

“AS THY DAYS, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE”

NO. 210

A SERMON

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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

Deuteronomy 33:25

BELOVED, it seems a sad thing that every *day* must die and be followed by a night. When we have seen the hills clad with verdure to their summit and the seas laving their base with a silver glory, when we have stretched our eyes faraway, and have seen the widening prospect full of loveliness and beauty, and we have felt sad that the sunlight should ever set upon such a scene, and that so much beauty should be shrouded in the oblivion of darkness.

But how much reason have we to bless God for nights! For if it were not for nights, how much of beauty would ever be discovered. Never should I have considered the heavens, the work of Your fingers, O my God, if You had not first covered the sun with a thick mantle of darkness—the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, had never been bright in mine eyes, if You had not hid the light of the sun and bidden him retire within the curtains of the west.

Night seems to be the great friend of the stars—they would be all unseen by eyes of men were they not set in the foil of darkness. It is even so with winter. We might feel sad that all the flowers of summer must die and all the fruits of autumn must be gathered into their storehouses, that every tree must be stripped, and that all the fields must lose their fair flowers.

But were it not for winter we should never see the glistening crystals of the snow. We should never behold the beauteous festoons of the icicles that hang from the eaves. Much of God’s marvelous miracles of hoarfrost must be hidden from us, if it were not for the cold chill of winter, which, when it robs us of one beauty, gives us another—when it takes away the emerald of verdure, it gives us the diamond of ice—when it casts from us the bright rubies of the flowers, it gives us the fair white ermine of snow.

Well now, translate those two ideas and you will see why it is that even our sin—our lost and ruined estate—has been made the means, in the hand of God, of manifesting to us the excellencies of His character. My dear friends, if you and I had been without trouble, we never could have had such a promise as this given to us—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

It is our *weakness* that has made room for God to give us such a promise as this. Our sins make room for a Savior. Our frailties make room for the Holy Spirit to correct them. All our wanderings make room for the Good Shepherd, that He may seek us and bring us back.

We do not love nights, but we do love stars. We do not love weakness, but we do bless God for the promise that is to sustain us in our weakness. We do not admire winter, but we do admire the glittering snow. We must shudder at our own trembling weakness, but we still do bless God that we are weak because it makes room for the display of His own invincible strength in fulfilling such a promise as this.

In addressing you this morning, I shall first have to notice the *self-weakness which is implied in our text*. Secondly, I shall come to the *great promise* of the text. And then I shall try and draw one or two inferences from it ere I conclude.

I. First, the SELF-WEAKNESS HINTED AT IN THE TEXT.

To keep to my figure, if this promise be like a star, you know there is no seeing the stars in the daytime when we stand here upon the upper land. We must go down a deep well and then we shall be able to discover them.

Now, beloved, as this is daytime with our hearts, it will be necessary for us to go down the deep well of old recollections of our past trials and troubles. We must first get a good fair idea of the great depth of our own weakness, before we shall be able to behold the brightness of this rich and exceedingly precious promise.

A self-sufficient man can no more understand this promise than a coal heaver can understand Greek—he has never been in a position in which to understand it. He has never learned his own need of another’s strength and therefore he cannot possibly understand the value of a promise which consists in giving to us a strength beyond our own. Let us for a few minutes consider our own weakness.

You children of God, have you not proved your own weakness in the day of *duty*? The Lord has spoken to you and He has said, “Son of man, run and do such and such a thing which I bid you.” And you have gone to do it, but as you have been upon your way, a sense of great responsibility has bowed you down and you have been ready to turn back even at the outset and to cry, “Send by whomsoever you will send, but not by me.”

Reinforced by strength, you have gone to the duty, but while performing it, you have at times felt your hands hanging exceeding heavy and you have had to look up many a time and cry, “O Lord, give me more strength, for without Your strength this work must be unaccomplished. I cannot perform it myself.”

And when the work has been done and you have looked back upon it, you have either been filled with amazement that it should have been done at all by so poor and weak a worm as yourself, or else you have been overcome with horror because you have been afraid the work was marred like the vessel on the potter’s wheel, by reason of your own want of skillfulness.

I confess in my own position, I have a thousand causes to confess my own weakness every day. In preparing for the pulpit, how often do we discover our weakness when a hundred texts exhibit themselves and we know not which to choose. And when we have selected our subject, distracting thoughts come in, and when we would concentrate our minds upon some holy topic, we find they are carried hither and thither, driven about like the minds of children by every wind of thought.

