculine, made them angelic, made them divine, for he made them partakers of the divine nature. But, above all, they conquered because Christ was actually with them. His body was in heaven, for he has risen, but his Spirit was with them. We learn from all the history of the saints, that Christ has a way of infusing supernatural strength into the weakest of the weak. The Holy Spirit, when he comes into contact with our poor, wavering, feeble spirits, girds us up to something which is absolutely impossible to man alone. You look at man as he is, and what can he do? Brethren, he can do nothing. "Without me, ye can

do nothing." But look at man with God in him, and I will reverse the question—What can he not do? I do not see a man burning in yonder fires, I see Christ suffering in that man. I do not see a martyr in prison, so much as the divine power, laughing at the thought of imprisonment, and scorning iron bands. I do not so much see a simple-minded virgin, uneducated, contending with sophists and cavillers, as I see the Spirit of the living God speaking through her simple tongue, teaching her in the same hour what she shall speak, and proving the truth that the foolishness of God is greater than the wisdom of man, and the febleness of God is stronger than the power of man. Oh! it is glorious to think that God should thus take the meanest, poorest, feeblest things, and should put himself into them, and then say, "Come on, all ye that are wise and great, and I will baffle you through those that are foolish and feeble! Now, come, ye devils of hell; come, ye men of earth, who breathe out threatenings, and foam with cruelty; come all of you, and this poor defenceless one shall laugh you all to scorn, and triumph even to the last!" It is the power of Christ. And did you notice the name by which the apostle called our Lord in the text? It is so significant, that I think it is the key to the text, "Through him that loved us." Yes, love yielded them victory. They knew he loved them, had loved them, always would love them. They knew that if they suffered for his sake, it was his love which let them suffer for their ultimate gain, and for his permanent honour. They felt that he loved them; they could not doubt it, they never mistrusted that fact, and this it was that made them so strong. O beloved, are ye weak to-day? Go to him that loved you. Does your love grow cold to-day? Do not go to Moses to get it improved; do not search your own heart with a view of finding anything good there, but go at once to him that loved you. Think, this morning, of our Lord's leaving heaven, and of his incarnation upon earth. Think especially of the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, the wounds of Calvary, the dying thirst, the "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Think of all that. Get Christ's love to you burnt into your inmost consciousness; and in the strength of this, fear no difficulties, dread no tribulations, but march to your life-battle as the heroes of old went to theirs, and you shall return with you crowns of victory as they returned with theirs, and you shall find that verse which we just now sang, to be most divinely true.

"And they who, with their Leader, have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever, are clad in robes of white."

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Rom. viii. 28 to end,
Heb. xi. 32 to end.
