

THE MIGHTY ARM NO. 674

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 4, 1866
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*“Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.”
Psalm 89:13*

WE are about, during the coming week, humbly but earnestly to beseech of God for days of refreshing and seasons of revival. It is well for us at the outset distinctly to remind ourselves of the source from whence all the strength must come. No genuine revival can ever arise from the flesh. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” Human excitement at the utmost, and carnal zeal at its extremity, can do nothing towards the real conversion of souls.

Here we are taught the lesson, “not by might nor by power.” Disappointments ought to have taught the church of God this lesson long ago. The many revivals which she has had which have proved to be spurious—the puffing up of excitement and not the building up of grace, all these should have driven her out of the last relic of her self-confidence, and have made her feel that it is not of herself to do anything in the Lord’s cause without His help.

“Our help cometh from the LORD that made heaven and earth.” It is well to be constantly convinced of this. We must have God’s arm laid to the work or else nothing will be accomplished which will stand the solemn tests of the last great day. Wood, hay, and stubble *we* may build alone, but gold, silver, and precious stones are from the king’s treasury.

“Without me ye can do nothing,” was the Savior’s word to His chosen apostles. How much more applicable must it be to us who are “less than the least of all saints”! In vain your holy assemblies, in vain your earnest desires, in vain your passionate addresses, in vain your efforts of a thousand shapes—unless God Himself shall step forth from the hiding place of His power, and set Himself a second time to His own glorious work, no good can come of all your toils. “Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain who build it.”

Having reminded ourselves, dear friends, that our great strength lies in the God of Jacob, it is very comforting to notice how great this strength is. There is but one arm for us to rest upon, but blessed is the assurance—“Thou hast a mighty arm.” Oh! if that God upon whom we have entirely to depend were stunted in might, and had a limit put to His strength, we might despair. If the answer to the question, “Is the LORD’s arm waxed short?” were the doleful reply, “Yes, He is no longer mighty to save,” then we might give up the work, but stupendous strength is with the Most High, the treasury from which we draw is inexhaustible.

We may come to God with the cheering confidence that we cannot possibly ask what it is not in His power to perform. We have the mighty God of Jacob to be our arm every morning and our salvation every night. I desire to speak of our God as the Almighty Lord that you and I may be strengthened in the work in which we are engaged for His name’s sake.

In speaking upon the divine power, I shall have a few words this morning upon *the power itself*, then a few words upon *its manifestations*. And then somewhat to close up with upon *the lessons to be derived from the power and its developments*.

I. First then, some few words about the POWER OF GOD itself, having as my drift the stirring up of believers’ minds to ask and to expect a great display of it.

In the first place, *God’s power is like Himself, self-existent and self-sustained*. Power in the creature is like water in the cistern. Power in the Creator is like water in the fountain. The creature is the moon

which shines with reflected light. The Creator is the sun whose light is un-derived, springing from Himself within. Naturally and spiritually this statement holds good. All the power that you and I have to serve God with must first come from Him, but He derives no power whatever from us. All our fresh springs are in God, but the rills of our grace do not minister to His fullness. “My goodness extendeth not to thee.”

The mightiest of men add not so much as a shadow of increased power to the Omnipotent One. His scepter is established by its own omnipotence. He sits on no buttressed throne, and leans on no assisting arm. His courts are not maintained by His courtiers, nor do they borrow their splendor of power from His creatures. He is Himself the great central source and originator of all power.

We must come then to His footstool, feeling that all must come from Him. We must bring nothing but our weakness, nothing but our sense of need, and come to Him crying, “O God, Thou art in Thyself all-sufficient. Thou needest us not, nor can we contribute aught to Thee. Now let Thine ability flow into us, and gird each of us poor weaklings with Thy might!”

In the next place, God’s power is *comprehensive*, including within itself all the power which resides in all the creatures in the universe. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.” When the wheels of a machine revolve, there is power in every cog, but all that power originally was in the engine which sets the whole in action and in a certain sense is still there. But in a far higher sense all power dwells in the Lord, “for in him we live, and move, and have our being.” Whatever power there may be in the mightiest of God’s creatures is still inherent in God Himself.

