

THE GLORY OF OUR STRENGTH

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“For thou art the glory of their strength.”
Psalm 89:17

THE psalmist Ethan is here speaking of the covenant people—the people of God, the people who know the joyful sound of the covenant of grace, and who therefore walk in the light of God’s countenance. It is said of these persons that God is the glory of their strength. All strength of every sort comes from God. Since He is the Author of all being, it is He who gives strength to every form of existence.

Read the remarkable chapters which close the Book of Job and see how God there claims to have given strength to the eagle in her lofty flight, and to the horse when he paws in the valley, and leviathan and behemoth, those mighty creatures of the sea and the land. God claims to have given all the strength that there is in any of these members of the inferior creation, and we are certain that He also lays an equally just claim to all the strength that there is in man.

The power of arm, the swiftness of foot, the keenness of intellect—all these come from the Most High, who has wrought such wonders in the formation of the human frame. Whatever of vigor and capacity there may be in it, all must be traced to the almighty hand of God. The glory even of man’s physical strength, whether he knows it or not, belongs to God. He makes the young man vigorous and the full-grown man mature in strength, so He ought to have the service of the strength which He has Himself created.

Equally is this true of all mental power. The craftsmen learn their art from God. Bezaleel and Aholiab were instructed of the Most High, “to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,” as truly as Moses was taught of God in the writing of the law. The poet receives his power for grand conceptions from God, who is beyond all human conception. And he who is most learned in any particular science—the great discoverer, the man who measures the stars or maps the seas—receives all his mental strength from the Most High.

It would be well if this were always remembered, for it often happens that men who are great in wisdom ascribe their greatness to themselves, and then prostitute their native talents and their acquired knowledge to their own ambitious ends, or to some mean and groveling purpose. Oh, that all men would lay out their talents for God, for He is the great Householder who has given to one of His servants one talent, to another two, and to another five talents—and who will, at His coming—require from them an account of what they have done with them! Oh, that all who are mentally strong would ascribe the glory of their strength to God!

But there is a higher and nobler form of strength than either the physical or the mental. We rise into another realm when we come to speak of spiritual things. There are some men whom God has raised up from spiritual death. When they “were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” and so He saved them from their death in sin, and they have been made strong spiritually by God through the effectual working of His Spirit.

By grace, they are the sons of the almighty God, and they themselves have become mighty through Him, so the glory of their strength is all to be ascribed to God. The psalmist’s declaration, “Thou art the

glory of their strength,” is true in reference to the whole of the spiritual seed—the covenant people who are made strong in spiritual things by the grace of God.

I. Now, in trying to lead your thoughts into the meaning of this text, I want you, first of all, by way of contrast, to spend a few minutes in considering the opposite of our text. God is the glory of our strength, but what I want you now to think of is **THE SHAME OF OUR WEAKNESS**.

This is a very humiliating subject, but it is one that should never be far from our thoughts, for we shall never realize to the full the glory of the strength which comes from God until we are deeply conscious of the shame of the weakness which is in our nature as the result of the Fall and of our own sin.

What poor weak creatures we are! It is no shame to us that we have not the strength of the elephant or the lion. It is no shame to us that we have not the wings of eagles or of angels. It is no shame to us that we are often the sport of the elements, so that we shiver in the cold or are blistered in the sun. It is no shame to us that, when the storm sweeps over the sea, it drives our navies before it like so many cockle-shells. It is no shame to us that there are many things in this world which are far more powerful than such a puny creature as man is. Such weakness as that which God intended us to have is no cause for shame—nay, we turn to God in the full consciousness of it and remind Him that we are but animated dust, and that He made us weak as we are, and intended us to be weak as we are. That is not where the shame lies. The shame lies in the moral weakness which is natural to us in our fallen state.

I mean that, left to ourselves *we are weak enough to allow our baser spirits to be our masters*, and our meanest capacities to have the sway over our entire nature. God has put the earth under our feet, but we often put ourselves under the earth by permitting that which is earthy to dominate us. We have a nature that, in its origin, was akin to the divine, yet how often we allow the passions of our fallen nature to control our whole being! We let that part of our nature which is worst be supreme over that which is best, yet it should never be so.

Look at the weakness of the strongest man ever born of a woman. See him lying helpless at Delilah’s feet and there committing suicide—for I can call it by no other name—by revealing the secret of his strength and so delivering himself into the hands of the Philistines.