And when we bow our knees to seek the Lord’s help before we preach, how often does our tongue refuse to give utterance to the earnestness of our hearts? And alas! how frequently too is our heart cold when we are about to enter upon an occupation which requires the heart to be hot like a furnace and the lip to be burning like a live coal?

Here in this pulpit I have often learned my weakness, when words have fled from me, and thoughts have departed too, and when that zeal which I thought would have poured itself forth like a cataract has trickled forth in unwilling drops like a sullen stream—the source of which does almost fail and which seems itself as if it longed to be dried up and dead.

And after preaching, how have I cast myself upon my bed, and tossed to and fro, groaning because I thought I had failed to deliver my message and had not preached my Master’s Word as my Master would have me preach it.

All of you, in your own callings, I dare say, have had enough to prove that. I do not believe a Christian can examine himself without finding every day that weakness is proven even in the doing of his duty. Your shop, however small, will be enough to prove to you your weakness. Your business, however little, your cares, however light, your family, however small, will furnish you with enough proofs of the fact—“Without me ye can do nothing.” “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

But beloved, we prove our weakness perhaps more visibly when we come into the day of *suffering*. There it is that we are weak indeed. I have sat by the side of those who have been exceedingly sick and have marked their patience. But I do not know that I ever wondered at the patience of a sick man so much as I do when I am sick myself—then patience is an extraordinary virtue.

Women suffer, and suffer well. But I think there are very few men who could bear a tithe of the suffering that many women endure, without exhibiting a hundred times as much impatience. Most of us

who are gifted with strong constitutions, and have but little of sickness, have to chasten ourselves that what little sickness we have to contend with is borne with so little resignation and with so much impatience.

We are too ready to repine, too prepared to bow our heads and wish we were dead, because a little pain is rending our body. Here it is that we prove our weakness indeed. Ah! people of God, it is one thing to talk about the furnace—it is another thing to be in it. It is one thing to look at the doctor’s knife, but quite another thing to feel it. You will find it one thing to sip the cup of medicine, but quite another thing to lie in bed a dreary week or month, and to drink on, and on, and on, of that nauseating draught.

When you are on dry land, most of you are good sailors—out at sea you are vastly different. There is many a man who makes a wonderfully brave soldier till he gets into the battle, and then he wishes himself miles away, and except his spurs, there is no weapon he can use with much advantage. That man has never been sick who does not know his weakness, his want of patience and of endurance.

Again, beloved, there is another thing which will very soon prove our weakness, if neither duty nor suffering will do it—namely, *progress*. You sit down tomorrow and you read the life of some eminent servant of God—perhaps the life of David Brainard and how he gave up his life for his Master in the wilderness. Or the heroic life of Henry Martin and how he sacrificed all for Christ.

And as you read, you say within yourself, “I will endeavor to be like this man. I will seek to have his faith, his self-denial, his love to never-dying souls.” Try and get them, beloved, and you will soon find your own weakness. I have sometimes thought I would try to have more faith, but I have found it very hard to keep as much as I had.

I have thought, “I will love my Savior more,” and it was right that I should strive to do so. But when I sought to love Him more, I found that perhaps I was going backward instead of forward. How often do we find out our weakness when God answers our prayers!

*“I ask’d the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.*

*“I hop’d that in some favor’d hour
At once He’d answer my request,
And by His love’s constraining power,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.*

*“Instead of this He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry power of hell
Assault my soul in every part.*

*“‘Lord, why is this?’ I trembling cried,
‘Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?’
‘Tis in this way,’ the Lord replied;
‘I answer prayer for grace and faith.’”*

That is, the Lord helps us to grow downward when we are only thinking about growing upward. Let any of you try to grow in grace and seek to run the heavenly race, and make a little progress, and you will soon find, in such a slippery road as that which we have to travel, that it is very hard to go one step forward, though remarkably easy to go a great many steps backward.

If none of these three things will prove your weakness, Christian, I will advise you to try another. See what you are in *temptation*. I have seen a tree in the forest that seemed to stand fast like a rock. I have stood beneath its wide-spreading branches and have sought to shake its trunk—to see if I could—

but it stood immovable. The sun shone upon it and the rain descended and many a winter's frost sprinkled its boughs with snow, but it still stood fast and firm.

But one night there came a howling wind which swept through the forest and the tree, that seemed to stand so fast, lay stretched along the ground—its gaunt arms, which once were lifted up to heaven, lying hopelessly broken and the trunk snapped in twain.