So, my brethren, if the Lord shall be pleased to teach some of you how to pray and others how to exhort, if He should gird you with might and send you into the midst of this church to work spiritual miracles for Him, the power will still be His, to be in an instant withdrawn if it so pleases Him. And especially withdrawn if you begin to sacrifice unto your own self and say, “Mine own arm hath gotten me this victory.”

All power dwells perpetually and necessarily in the Lord JEHOVAH. The might which resides in any spiritual agency at this present moment, whether it be in the Book of God or in the ministry of truth, or in prayer, or in what else the church serves the Lord, all that power is still comprehended in the Most High.

Come then, beloved, let us all draw near to Him, and pray that as all fullness is in Himself, He would be pleased to give it to us. And since giving it does not impoverish, but the same strength remains in Him still, let us be bold to make great drafts upon the divine storehouse.

The power of God, I would remind you in the third place, is *immutable*. Whatever He did of old He is able to repeat now. His arm never did increase in strength, what more could He be than Almighty? It never did decrease, what else can we conceive Him to be than God all-sufficient? We talk of changing ages, but we must not dream of a changing God.

There was the age of gold, the age of silver, and we mournfully say that we have fallen upon the age of iron, but the God of all ages, like the finest gold, abides ever more most pure and glorious. Our God is not the God of the past only, but of the present. Think not of Him as did the Syrians, that JEHOVAH is God of the hills and not the God of the valleys. The era of great men had no other God than He who watches over their humble sons. He is the God of us upon whom the ends of the earth have come.

There is no change in the power of the everlasting Father. Time and age work no decay in Him. His eye has not waxed dim, neither has His natural force abated. He is still the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God. Let this encourage us then in our earnest entreaties that He would do for us like wonders to those which He wrought for the early church. Let us plead for Pentecosts, for even mightier works than apostles saw.

“Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Open your mouths according to the model of the olden times, and sing unto the Lord’s arm in your hearts as you sang with your lips just now—

“Again Thy wonted prowess show,

Be Thou made bare again!"

It is for us to recollect also that God's power is in the fullness of it perfectly *irresistible*. We grant that when God puts out but little of His strength, it is with Him as it is with a man when he plays with a child, he may suffer that child to overcome him. But when God puts forth His omnipotence, who, who is there that can stay His hand? Proud hearts are humbled, hard hearts are broken, iron melts, and rock dissolve. When the Lord visits the host, none of the men of might can find their hands. At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the horses and the chariots are cast into a dead sleep.

Let this encourage us—we have only to bestir our God and all things are possible. If we shall but behold His goings forth in the sanctuary, there is nothing that by any possibility can thwart the desire of our soul or frustrate our wishes. Only plead you with the Most High till you can cry with Luther, "Vici!" we have overcome him, we have conquered in prayer, and You have conquered altogether. Let your cry be heard in the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth—"Awake! put on thy strength, O God! and go thou forth with our hosts to conflict for the glory of thy name," and if He deign to answer, nothing can withstand Him.

This thought ought to comfort those of us who feel our weakness, and think that we can do nothing—remember *His* strength, and recollect that He can do everything. If you have any kinsfolk for whom you have prayed and no answer has come, and your own exertions have been mocked at and despised, come you again to the Mighty God of Jacob, for He will do His good pleasure, and in answer to your prayers He will send forth the blessing. His power is irresistible, lay hold upon it and prevail.

Nor will it be ill for me to remind you that this power is entirely *independent*. I mean that it needs nothing extraneous or beyond itself to enable it to work. This power is independent of place. Do you think there was any sanctity in the upper room at Jerusalem? Behold this room is quite as sacred as that filled by the Spirit in years gone by. Dream not that the city of Jerusalem of old, in the days of the Savior, was a more proper theater for divine working than this is. He can make London rejoice even as He did Jerusalem of old.

Equally is the divine power independent of time. Do not dream that the ages have changed so that in this day God cannot do His mighty works. Beloved, if you can conceive of an age that is worse than another, so much the more is it a fit platform for the heavenly energy, the more difficulty, the more room for omnipotence to show itself. There is elbow room for the great God when there is some great thing in the way, and some great difficulty that He may overturn.