Look at the weakness of the wisest man who ever lived and see how Solomon’s heart was turned aside from God. Look at the weakness of one of the best of men who ever lived, the man who was as great as a saint as he was as a poet—David, the sweet singer of Israel—who was weak as water when left to himself.

I need not mention other cases. God grant that we may not ourselves become instances of such weakness! But we have been, I do not doubt, in some way or other, foolish enough to let our baser passions consent to sin while our nobler spiritual nature has hated the evil thing and fought against it.

Our weakness may also be seen in another way—*we are very apt to be carried away by circumstances*. We think we are standing very firmly, but a very slight change in our position or condition will affect us very seriously. It is really extraordinary how easily a holy man, who has been truly communing with God, will be put out of temper by a circumstance so infinitesimal in importance that he would be ashamed to have it known that he had been influenced by it.

I think some of you must have known what it has been to have close fellowship with God, and yet, afterwards, the merest trifle in the household has sufficed to rob you of all the good you had gained. Possibly, if God should give you, at this service, a very special manifestation of His presence and you were to meet with a great trial at home, you would be enabled to bear it with equanimity. Yet some little insignificant thing—I shall not conjecture what—may cause you to lose your temper or put you off your guard in some other respect, or cause you to become concerned about other things than the highest and best things, and effectually bring you down from your privileged position as follower of the Lord Jesus Christ to the common level—I was about to say—of an ordinary worldling. Oh, how weak we are, how weak we are in such a case as that!

It is also amazing to think how *good men have been led into sin and overcome by the very smallest adversary*. Look at Peter, for instance—bold, lion-hearted Peter. Who was it that led him to deny his Master? If some huge Roman legionary had come up to him with his drawn sword and said to him, “You Galilean, if you dare to say, ‘I know Jesus,’ this sword shall smite off your head,” I should not wonder but that Peter would have been equal to that emergency and certainly he would have wished to have in his hand the sword with which he cut off the ear of Malchus, so that he might at least defend himself.

If the high priest had pointed to Peter and said, “I believe that yonder stands one of the men who were with Jesus of Galilee,” it may be that he would have been bold enough to confess his Lord. But it was only a damsel, one of the high priest’s maids, who saw him as he was warming himself at the fire, and who said to him, “Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee”—and he denied it—and so the strong man was overcome. It is thus that little foes have frequently mastered us where great foes could not do so.

I think it was Admiral Drake who, in a storm at the Nore, said to his sailors, “Surely we have not braved many tempests out in the open sea to come here to be drowned in a ditch.” Yet it has often been so. Men who have done business in great waters, who have encountered huge Atlantic waves of temptation, have nevertheless been allured into sin by a temptation that was utterly contemptible. And perhaps it was just because it seemed to them so contemptible that they became carnally secure and so it proved to be doubly dangerous to them. But oh, what weak creatures we must be when trifling circumstances can turn us aside and when little things suffice to conquer us!

One thing in which we all betray our littleness is *the readiness with which we fall into the gross sin of idolatry*. We are none of us likely to bow down before blocks of wood and stone, as the heathen do. Nor are we likely to worship the god made of bread, which is the god of so many in this country—yet we are all too prone to make unto ourselves gods that are really idols.

At one time it is favorite child who is thus worshipped. “There never was a fairer child than mine. She is more like an angel than a human being,” says the fond and foolish mother, whose heart is wrapped up in her little one. Then comes God’s great hammer that breaks all idols—and the dead child is carried to the silent tomb. After such a painful experience as that, will the mother ever make an idol of another child? Yes, there are some who have done that, to their own confusion, time after time.

If it has not been a little child who has been thus idolized, it may have been the partner of one’s own life. Perhaps it has been some cherished idea which we have pursued with such avidity that it has become a god to us. It is very, very easy to put your trust in an arm of flesh—either your own or somebody else’s arm.

But as soon as you do that, you bring yourself under that ancient curse, “Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD”—for all trust in the creature is a subtle form of idolatry. After we have trusted in the creature once, twice, twenty times, and been deceived, will we do it again? Yes, for such is the shame of our weakness that we still turn away from the eternal arm which can never fail us, and cling to that poor puny arm of man that is often as false as it is weak. Still do we we make gods of things that are not gods, for, like the children of Israel, we are weak as water in this point also.