And so have I seen many a professor strong and mighty—and nothing seemed to move him. But I have seen the wind of persecution and temptation come against him, and I have heard him creak with murmuring, and at last have seen him break in apostasy, and he has lain along the ground—a mournful specimen of what every man must become who makes not the Lord his strength and who relies not upon the Most High.

“Ah!” says one, “I do not believe I could be tempted to sin.” My friend, it depends upon what kind of temptation it should be. There are many of us who could not be tempted to drunkenness and others who could not be tempted to lust. If the devil should set before some of you cups of the richest wines that ever came from the vintages of Burgundy or of Xeres, you would not care for them—if you did but sip them it would satisfy you. It would be in vain to tempt you with the drunkard's song. Nothing could induce you to lose your equilibrium by intoxicating liquors.

But perhaps you are the very man whom a temptation of lust might overthrow. There are other men whom neither lust nor wine can overcome, who may be led by a prospect of profit into that which is dishonest. And others again, whom neither profit, nor lust, nor wine, would turn aside, may be overthrown by anger, or envy, or malice.

We all have our tender points. When Thetis dipped Achilles in the Styx, you remember she held him by the heel. He was made invulnerable wherever the water touched him, but his heel, not being covered with the water, was vulnerable, and there Paris shot his arrow and he died.

It is even so with us. We may think that we are covered with virtue till we are totally invulnerable—but we have a heel somewhere. There is a place where the arrow of the devil can make way—hence the absolute necessity of taking to ourselves “the *whole* armour of God,” so that there may not be a solitary joint in the harness that shall be unprotected against the arrows of the devil.

Satan is very crafty, he knows the ins and outs of manhood. There is many an old castle that has stood against every attack, but at last some traitor from within has gone outside and said, “I know an old deserted passage, a subterranean back way that has not been used for many a day. In such and such a field you will see an opening. Clear away a heap of stones there and I will lead you down the passage—you will then come to an old door of which I have the key and I can let you in. And so by a back way I can lead you into the very heart of the citadel, which you may then easily capture.”

It is so with Satan. Man knows not himself as well as Satan knows him. There are back ways and subterranean passages into man's heart which the devil does well understand. And he who thinks that he is safe, let him take heed lest he fall. That is not a bad hymn of Dr. Watts, after all, where he tells us that Samson was very strong while he wore his hair, but—

*“Samson, when his hair was lost,
Met the Philistines to his cost:
Shook his vain limbs with vast surprise,
Made feeble fight, and lost his eyes.”*

The reason was because there was a back way into Samson's heart. The Philistines could not overcome him—“Heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass, have I slain a thousand men.” Come on, Philistines, he will tear you in pieces as he did the young lion. Bind him with green ropes and he will snap them as tow. Weave his locks with a weaver's beam, and he will carry away loom and all, and go out like a giant refreshed with new wine.

But O Delilah, he has a back way to his heart—you have found it out and now you can overthrow him. Tremble, for you may yet be overcome! You are as weak as water if God leaves you alone.

Now, I think if we have well surveyed these different points of our moral standing on earth, every child of God will be ready to confess that he is weak. I imagine there may be some of you ready to say, “Sir, I am nothing.” Then I shall reply, “Ah! you are a young Christian.” There will be others of you who will say, “Sir, I am less than nothing.” And I shall say, “Ah! you are an old Christian.” For the older Christians get, the less they become in their own esteem—the more they feel their own weakness and the more entirely they rely upon the strength of God.

II. Having thus dwelt upon the first point, we shall now come to the second—THE GREAT PROMISE—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

In the first place, this is a *well-guaranteed promise*. A promise is nothing unless I have good security that it shall be fulfilled. It is in vain for men to promise largely unless their fulfillment shall be as large as their promise—for the largeness of their promise is just the largeness of deception. But here every Word of God is true.

God has issued no more notes for the bank of heaven than He can cash in an hour if He wills. There is enough bullion in the vaults of Omnipotence to pay off every bill that ever shall be drawn by the faith of man or the promises of God. Now look at this one—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Beloved, God has a strong reserve with which to pay off this promise, for is He not Himself omnipotent, able to do all things?

Believer, till you can drain dry the ocean of omnipotence, till you can break into pieces the towering mountains of almighty strength, you never need to fear. Until your enemy can stop the course of a whirlwind with a reed, till he can twist the hurricane from its path by a word of his puny lip, you need not think that the strength of man shall ever be able to overcome the strength which is in you, namely, the strength of God.