When there is a mountain to be cast into the valley, then there is almighty work to be done, and our covenant God only needs to see work to do for His praying people, and He will shortly do it. God is not dependent upon instruments any more than upon times and places. He, who blessed the world by Paul and Peter, can do His good pleasure by His servants now. The Christ of the fishermen is our Christ still. Talk not of Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli as though they were specially powerful in themselves, and therefore accomplished so marvelous a work.

Oh, sirs, there are humble men and women among us whom God may just as well bless as those three mighties if it so pleases Him. Dream not that there was something about the Wesleys and Whitefield, which made them the only instruments for evangelizing this nation. O God Almighty, You can bless even us! and amongst the thousands of ministers who hitherto may have ploughed as upon a rock, and labored in vain, there is no one whom God may not take and make him as a two-edged sword in His hand, to smite through the hearts of His foes.

Beloved, I have sometimes prayed, and do often pray, that out of that little band of men whom we have in our own college—some ninety or so—He would find for Himself His arrows and fit them to the bow, and shoot them to the utmost ends of the earth. And why not? Unbelief has many mournful reasons, but faith sees none.

In our classes there are women, there are men, there are children, upon whom the Lord may pour forth His Spirit, so that once again our sons and our daughters shall prophesy, and our young men shall

see visions, and our old men shall dream dreams. We have but to wait upon the Most High, and He will honor us with success, for He can work in any place, in any time, among any people, and by any instruments. Let us come with confidence to His feet, and expect to see Him lay bare His mighty arms.

This power, I must not forget to say, as a gathering up of the whole, is *infinite*. Power in the creature must have a limit for the creature itself is finite, but power in the Creator has neither measure nor bound. I am sure, beloved, we treat our God often as though He were like ourselves. We sit down after some defeat or disappointment, and we say we will never try again—we suppose the work allotted to us to be impossible of performance.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? why limit you the Holy One of Israel? God is not man that He should fail, nor the son of man that He should suffer defeat. Behold He touches the hills and they tremble. He touches the mountains and they smoke. When He goes forth before His people, He makes the mountains to skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs, what then, can block up His path? The Red Sea You divided of old, O God, and You did break the dragon's head in the midst of the many waters, and You can still do according to Your will, let and hinder who may.

Oh, beloved, if I may but be privileged to lift up your hearts and mine to something like a due comprehension of the infinite power of God, we shall then have come to the threshold of a great blessing.

If you believe in the littleness of God you will ask but little, you will have but little. But enlarge your desires, let your souls be stretched till they become wide as seven heavens, and even then you shall not hold the whole of the great God, but you shall be fitted to receive more largely out of His fullness. Ask of Him that He would give the heathen unto Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, for the scepter of JEHOVAH shall go forth, and the monarchy of Christ shall be extended from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

It were not right, perhaps, to leave this point without observing concerning this divine power that it is *all our own*, for we are told that this God is our God forever and ever. "The LORD is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him." Christian, the potency which dwells in JEHOVAH belongs to you. It is yours to rest upon in holy trust, and yours to stir up in earnest pleading. That little sinew moves the great arm—I mean the sinew of the believer's prayer.

If you can pray, God will work. "To him that believeth all things are possible." It is not, "Canst Thou work, O God?" but it is, "Canst thou believe, O Christian?" You have a mighty arm, O God, but that arm is Your people's arm, for it is written, "He is their arm every morning, and their salvation every night." Come then with confidence, you who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice, for this God is our God forever and ever, and He *will* help us, yea, He *will help us*, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

II. Having given utterance to these few words upon His power in itself, I shall direct your attention to THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THIS POWER, which are very varied in character and altogether innumerable in multitude.

Following the leading of the psalm rather than the natural order of things, I will remind you of *God's tremendous power in destruction*. You have this in the psalm. "Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces as one that is slain. Thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong hand." Look back with solemn awe upon the works of God in the overthrow of sin.