There is another thing that shows the shame of our weakness, namely, our *unbelief*. Have you never caught yourself saying, “After this, I shall never have a doubt again”? I have frequently found some such expression as that come to my lips, for I have had such extraordinary deliverances and such proofs of God’s gracious lovingkindness that, when I have received them, I have said, “Oh, what a blessed God! Oh what a faithful God! Oh, what a prayer-answering God!”

And then the thought has come, “The next time I am in trouble, I shall not be so timorous and so unbelieving.” Yet I fear that many of you will have to join me in confessing, with deep shame and confusion of face, that it has only needed a new trial to come to us to cause us to find out that what we thought was strength was utter weakness. Have not you also found it so?

Why, we are weaker even than our own children, for our children can and do trust their father. But sometimes we, the loved ones of heaven, cannot and do not trust our Father who never has deceived us. We may well lament the shame of our weakness.

If I were to keep on speaking of this part of my theme, I might show you that *we are weak everywhere and weak in every way*—weak to all good and weak in the presence of all evil if God once withdraws Himself from us. You who are most mighty in prayer, are you not sometimes weak when you are upon your knees? You who often bear testimony to Christ with much courage, are you not sometimes weak in holy boldness? You who can generally rejoice in the Lord, are you not sometimes weak and feeble through despondency? Apart from God, our whole head is sick, our whole heart is faint, and we are a mass of misery and a heap of weakness.

II. Now, having spoken thus by way of converse, I hope it is a fitting preparation for our dwelling a little while upon the second point, which is, according to the text, THE GLORY OF OUR STRENGTH.

True believers, though they are a very feeble folk in themselves, are very strong when God is with them. They are so strong that their strength has a great glory in it, of which we will now speak. The strength of the true Christian is so great that nothing can overcome him and he is more than a conqueror in every engagement into which he enters.

What strength God gives to us, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, *at the very first, when we rise out of the grave of our spiritual death*. There we lie, bound hand and foot in that dark sepulchre—and a great stone is rolled over the mouth of it. The moment the Lord says to us, “Come forth,” we open our eyes and begin to discover the gloomy grave in which we lie.

There and then God gives us the power to ungird ourselves, and to remove the stone, and to come forth into liberty. I mean that men, quickened by divine grace, deliver themselves from evil habits, from customs which had bound them as with bands of iron, from inveterate sins which had held them captive as in a net. They become free from all these things in the strength of the Holy Ghost when He has regenerated them and brought them up from their spiritual captivity.

The achievements of a new-born soul, in its first conflicts with its old sins, are perfectly marvelous. There are many wonders in the Christian life, but I believe that the first stroke he gives when he is but newly born, and therefore weak, has a marvelous degree of power in it. Many men have been swearers, many have been drunkards, many have been guilty of all manner of evil, but those old sins have been laid dead at their feet by one blow struck in the power of the ever-blessed Spirit. Truly, the glory of the strength of the new-born child of God must lie in his God.

The man being divinely quickened, we now find him contending for the right. And *wherever he contends, he overcomes*. The world frowns on him and he laughs at the frown. Then it fawns on him and he despises its flattery. Sham faith soon yields to the enemy, but real faith wins the victory over the world.

If the whole world should attack a true believer, the believer would overcome the world and break through all its toils. Faith also overcomes the flesh and that is no small victory. He who has true God-given faith in Christ contends with inbred corruptions, strong passions, and the deceitfulness that is engrained within the human heart.

Where the life of God is in the heart, there is strength given to overcome the flesh. Though the man may have been sensual and devilish before conversion, grace is more than a match for the flesh, and grace gains the victory. It is a great thing to be able to overcome the world—the great world without and the little world within—but Satan comes into the field and sets himself amongst those who are arrayed against the believer—but blessed be God, the devil fares badly in the fight, for many a time the dread Apollyon, who has stretched himself across the way and said that he would slay the saint, has himself been pierced by the sword of the Spirit and has fled away wounded. What strength there must be in the believer when he is able to overcome that accursed trinity of antagonists—the world, the flesh, and the devil!

When God is in him, *the Christian finds himself able to do anything*. “By thee,” says David, “I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.” And God said, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel, I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small.”

Weak as we are, with God’s help nothing is impossible for us. What feats of valor some believers have performed! Read the histories of the saints of the olden ages and think of the apostles and their immediate followers. What strength was theirs and it was only faith that made them strong. You have read Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, perhaps, till you have felt your blood boil with indignation and you have shut the book up and said, “I can read no more of the dreadful story lest it should disturb my dreams.”