While the earth’s huge pillars stand, you have enough to make your faith firm. The same God who guides the stars in their courses, who directs the earth in its orbit, who feeds the burning furnace of the sun, and keeps the stars perpetually burning with their fires—the same God has promised to supply your strength.

While He is able to do all these other things, think not that He shall be unable to fulfill His own promise. Remember what He did in the days of old, in former generations? Remember how He spake and it was done. How He commanded and it stood fast. Do you not see Him in the black eternity? When there was nothing but grim darkness, there He stood—the mighty Artificer.

Upon the anvil there He cast a hot mass of flame, and hammering it with His own ponderous arm, each spark that flew from it made a world. There those sparks are still glittering now—the offspring of the anvil of the eternal purposes, and the hammer of His own majestic might.

And shall He, that created the world, grow weary? Shall He fail? Shall He break His promises for want of strength? He hangs the world upon nothing. He fixed the pillars of heaven in silver sockets of light, and thereon He hung the golden lamps, the sun and the moon—and shall He that did all this be unable to support His children?

Shall He be unfaithful to His Word for lack of power in His arm or strength in His will? Remember again, your God, who has promised to be your strength, is the God who upholds all things by the power of His hand. Who feeds the ravens? Who supplies the lions? Does not He do it? And how? He opens His hand and supplies the needs of every living thing. He has to do nothing more than simply to open His hand.

Who is it that restrains the tempest? Does not He say that He rides upon the wings of the wind, that He makes the clouds His chariots, and holds the water in the hollow of His hand? Shall He fail you? When He has put such a promise as this on record, shall you for a moment indulge the thought that He has out-promised Himself and gone beyond His power to fulfill? Ah! no.

Who was it that cut Rahab in pieces and wounded the dragon? Who divided the Red Sea and made the waters thereof stand upright as a heap? Who led the people through the wilderness? Who was it that cast Pharaoh into the depths of the sea, his chosen captains also? Who rained fire and brimstone out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah? Who chased out the Canaanite with the hornet and made a way of escape for His people Israel?

Who was it that brought them from their captivity and did settle them again in their own land? Who is He that has put down kings, yea, and slew mighty kings that He might make room for His people wherein they might dwell in a quiet habitation? Has not the Lord done it—and is His arm shortened that He cannot save? Or is His ear heavy that He cannot hear?

O You who are my God and my strength, I can believe that this promise shall be fulfilled, for the boundless reservoir of Your grace can never be exhausted, and the unlimited storehouse of Your strength can never be emptied or rifled by the enemy. It is, then, a well-guaranteed promise.

But now I want you to notice it is a *limited* promise. “What!” says one, “limited! Why it says, ‘As thy days, so shall thy strength be.’” Ay, it is limited. I know it is unlimited in our troubles, but still it is limited. First, it says our strength is to be as our *days* are. It does not say our strength is to be as our *desires* are.

Oh! how often have we thought, “How I wish I were as strong as so and so”—one who had a great deal of faith. Ah! but then you would have rather more faith than you wanted and what would be the good of that? It would be like the manna the children of Israel had—if they did not eat it in the day, it bred worms and stank.

“Still,” says one, “if I had faith like so and so, I think I should do wonders.” Yes, but you would get the glory of them. That is why God does not let you have the faith, because He does not want you to do wonders. That is reserved for God, not for you—“He only does wondrous things.”

Once more, it does not say, our strength shall be as our *fears*. God often leaves us to shift alone with our fears—never with our troubles. Many of God’s people have a manufactory at the back of their houses in which they manufacture troubles. And home-made troubles, like other home-made things, last a very long while and generally fit very comfortably.

Troubles of God’s sending are always suitable—the right sort for our backs—but those that we make are of the wrong sort and they always last us longer than God’s. I have known an old lady to sit and fret because she believed she would die in a workhouse and she wanted God to give her grace accordingly. But what would have been the good of that, because the Lord meant that she should die in her own quiet bedroom.

I have heard of and known men who, being sick, believed they were dying and wanted grace to die complacently. But God would not give it because He intended them to live—and why should He give them dying grace till they came to die? And we have known others who said they wanted grace to endure many troubles which they expected to come upon them. They were going to fail in a fortnight or so, but they did not fail and it was no wonder they had not grace given to carry them through it, because they did not require it.

The promise is, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “When your vessel gets empty, then will I fill it. I will not give you any extra, over and above. When you are weak, then I will make you strong. But I will not give you any extra strength to lay by—strength enough to bear your sufferings, and to do your duty—but no strength to play at matches with your brethren and sisters in order to get the glory to yourselves.”