See the whole earth deluged with destructive floods. "Thou hast a mighty arm, O God." You have unloosed the gates that shut in the sea. Greater than Samson You have borne away both posts and bar and all, and set free the hosts of waters that they might overthrow Your foes. Up from their cavernous prison house the furious waters leap to desolate the sin-polluted world. Noah might have sung as he floated on that shoreless sea, "Thou hast a mighty arm."

Cast your eye yonder to the East, to the well-watered plain of Sodom, and mark how God's anger smokes. He comes down to see if it is altogether according to the cry thereof, and when justice has proved her point, then judgment follows with swift foot. He rains hell's torments out of heaven upon

sinners, fiery hail and brimstone cover the cities of the plain and the smoke goes up to heaven. “Thou hast a mighty arm.”

Let your eye glance along the banks of Nilus, where haughty Pharaoh vaunts himself against the Most High. Remember how He smote the firstborn of Egypt, the chief of all their strength! Let the terrible overthrow of the Red Sea never be forgotten. See how He scattered Amalek as chaff before the wind. Mark how He drove out the Hivites and the Jebusites, and gave their necks to the feet of His children who were His avengers.

Talk you to one another, and tell how He smote Philistia, how He made the sons of David cast forth their shoes upon Edom, and gave Moab to be the wash pot of their feet. Let the name of Sennacherib come up before you and think you how the Lord thrust a bit into his mouth, and a hook into his jaws, and made him go back the way by which he came.

Remember Babylon and the heaps thereof, Nineveh, and the owls and the dragons that haunt her ruined walls. Think you of the proud cities of Greece, cast down and destroyed because they worshipped idols. And Rome herself, only living like a widow in her weeds, weeping because God has bereaved her of her glory. “Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariots in the fire.” Who is a God in might to be compared unto Him?

As we survey the works of His power in destruction, let the subject make us grateful. What a marvel that He has not struck *us*! My soul, remember when you did defy Him, when you did scorn His grace, break His sabbaths, and blaspheme His name. Yet He who breaks the ships of Tarshish by His strong east wind has not shipwrecked you, but on the sea of life you sail still securely.

O sinner! remember that this longsuffering will not last forever. Beware, lest He tears you in pieces and there be none to deliver you. He is strong to smite, and condemned souls feel that He is so. If I could catch the distant sounds that rise from hell, I think they might be rendered into this one line—“Thou hast a mighty arm!”

Oh, how He smites! Imagination fails to picture the terror of His blows. The day of mercy is over with the condemned, and they writhe in agonies extreme, while with almighty hand, armed with an iron rod, He smites, and smites, and smites again. “Thou hast a mighty arm.”

Oh, bow before Him, you who have not loved Him, tremble at Him. “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry; and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” You cannot face it out with Him, neither can you escape Him. You cannot set yourselves in battle array against the Almighty. Let the thorns set themselves in battle against the fire, but do not you attempt to stand against Him.

*“O sinners, seek His face
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the scepter of His grace,
And find salvation there.”*

Looking at this part of the subject, here is a very strong argument for the people of God to stir them up to pray. The fearful nature of the sinner’s doom should arouse us to earnestness, vehement and abiding. Must we not plead with God when we think of our fellow creatures who are liable to prove the terror of the Almighty’s arm? Will you not cry, you that have hearts not altogether turned to stone? Will you not plead with all your hearts, you who have any loving tenderness and generous pity within you? Will you not cry aloud and spare not, that He would be pleased to give men right reason to see their danger, and turn them to Himself, that they may be washed in the Savior’s blood, and escape the terrible wrath due to their iniquities?

Turning from the subject, the psalm reminds us of the manifestation of *God’s power in creation*. “The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them.”

Now, beloved, it is well to remember the mighty power of God in creation. Man wants something to work upon, give him material, and with cunning instruments he straightway makes for himself a vessel. But God began with nothing, and by His Word alone out of nothing made all things. He used no instrument except His own Word, "He spake, and it was done as he commanded, and it stood fast."

Darkness and chaos lay in the way before Him, but these soon gave place to the excellence of His might when He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." "In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them." He garnished the heavens with the crooked serpent and the bear, and led forth Arcturus with his sons. How rapid was that work, and yet how perfect, how gloriously complete! Well might "the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy!"