But if you cannot even bear to *think* of the tortures which the saints underwent, what must it have been for them to *bear* them so heroically as they did? Women and even children defied their tormentors, and there were saints who, in the midst of the fire, bravely quoted verses of Scripture against their persecutors, and with holy joy sang psalms in the midst of the flames.

How the saints baffled Nero, and Domitian, and other cruel tyrants! The Inquisition, in its dreary vaults, almost rivaled hell in its pains and torments, but it was not able to quench the noble spirit of God’s faithful servants. The persecutors may do what they will, but only give us a band of men and women who have God’s Spirit in them, and even though their foes may tear them limb from limb, they shall not conquer them. It is impossible that God’s true saints should be overcome, for they have a glory of strength that nothing can destroy.

Neither persecution, nor tribulation, nor nakedness, nor distress, nor famine, nor peril, nor sword, nay, nor even death itself, has been able to make the saints deny their Master, and we see the same strength upholding them still.

I have, in my mind’s eye now, one dear sister, a member of this church, in whom I have seen, within the last few days, the matchless way in which the saints can conquer death. When they have been almost worn out by disease and incessant pain, when sleep has been banished from their eyes, when their whole body has been only a road for the feet of pain to traverse, even then they have never been impatient and they have rejoiced in the prospect of departure—not merely because they wished to be free from pain, but because the presence of Christ had already made them so happy that they longed to get to the fountainhead of those sweet streams which were even then making them glad.

Death has never yet conquered a saint. The children of God have all been conquerors. Every sepulchre of a saint is but another monument of the victory of faith. “These all died in faith,” might be inscribed over the vast mausoleum of believers—and then the palm branch might be put at the bottom of the inscription, for, dying in faith, they, every one of them, achieved the victory.

Let me add that God’s servants have a glory of strength which I must not even mention without much humbleness of heart. God’s people are, through His grace, so strong that they not only overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, but *they overcome God Himself*. Oh, matchless mystery, that the Omnipotent should yield to the believer’s strength!

Do you ask, “How is this?” Let me remind you of the brook Jabbok and the memorable wrestling there when the divine Wrestler said to Jacob, “Let me go, for the day breaketh,” but the brave man of faith replied, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” And so he won the blessing—and with it came that new name, so full of meaning, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”

Truly did Joseph Hart, write, concerning God-given faith,

*“It treads on the world and on hell;
It vanquishes death and despair;
And what is still stranger to tell
It overcomes heaven by prayer.”*

Surely there is a great glory in the strength of a Christian when even heaven is moved by the pleading voice of a true believer.

III. Now let us notice, in the third place—and may the Spirit of God give His own unction and power with the thought!—that believers, thus having God-given strength, know that ALL THE GLORY OF THEIR STRENGTH LIES IN GOD.

I hope you have understood this truth even while I have been speaking about it, for it is true that the Christian has no other strength than that which has come from God. *It is so in every individual Christian.* The glory of any strength that he has must be given to God because God has given that strength to him.

Have you all learnt this lesson yet? Or are any of you proud of anything that you are, or of anything that you have done? Have you not yet learnt the truth of the text, “Thou art the glory of their strength”? Have you been foolish enough to say, “I preach well,” or “I work well,” or “I suffer well,” or “I am growing in grace, so there is some credit due to me?”

Dear brother, if you talk like that, may the Lord deliver you from all such delusions! He is the glory of our strength—let us keep to that and never get away from it, for the Lord our God is a jealous God, and He is especially jealous of His own glory. And if He sees that we give that glory to ourselves or to any other but Himself, He will take away from us the strength that He gave, and make us cry out once again because of our weakness. So do not destroy your own strength by taking the glory of it to yourself.

Oh, how many a man has flung himself from the battlements of his pulpit by beginning to feel that *he* did it and that he had some strength of his own! How many a professor has marred a life of consistency in one dark hour—and the reason has been that self-sufficiency and carnal security were hidden away in his bosom—and at last betrayed him.

When you are strong, then are you weak. But when you are conscious of weakness, then are you truly strong. While you lay the crown at the feet of Him who gave you the strength to win it, you will always be made strong. But as soon as you begin putting the crown on your own head, your strength shall be taken from you, and if, like Samson, you go out to shake yourself as at other times, you will find that the Lord has departed from you to chasten you for your pride.

