

Trodden Down Strength

by Horatius Bonar

In this sermon, Horatius Bonar encourages believers to engage in the good warfare of faith, relying on divine strength and heavenly weapons to overcome spiritual enemies and achieve victory in Christ.

Scripture: Judges 5:21, Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the theme of spiritual warfare in his sermon 'Trodden Down Strength,' drawing inspiration from Judges 5:21. He encourages believers to march on with courage, celebrating the victories won through divine strength and the power of God. Bonar outlines the nature of our warfare against internal and external enemies, the necessity of divine weapons, and the assurance of victory through Christ. He reminds the congregation that while the battle is constant and formidable, the rewards for overcoming are great and worth the struggle. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to fight the good fight of faith, anticipating the triumphant song of victory.

Transcript

"O my soul, you have trodden down strength." Judges 5:21

"March on, my soul, with courage!" Judges 5:21

This is one note of the warrior's song; a note loud and glad. It is the exulting cry of victory; the song of triumph; victory and triumph; when the battle was not merely for Israel but for God. It is the song of Deborah and Barak; a song inspired by the Holy Spirit; a song of earth, yet doubtless responded to in heaven; the song of the putting off of the armor; the song of one who was strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

We might suppose it uttered by Abraham on returning from the slaughter of the kings; by Moses when he saw Pharaoh overthrown; by Joshua when he conquered Amalek; by David when he slew Goliath; by Israel in the latter day (Isaiah 14:3,4). It is the song of one who out of weakness had been made strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. We might suppose it to be Christ's song of triumph when he died, with "It is finished" on His lips; or still more when He rose again from the dead; or still more when He ascended on high, leading captivity captive. We might take it as the song of apostles on the day of Pentecost, when, "not by might or power," they saw three thousand saved; and as the song of apostles wherever they went preaching the gospel- Ephesus, Corinth, Colosse, or Rome- that wondrous gospel,

proving itself mighty in their hands to the pulling down of strongholds, and the overthrow of enemies. Surely it was Paul's when he said, "I have fought a good fight." We might take it as the church's song in the day of her coming triumph over all her enemies- over Antichrist, over Babylon, over Satan; when caught up into the clouds, or standing on the sea of glass: "O my soul, you have trodden down strength."

It must be ours-

(1) daily;

(2) specially at certain seasons and emergencies;

(3) at the last, like Paul;

(4) hereafter throughout eternity, as we look back upon the past, and understand more fully our own impotence, as well as the greatness of the powers arrayed against us. How often shall we find ourselves repeating, even in the new Jerusalem, the song of the ancient prophetess, "O my soul, you have trodden down strength."

I. Our WARFARE. It is "a good warfare," or more exactly, "a glorious warfare." It is against enemies within, around, beneath; self, the flesh, the world, but specially, the principalities and powers of evil. "Fight the good fight of faith." It is our battle. It is God's battle. It is the church's battle; for we are but one of a mighty army of warriors. It is a warfare from which we cannot escape, except by deserting Christ's ranks; for there is no discharge in this war. It is a constant warfare. It is a lifelong warfare. It is earnest and formidable; no child's play; no mere sound or name; but an intense reality.

Nowhere out of Scripture do we find it better described than by Bunyan in his Pilgrim's Progress. He knew the reality, and has painted it well. Our life is then a warfare; a warfare which enters into everything; because at every step our great adversary stands to bar our progress, and to prevent us glorifying God in each portion and transaction of life. You complain of the power of sin. Well, fight! You complain of the difficulty of believing. Well, fight!

II. Our WEAPONS. We need to be armed, both for defense and offence; fully equipped in every instrument of battle. No half-furnished soldier can fight a battle like this. There must be no broken swords, no rusted spears, no shattered helmets.

(1.) What our weapons ARE NOT. They are not carnal; not earthly; not self-made, nor man-made. They are not the weapons of science, or philosophy, or human intellect. These avail nothing against sin, or the flesh, or Satan.

(2.) What they ARE. They are divine and heavenly, forged and hammered on no earthly anvil. They are God-made and God-given. They are complete, both for attack and defense. Sword, shield, sandal, helmet- all that is needed in this warfare, and described by the apostle (Eph. 6), are provided for us. No man loses this battle for lack of offered armor.

III. Our STRENGTH. We need power to use the provided weapons. Not the weapons without the power, nor the power without the weapons, but both together. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Our sufficiency is of God; all strength is in the Lord. What are sword and buckler to palsied limbs? We need strength- divine strength for divine armor. The fullness of Him to whom all power is given, is at our disposal. There need be no lack of strength to us in this warfare.

IV. Our VICTORY. This warfare of ours is no vain warfare; no idle battlefield. We go forth to win! Yes. Our eye is fixed on victory from the outset. We are assured of triumph from the moment we draw the sword. We are made more than conquerors. How often are these words sounded in our ears: "To him who overcomes." We aim at daily victory- we aim at final victory- such as that of Paul. Fight and conquer. Let us anticipate the warrior's song: "O my soul, you have trodden down strength."

V. Our REWARD. All who win have their rewards; but some victories are harder to win; some more or less complete. And there is a difference in the degree of reward. The seven rewards promised to the seven churches are representative rewards. They represent seven different kinds or degrees of glory, set before the conqueror. Yet the least reward is unutterably excellent; worth all the struggle, and the sacrifice, and the sorrow. Brethren, let us fight! Let us aim at victory; at complete and perfect victory. Let us covet a high reward; let us be ambitious of no common crown. Our great Captain speaks to us, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me." How soon He may appear we know not. And He comes with the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory in His hand for His own. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him!

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