Now, Christian, I want you to draw living water out of this well. The God who in the old creation did all this, can He not work today? What if in the human heart there be nothing to help Him, He made the world out of nothing, can He not make new creatures without the aid of human will? Even out of these stones, can He not raise up children unto Abraham? His Word fashioned the creation of old, and His Word can work marvels still. Spoken by whomsoever He pleases to send, His Word shall be as potent now as in primeval days.

There may be darkness and confusion in the sinner's soul, a word shall remove all, and swift and quick, requiring not even six days. God can make new creatures in this house of prayer and throughout this city. The Lord has but to *will* it with His omnipotent will, and the sinner becomes a saint, and the most rebellious cast down their weapons.

Oh let creation encourage you to expect a new creation! The old creation had no blood upon it to plead with God to work, but we have the blood of Jesus to be our plea when we come before Him with regard to the new creation, and we may cry, "O God, since Thou hast given Thy dear Son to lay the foundations of this new earth and these new heavens, wherein righteousness doth dwell, come Thou and build up Thy church, and complete the last and noblest work of Thy hands."

Again, God's power is manifest, dear friends, to our joy, in works of *sustentation* as well as of creation. The next stanza of the psalm seems to hint at that—"Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name." That is to say, when the showers come dropping upon Tabor and Hermon, they send forth the perfume of their flowers and produce the abundance for the flocks.

Now, beloved, God's power has been seen, I am sure, not only in holding up the world, but in preserving His church in the world all these years. He would be thought to be a mighty man who held up the monument of London on the palm of his hand, but You bear up, O God, the pillars of the heavens. And he who should take up St. Paul's and turn it uppermost as though it were but a cup in his hand would be exceeding mighty, but You take up the isles as a very little thing.

What must be the power of God in sustaining and supporting all worlds? But as I have said, the spiritual power which preserves the spark of truth in the midst of a sea of error is equally great. To keep His sheep alive in the midst of wolves is equally marvelous. The mighty arm of God has been conspicuous in supporting His church in years gone by.

How the Lord has been in that gallant vessel! Never barque more tempest-tossed than she! No voyage more dangerous than hers! She has tracked a narrow channel between threatening rocks and hidden quicksands. As for her crew, they have been a feeble folk, little able to cope with boisterous elements and furious tempests.

Oftentimes the good vessel of the church has mounted up to heaven upon the crown of an outrageous billow, and anon has gone down again into the depths of a yawning sea, while her sailors have reeled like drunken men, staggering to and fro, being at their wits' end. But they have cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He who was strong to stir up the deep from its very bottom and make it boil like a pot, has been equally strong to speak the word and still the raving of its waves.

Let us be then of good comfort. Why should not God bless and succor His well-beloved church now? Why should He not make her in these peaceful days to be a Palace Beautiful for Himself to dwell in? For the fair edification of His church new converts are wanted. There can be no building up of her

walls except by the quarrying of fresh stones. O God, we have confidence in You, You will help us. Strong is Your hand, You have a mighty arm! Oh come, for the sustaining and increase of Your church, even in this our day!

But beloved, the most striking manifestation of divine power is found in the fourth form of it, namely, in works of *redemption*. Typical of these was the great redeeming work at the Red Sea, and hence the song of Moses is joined with the song of the Lamb. For it was by Moses' rod that God brought forth the hosts of His beloved, and in mightier fashion and to a nobler tune shall the elect sing when they have been redeemed from all their enemies.

Think you, dear friends, of the mighty arm of God in working out the means of our salvation. That was no light labor which Jesus undertook. Hercules cleaned the Augean stable, saith the fable, but what an Augean stable was this world! Yet Christ will purge it. He is purging it, did purge it by His death. This Aceldama shall yet become an Elysium. The field of blood shall be transformed into a garden of delights. Christ came to bear a load upon His shoulder, compared with which the burden of Atlas is as nothing. Atlas, according to the heathen mythology, bore the world between his shoulders, but Jesus bears the world's *sin*, and that is more.