Further, *what is true of individual Christians is also true of a church.* And I want to impress this truth upon the members of this church and upon the members of all other churches. When God makes a church strong, it is a very blessed and glorious thing—but the glory and strength of every church must always lie in God. It never lies in the fact that there are many wealthy persons belonging to it. If God ever sees His people worshipping the golden calf, He will send a plague upon them to punish them for their idolatry.

The glory of a church must never lie in the fact that there are certain persons of intelligence connected with it. I believe that is the worm at the root of many churches and that it will lead to their decay. Everything is done with the view of pleasing two or three people who are supposed to be very intellectual—yet those very people, if they are the Lord’s people—do not want “intellectual preaching” at all. They have enough work for their intellect on the other six days of the week and they want the simple Gospel—plain spiritual food for their souls to feed upon on the Sabbath day.

There are a great many ministers who cause their hearers to break the fourth commandment for the labor involved in hearing them preach is indeed terrible—it must rack the soul instead of resting it. I should like to see a Lord’s Day Rest Society established to keep the people’s mind at rest, instead of their being tortured with all manner of quibbles and questions. They need to hear of Jesus Christ, for He is the true rest for the soul, and it is the very essence of the divine commandment to leave your own work and to rest in Christ. That is the way to keep the Sabbath day holy and he who has not done that cannot know the true Sabbath rest which is the portion only of those who are resting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So it will not do to make the glory of our strength to lie in the wealthy people or the intelligent people. And it will not do to make the glory of our strength to lie in fine elocution. “The wisdom of

words” appears to have strength in it, but when it makes the cross of Christ of none effect, it is sheer weakness.

It was one of the worst days that ever dawned upon the church of Christ when it began to cultivate the art of oratory and turned aside to “enticing words of man’s wisdom.” But when men speak out of an overflowing soul of what God has done for them, that is the power which the Spirit of God gives to them, and the power which He will bless to their hearers. They do not then try to use out-of-the-way words and nicely-rounded sentences, nor to pile up perorations—for that is magnifying the preacher and dishonoring the Word that has come out of the mouth of God.

The glory of our strength must never lie in any of these things—it must lie in God alone. If it does so lie, then we shall glory in the Gospel, which is one of the great supports of our strength. We shall glory in the cross of Christ, which is the main strength of the Gospel. And we shall glory in the Holy Spirit, who alone can raise the spiritually dead, who alone can give the eyes that look to Christ upon the cross, and who alone can make the heart long after its Redeemer.

O brethren and sisters in Christ, we have need to pray for God the Holy Ghost to work mightily among us. We have the Holy Ghost still with us, so we have no need to pray that He would come down from heaven. He came down at Pentecost and He never went back to heaven, so He is still here. He is in all His people. He is in this assembly right now. He dwells among us, though we are apt to forget that He does.

We reckon that the glory of our strength lies in our ministers, or in our organizations, or in our creeds. We forget that the glory of our strength is spiritual and lies in the Holy Spirit Himself, who is in us, and who shall be forever in us if we are truly the Lord’s. Cry mightily in prayer, beloved, that this true glory of our strength may continually be revealed in our midst as a church, for so often we restrain Him, and grieve Him, and bind Him as it were with bonds.

He cannot do many mighty works among us because of our unbelief. He withholds His richest blessings because of our sinfulness. Let us turn to Him again. O Lord, turn us and we shall be turned, and then we shall see the glory of our strength among us, and we shall give all the glory to Him who gives to us all our strength.

I offered a prayer, this evening, (and I prayed in faith), that the Lord would, in His mercy, save some souls tonight, and I expect to hear that He has done so. I do not expect that blessed fact to remain concealed until we get to heaven, but I expect to know tonight that some of my hearers have come and found rest in Jesus.

I think I hear someone say, “I would fain be saved, but I am so weak.” But the almighty Savior came to save weak sinners. “Oh, but I am *so* weak I do not feel any repentance.” But Christ was exalted to give repentance. O poor weak ones, it is to just such as you are that Jesus says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” It is but a look that is needed, and even that the Holy Spirit gives you. He gives it to you *now*—He enables you *now* to look to Jesus, the great atoning sacrifice.