Oh! if we had strength according to our wishes, we would soon all of us be like Jeshurun—wax fat and begin to kick against the Most High. Then again, there is another limit. It says “As thy *days*, so shall thy strength be.” It does not say, “As your *weeks*,” or “*months*,” but “As thy *days*.” You are not going to have Monday’s grace given you on a Sunday, nor Tuesday’s grace on a Monday. You shall have Monday’s grace given you on Monday morning as soon as you rise and want it. You shall not have it

given you on Saturday night. You shall have it “day by day”—no more than you want, no less than you want.

I do not believe God’s people are to be trusted with a week’s grace all at once. They are like many of our London workman—they get their wages on Saturday night, and then the rascals go and have Saint Monday and Saint Tuesday, and never do a stroke of work till Wednesday, when they go to the pawnbrokers with their tools to help them over till the next Saturday night.

Now I think God’s children would do the same. If they had grace given them on Saturday to last them all through the week, I question whether Satan would not get a good deal of it—whether they would not be pawning some of their old evidences before the week was out in order to live upon them—spending all their grace on Monday and Tuesday, spending very much of their strength in indulging in pride and boasting, instead of walking humbly with their God. No, “As thy *days*, so shall thy strength be.”

Now, having said that the promise is limited, perhaps I am bound to add—what an *extensive* promise this is! “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Some days are very little things—in our diary we have very little to put down, for there was nothing done of any importance. But some days are very big days.

Ah! I have known a big day—a day of great duties, when great things had to be done for God—too great, it seemed, for one man to do. And when great duty was but half done, there came great trouble, such as my poor heart had never felt before. Oh! what a great day it was! there was a night of lamentation in this place, and the cry of weeping, and of mourning, and of death. Ah! but blessed be God’s name, though the day was big with tempest and though it swelled with horror, yet as that day was, so was God’s strength.

Look at poor Job. What a great day he had once! “Master,” says one, “the oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away.” In comes another and he says, “The fire of God hath fallen on the sheep.” “Oh,” says another, “the Chaldeans have fallen upon the camels and taken them away, and I, only I, am left to tell thee.”

Still, you see, grace kept growing with the day. Still strength grew as the trouble grew. At last comes the black stroke—“A great wind came from the wilderness, and smote the house where thy sons and daughters were feasting, and they are dead, and I, only I, am left to tell thee.” Grace still kept growing, and at last the grace did overflow the trouble, and the poor old patriarch cried, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” Ah! Job, that was a big day indeed, and it was big grace that went with that big day.

Satan sometimes blows up our days with his black breath till they grow to such a cursed height that we know not how great the days must be. Our head whirls at the thought of passing through such a sea of trouble in so short a space of time. But oh! how sweet it is to think that the bed of grace is never shorter than a man can stretch himself upon it—nor is the covering of Almighty love ever shorter than that it may cover us.

We never need be afraid. If our troubles should become high as mountains, God’s grace would become like Noah’s flood—it would go twenty cubits higher till the mountains were covered. If God should send to you and to me a day such as there was none like it, neither should be any more, He would send us strength such as there was none like it, neither should there be any more.

Do you see Martin Luther riding into Worms? There is a solitary monk going before a great council—he knows they will burn him—did not they burn John Huss and Jerome of Prague? Both those men had a safe conduct, and it was violated, and they were put to death by Papists, who said that no faith was to be kept with heretics.

Luther placed very little reliance on his safe conduct. And you would have expected as he rode into Worms that he would have a dejected countenance. Not so. No sooner does he catch sight of Worms than someone advises him not to go into the city. Said he, “If there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would enter.” And he rides right in.

He goes to the inn and eats his bread and drinks his beer as complacently as if he were at his own fireside. And then he goes quietly to bed. When summoned before the council and asked to retract his opinion, he does not want time to consider or debate about it—but he says, “These things that I have written are the truth of God, and by them will I stand till I die; so help me God!”

The whole assembly trembles, but there is not a flush upon the cheek of the brave monk, nor do his knees knock together. He is in the midst of armed men and those that seek his blood. There sit fierce cardinals, and bloodthirsty bishops, and the Pope’s legate, like spiders longing to suck his blood. He cares for none of them. He walks away and is confident that “God is his refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

“Ah! but” you say, “I could not do that.” Yes you could, if God called you to it. Any child of God can do what any other child of God has done, if God gives him the strength. You could not do what you are doing even now without God’s strength. And you could do ten thousand times more if He should be pleased to fill you with His might. What an expansive promise this is!