Can you see Him there in the Garden? Great drops of sweat prove what a tremendous toil He has undertaken. Do you see Him on the cross? Not a bone is broken, but every bone is dislocated, to prove how great the labor, but how greater still the strength which achieved the whole. O Lord Jesus! when we see that You have burst the gates of death, that You have trodden on the neck of sin, that You have broken the head of Satan, that You have led captivity captive, and opened the gates of heaven to all Your people, we may indeed, sing, "Thou hast a mighty arm."

Just now we have most to do with *the application of this redemption by the Spirit of God*, for it is that concerning that which we pray. We have no reason to ask our Lord Jesus to finish the work of redemption, for He has completed it. On the tree He said, "It is finished." It is the application of it which concerns our souls. And beloved in the faith, it is a great joy to us to know that in bringing souls to Christ by the Holy Spirit, the omnipotence of God is very graciously displayed.

III. Let us just a minute or two think of some sure tokens of this, and this shall furnish us with the third point, namely, THE LESSONS FROM THE WHOLE.

There have been vouchsafed in the past very wonderful manifestations of divine favor. Churches have grown very lukewarm, ministers very dull, doctrines have become unsound, the hearts of God's people have failed, the faithful have almost died out, but on a sudden God has raised up some one man, perhaps some half dozen, and the face of the church was changed from languor to energy.

These men did but strike the spark, and the flame flew over all lands. The Reformation was a marvelous type of genuine revivals, God-given revivals, which have been frequent in all times. In England we have had them, in America they have been abundant. Ireland has not been without them. In the darkest day when every one said the cause of religion was growing hopeless, then the great lover of the church has appeared.

Have you never read the story of Livingstone preaching in a heavy shower of rain, outside the Kirk of Shotts, to the multitude of people standing there who would not stir from the hearing of the Word? Or have you not heard the story of Whitefield's mighty preaching, when the people moved to and fro, as the corn is moved by the wind in the summer, and at last fell down beneath the Word as the sheaves fall before the reaper's scythe?

Why may we not see all this again? Why not? And why not greater things than these? What hinders but our unbelief? O God, Thou hast a mighty arm. Tens of thousands beneath one ministry have been made to feel the power of the cross, and why not again? Let us proclaim a crusade, let us gather together in prayer, and besiege the throne, and we shall see again a revival that shall make glad the age.

God has proved the power of His arm in *the persons* whom He has saved. Saul of Tarsus seemed to be a very hard case, but the light from heaven, and the voice which gently upbraided, had power over Saul, and he became one of the ablest of God's servants. There is no heart so hard but what God's

hammer can dash it in pieces. Let us never despair while we can say of our God, “Thou hast a mighty arm.”

Beloved, if there should happen to come within these walls, at any time, some of the worst of men, we must not think that God will not bless them. Oh no, “Thou hast a mighty arm.” Lord, here is a great and hard rock, now wield Your great hammer, and the sparks shall fly, and the flint stone shall be broken into pieces. Quarry Your own stones, O God, and make them fit for Your temple, for “Thou hast a mighty arm.”

This is seen sometimes in *the number* converted. Three thousand in one day under Peter’s sermon, why not three thousand again? Why not thirty thousand? Why not three hundred thousand in a day? There is nothing too great for us to ask for, or for God to grant. He could, if He willed, turn the hearts of men as He turns the rivers by His foot.

This might has been manifested in *the instruments* which the Lord has employed. He has taken the base things and the despised, to make them the medium of His power, and we have then said, “Thou hast a mighty arm” to do such wonders by such puny things.

Now, beloved, when I recollect the past in these various tokens of divine strength, I would I had time to encourage your hearts to expect great things of God. We are not straitened in Him, certainly. You will be straitened in your own bowels, if you be straitened at all, and I do pray my mighty Master that He may not suffer this to be, but give us large expectations, that we may have large realizations.

There is a friend here who says, “I have been praying very long to this mighty God for the conversion of one who lies very near my heart, but I cannot get an answer.” No, beloved, it may be that God has not yet put forth His power, it is certain He has not, or your friend would be healed. There may have been a reason why the Lord would not work, namely, because you were not prepared for so great a blessing, and perhaps, had He honored you to be the means of your friend’s conversion you would have grown proud.