And as you look, you are saved in a moment, saved through His grace by that simple looking unto Jesus. Oh, to leap out of death into life, out of thick darkness into unutterably glorious light in one moment! I pray that the Holy Spirit may speak to many a soul here through the words that I am now uttering. “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” The Lord grant that it may be so and to Him shall be the glory, for He is the glory of our strength. Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 89:1-38

Verses 1, 2. *I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.* [See sermon #1565, Maschil of Ethan, A Majestic Song]

So far, the gracious man declares the resolution of his heart to praise his God forever and gives the reason for that resolve. Now he quotes the Lord's covenant with David:

3-4. *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*

That covenant, as you well know, was not only made with David, but it had a higher spiritual bearing, for it related to that great and glorious Son of David, who still reigns, and shall reign forever, and in whom every covenant blessing is secured.

5. *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.*

It is often very profitable, when we are enjoying fellowship with God, for us to speak to God and then wait for God to speak to us. It is so here, you see. First the psalmist says that he will praise God forever, then God tells him of His covenant and explains to him the reason why mercy shall be built up forever, and then the man of God begins to praise God again. That will give you a hint for your own private devotion.

Sometimes you feel that you cannot praise God and cannot pray to Him. Well then, if you cannot speak to God, sit still, and let Him speak to you. Read a portion of Scripture and then, perhaps, some suggestive verse or word in it will set you praying. And then when you have prayed, stop a little while, and read again—and so a blessed conversation shall be carried on between you and your God. Thus the psalmist takes his turn again, “And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.”

6-7. *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared—*

That is, revered,

7-9. *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.*

He lets them arise and He bids them sink down again. All the providential dealings of God seem to be illustrated in the ever-varying phenomena of the sea. The Lord sometimes lets tempests arise in our circumstances, but soon with a word He stills them and there is a great calm.

10. *Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain;*

The great crocodile of Egypt;

10-12. *Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*

Oh, what a blessed spirit the spirit of true devotion is! There is such life in it that it seems to quicken all inanimate creation, and make the rocks and mountains sing, and the trees of the wood to clap their hands, and the waves of the sea to praise the great Creator. So the whole world is like a great organ, and man, guided by God's Spirit, puts his fingers on the keys, and wakes the whole world to the thunder of adoration and praise. Oh, to be taught of God to have a praiseful heart, for then all around us will be more likely to also praise JEHOVAH.

13-14. *Thou hast a mighty arm.* [See sermons #674, The Mighty Arm and #1314, which has the same title] *Strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

There are wells of joy in this verse to those who know how to draw it up. It is a great delight to every man who is oppressed to know that justice and judgment stand, like armed sentinels, on either side of the throne of God, and to every human soul, conscious of unworthiness, it is an unspeakable delight that mercy and truth, like royal heralds, go before God wherever He goes. It has been well said that a God all mercy would be a God unjust—but a God of all justice without mercy would be terrible indeed.

15-21. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.*

David was a great blessing to the nation over which God made him king. Among the choicest gifts that God ever gives to men are men, and therefore we read, concerning Christ, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men”—and those gifts were men, for “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” These were the choice ascension gifts of Christ.

Yet, while these verses primarily refer to David, the king of Israel, we must believe that a greater than David is here, even Christ, who deigns to call Himself God’s Servant, who has been anointed by the Spirit of God, with whom God’s hand is always established, and who is ever strengthened by the arm of Omnipotence.

22-25. *The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.*

Do not believe, dear friends, any of the prophecies that some men make concerning the destruction of the kingdom of Christ and the failure of His church—but be certain that the Lord will not suffer Christ to fail or be discouraged—and rest assured that the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands. The history of the church of Christ is a history of conflict, but it shall be a history of victory before it is completed, “I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.”

26-34. *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*

If, then, you are in the covenant, you will have the rod—you may rest sure of that. If you do not walk in God’s ways, but break His statutes, you will not be allowed to go unchastened. If a father saw some boys in the street breaking windows or otherwise misbehaving themselves, and he gave one of the boys a box on the ears, you may be pretty certain that the boy is his own son.

And when God sees men doing wrong, He often permits the wicked to go unpunished in this life—but as for His own people, it is written, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Our heavenly Father’s hand still holds the rod and uses it when necessary—but it is in love that He corrects us.

Let us, therefore, when He chastens us, plead the covenant that is here recorded and say to Him, “Thou hast said, ‘Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.’”

35-37. *Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.*

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.