Once more, what a *varying* promise it is! I do not mean that the promise varies, but adapts itself to all our changes. “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Here is a fine sunshiny morning—all the world is laughing—everything looks glad. The birds are singing, the trees seem to be all alive with music. “My strength shall be as my day is,” says the pilgrim.

Ah! pilgrim, there is a little black cloud gathering. Soon it increases. The flash of lightning wounds the heaven and it begins to bleed in showers. Pilgrim, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” The birds have done singing and the world has done laughing. But “as thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Now the dark night comes on and another day approaches—a day of tempest and whirlwind and storm. Do you tremble, pilgrim?—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

“But there are robbers in the wood.”—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “But there are lions which shall devour me.”—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “But there are rivers—how shall I swim them?” Here is a boat to carry you over—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “But there are fires—how shall I pass through them?” Here is the garment that will protect you—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “But there are arrows that fly by day.” Here is your shield—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “But there is the pestilence that walketh in darkness.” Here is your antidote—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Wherever you may be and whatever trouble awaits you, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

Children of God, cannot you say that this has been true hitherto? *I can*. It might seem egotistical if I were to talk of the evidence I have received of this during the past week, but nevertheless I cannot help recording my praise to God. I left this pulpit last Sunday as sick as any man ever left the pulpit—and I left this country too as ill as I could be.

But no sooner had I set my foot upon the other shore, where I was to preach the Gospel, than my strength entirely returned to me. I had no sooner buckled on the harness to go forth and fight my Master’s battle, than every ache and pain was gone, and all my sickness fled. And as my day was, so certainly was my strength.

I believe if I were lying upon a dying couch, if God called me to preach in America, and I had but faith to be carried down to the boat, I should have strength given me, though I seemed to be dying, to minister as the Lord had appointed me. And so would each of you, wherever you might be, find that as your day was, so your strength should be.

And in conclusion, what a *long* promise this is! You may live till you are never so old, but this promise will outlive you. When you come into the depths of the river Jordan, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” You shall have confidence to face the last grim tyrant and grace to smile even in the jaws of the grave.

And when you shall rise again in the terrible morning of the resurrection, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Though the earth be reeling with dismay, you shall know no fear. Though the heavens are tottering with confusion, you shall know no trouble. “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” And when

you shall see God, face to face, though your weakness were enough to make you die, you shall have strength to bear the beatific vision. You shall see Him face to face, and you shall live. You shall lie in the bosom of your God. Immortalized and made full of strength, you shall be able to bear even the brightness of the Most High.

III. What INFERENCE shall I draw except this?

Children of the living God, be rid of your doubts, be rid of your trouble and your fears. Young Christians, do not be afraid to set forward on the heavenly race. You bashful Christians, that, like Nicodemus, are ashamed to come out and make an open profession, don't be afraid—“As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.” Why need you fear? You are afraid of disgracing your profession—you shall not. Your day shall never be more troublesome, or more full of temptation, than your strength shall be full of deliverance.

And as for you that have not God to be yours, I must draw one inference for you. Your strength is decaying. You are growing old and your old age will not be like your youth. You have strength—strength which you prostitute to the cause of Satan, which you misuse in the service of the devil. When you grow old, as you will do—unless your wickedness shall bring you to an early grave—they that look out of the windows must be darkened and the grasshopper must be a burden to you—and your strength shall not be as your day.

And when you come to die, as die you must, then you shall have no strength to die with. You must die alone. You will hear yon iron gates creak on their hinges and no guardian angel to comfort you as you go through the dreary vault. And you will stand at God's great bar at the day of resurrection and no one to strengthen you there.

How will your cheek blanch with terror! How will your soul be frightened with horror when you shall hear it said, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell, prepared for the devil and his angels.” You have no such promise as this to cheer you onward, but you have this to drive you to despair. Your days shall become heavier, but your strength shall become lighter. Your sorrows shall be multiplied and your joys shall be diminished. Your days shall shorten and your nights shall lengthen. Your summers shall become dimmer and your winters shall become blacker. All your hopes shall die and your fears shall live. You shall reap the harvest of your sins in the dreadful vintage of eternal wrath.

May God give us all grace, so that when days and years are past, we all may meet in heaven. There are some people here who I have seen a great many times and I thought they would have been converted before now. I ask them one question (there are some of them whom I sincerely respect) and it is this—what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? When death shall get hold upon you? What, what will you do, then? May God help you to answer and prepare to meet Him!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.