If you yourself now feel your own utter powerlessness, now will be the time for God to work. The reason of delay may now have gone. Certainly the fact that God has not answered you is no reason why He should not ultimately give you your desire. If He has delayed a little time, remember He never is too late, and certainly never forgets in the end. He may delay, but He cannot deny. Has your friend become worse and worse? Well, then, rampant sin often stirs up God. It is time for You to work, Lord, for they make void Your law!

I look upon the present age with very great comfort. Beloved, there never was a time in which Popery was so, I was about to say, omnipresent everywhere. It is working everywhere, openly and by stealth. The Church of England has become thoroughly putrid with Puseyism. Infidelity has grown very bold. Let all these powers of evil be developed and work their will, for good in the end will come out of it. All these provocations will arouse our God.

I thought within myself, when turning over these matters and seeing the signs of a breaking out of the old moderatism in Scotland, “Ah, Lord! You have not answered Your friends, perhaps You will hear Your foes, and if Your children’s prayers have not provoked You to bestir Yourself, perhaps the hard words of Your enemies will do it.”

It is a good thing for Zion when her enemies begin to curse and to lift up themselves against God, for then He will take up His own quarrel. Let them throw down the gauntlet, and God will take it up. And we know, when He does come forth from His resting place, the victory is sure. It is for us, however, to cry unto Him, and spare not till He proves His cause to be His own by the potency which He puts into it.

Let us, then, discard our despondencies and be of good courage, for strong is His hand and high is His right hand.

*“Lord, when iniquities abound,
And blasphemies grow bold,
When faith is hardly to be found,
And love is waxing cold;*

***“Is not Thy chariot hastening on?
Hast Thou not given this sign?
May we not trust and live upon
A promise so divine?”***

Beloved, I am encouraged to expect the visitation of grace among us for these reasons—*It must be for God’s glory to save souls*, there cannot be two opinions about it. Will He not therefore do it? Secondly, *It must be due to Christ that souls should be saved*. He cannot have seen the whole of the travail of His soul yet. I am sure He is not satisfied yet. He is to have many more yet. And shall He not have His seed and see His children?

We can plead the blood, and that is a prevalent argument with the Most High. I look upon our prayers as tokens for good. Some of us can say we came up here with prayer, and our souls have been exercised during the week with groanings and longings towards the mighty God of Jacob, that He would bless this congregation, and bless the world. This too, is a token for good.

Our past history comforts me in cheering hope. “The LORD *hath* been mindful of us; he *will* bless us.” Who would have thought that the Lord would bless us as He has done? It is now twelve years and more since I first came up to this great city, a stripling. With what trembling did I come! You were but very few and feeble, but still there was the true life lingering among you, and soon the blessing came.

You remember our sore trials and troubles, when we went through fire and through water, and men did ride over our heads. But our God has brought us out into a wealthy place. This very house is itself a monument of what God can do. Poor and feeble folk were we, and yet this house was builded to His praise, and He has filled it and kept it full.

Where else has He been pleased to gather the multitudes year after year, with never-failing, never-flagging interest and earnestness? Where else has He been pleased to add to the church by hundreds in the year, till the only difficulty is the time to see the inquirers, and to hear their confession of faith? In what other church have there been four hundred and fifty souls added to the fellowship in one year? Where else has the baptismal pool been stirred with such a multitude of souls immersed into a profession of the Lord Jesus Christ?

We say this not, we trust we do not, with so much as a single grain of sacrificing unto self, for what were we, and what were our father’s house, that He should have brought us hitherto? But we beg you to regard the past as a type of the future.

Oh, start not back, you men of prayer! Fail not now since God is still your arm! You carry bows, turn not back in the day of battle! You have the trophies of past victories before your eyes! Now for a mighty attack upon the mercy seat, that you may win power to overcome the gates of hell! Let us be vehement—violent I was about to say, for “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” Let us cannonade the gate of heaven!

Let us arise, each man and each woman, every soul that has power, and let us cry unto the mighty God, that He would be pleased to give us such a blessing that we shall not have room enough to receive it. It *must* come, only be ready for it. It *will* come, it comes even now! Thank God! Take courage! Be on your watchtower! and may the Lord bless us for His name’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 89

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.