

## STRENGTH AND FREEDOM.

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And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. 2 Cor. 12: 9.

THE words of Paul are a comfort to every Christian warrior, and in every stage and degree of demonstration, his experience, patience, and wisdom, is an inspiration to all those who seek the Law of Life. He sets us an example of fortitude, perseverance, and unwavering trust. Through all his afflictions and persecutions he saw nothing but the finger of God pointing to a glorified existence in the revelation of the real.

He relates his troubles in a meek and humble spirit, and counts them all as benefits, blessings, guides, through which spiritual facts are made discernible. He declares, "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep." In perils often in his own country, by the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren; in weariness, in painfulness, watching, hunger, and thirst, cold and nakedness!

He does not relate these trials in a rebellious, murmuring spirit, or in a way that made a reality of them; but with Christ-like, honest confession he portrays the path through which his bleeding footsteps found the way to the heights of revelation.

Paul's method of handling error, his manner of exposing it, his ability to speak of it in an impersonal way, points to us a lesson of common sense and humility.

He relates his temptations for the purpose of showing how one can be tested, tried, and persecuted for Christ's sake. As Christian Scientists, brotherly affection would broaden, if we walked in his footsteps.

But through all his persecutions Paul declared, "My

strength is made perfect in weakness." Tribulation made him demonstrate until patience became in him a conspicuous quality. Experience showed to him the golden quality of *hope*, and hope was like a green fir-tree, pointing toward the shore of eternity.

Hope maketh not afraid ; with eternity in view, fear vanished, and the glorious warrior for Truth stood bound with the girdle of strength, and proclaimed the law of freedom. Pulling down the strongholds of evil, weakening the citadel of pride, self-will, self-justification and all other mortal self-qualities, his strength was made perfect.

Strength is a life-giving property, and is in Mind only. A knowledge of this made the prophet declare, "My strength is inexhaustible." Strength is the vigor and vitality of life, and the foundation of all action. It required strength in David to battle with Saul and to gain his victory over Goliath.

It was the strength of divine power that enabled Jesus to bear the cross, roll the stone from the tomb, and appear to the disciples through the wall of materiality. It was the strength of divine Law that was with Paul as he did his work for the disciples, the church, fought the beasts at Ephesus, overcoming prison and peril. The strength of love and wisdom is our shield ; we should own this shield, and ever wear it until freedom sounds through every corridor of thought.

What a proof that there is no strength in mortal mind, when we find the body robbed of its supposed vigor, and lying in the clasp of (so called) death ! Seeing this gives us a right to declare, there is no strength in matter, no strength in mortal mind ; that strength alone is found in Spirit.

Said David, "God is my strength and power." Strength embodies force, gives energy to purpose, determination to will, puts resolve into action, and brings revelation out of demonstration. The walls of Jericho were encompassed seven times before a belief in the strength of matter yielded to the strength of Spirit ; then the shout of Joshua and his soldiers of victory and freedom, was long and loud.

We have but to storm the bulwarks and towers of evil with the trumpet notes of Truth, and the walls of belief will give way to the strong forces of understanding. It is the strength of Love and Life that gives inspiration, and the strength of inspiration that removes the mountains of human belief, and uproots the sycamore trees of material law.

Strength has its vital force in the purity and power of spiritual understanding, and gives ability to heal the sick, cleanse the leper, and raise the dead. Dead to divine Law, human law becomes monitor, because it claims to be master. Looking through the eyes of Science, we see it is the monster of belief; its so-called strength and freedom to do, act, think and talk, must be drowned by the true Monitor, the true Good, in whose strength is an ever-abiding peace.

The powers that be are ordained of God, and their force is in the strength of the Law.

There is strength in unity, strength in obedience, strength in patience, strength in humility, strength in every good and spiritual gift; but there is no strength in matter, and we must not look for it there. The strength of a pure and honest purpose to live, act, and think aright, is "Like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Cowardice and dishonesty are two of the most deadly enemies, and if allowed to roam unrebuked in the consciousness, cause storm, disaster, shipwreck, and weaken our efforts to do good in whatever way we may turn. It is well to look after these intruders, and cut off their subtle work, if we desire the strength and freedom of the substance of Love. Treachery, avarice, and conceit, are three more wily workers that must be ruled out and robbed of their supposed strength, that the strength of divine Principle may be honored, glorified and shine as a jewel in the countenance of man. The true soldier will be strongest when persecution is heaviest, bravest when the problem is hardest, more to be trusted when everything looks the darkest. Looking away from danger, doom, and threat, Job cried, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Daniel did not flee from the den of lions when he was ordered

to enter it and close their mouths. An angel of the Lord came and comforted him. He was strong in the power of Spirit, and his belief in that power, rendered the thing possible, and he wrought such wonders and signs that it was declared there was no God like the God of Daniel. Steady in purpose, honest in endeavor, faithful to Principle, Daniel wrought a great problem, and left the example of obedience and humility, which shows forth the power of his strength.

If we should open the den of lions in our own consciousness, and find doubt, dread, dismay, distrust, disappointment, disease all growling at us, and clogging our footsteps so that we could not heal and teach, did we not obey Spirit which bids us enter in, and destroy their power and ability to bite, we would be yielding to two more deadly lions, cowardice and dishonesty, and thus lose our strength, freedom and birthright.

All of us have these lions either large or small in our personal sense condition. We cannot flee from them, nor will they let go of us until scientifically removed through denying that they have existence or origin.

Jesus plainly shows us how to avoid the broad avenues of weakness, and plant our feet in the narrow path of strength. When the devil saluted him and began his polite whisper of temptation, he instantly met it with the severe rebuke, "Get thee behind me Satan; . . . for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Immediately strength unfurls her banner and freedom smiles with sweet content.

There is no strength in the argumentative forces of mortal mind. Science declares there is but one Mind, and through the force of divine Mind the law of Being is revealed. Science comes to reveal this power, giving to man this strength, urging him to subdue the body, the earth, climb the Horeb heights of revelation, and become bathed in the sunlight of inspiration.

It is here that weakness and cowardice are known to be a myth. Superstition has taken to itself wings and flown. Strength, with Freedom, becomes our guide through the

sweet fields of Eden, and as we listen to these winged messengers, we learn of Love, become educated by Life, and absorb the knowledge of Truth.

This is Principle saying to us through the prophet (Isaiah 52: 1.) "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come to thee the uncircumcised and unclean."

The power invested in the religion of Christian Science to heal diseases and overcome sin, is in the knowledge of the one God, who is Spirit, the denial of matter, the demonstration of its powerlessness, and holding high above the seeming, the proof that the labor of continuous prayer, is the fruit of freedom.

Duty in spiritual things carries us unto the realm of strength. Let us shirk no duty, church or study, class or healing, home or business, liberal giving, honest appreciation of what others do for us, and we shall reap the reward, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Let us put our house in order, and make preparation to take higher steps, become better associated with charity, and do our duty, one toward another, so that we may be called dutiful sons and daughters of God.

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THERE dwells one bright immortal on the earth,  
Not known of men. They who know her not  
Go hence forgotten from the House of Life,  
Sons of oblivion.

To her once came  
That awful shape which all men hold in dread,  
And she with steadfast eyes regarded him —  
With heavenly eyes — eyes half sorrowful, and then  
Smiled and passed by. "And who art thou," he cried,  
"That lookest on me and art not appalled;  
That seemest so fragile, yet defiest death?  
Not thus do mortals face me. What art thou?"  
But she no answer made; silent she stood,—  
Awhile in holy meditation stood,—  
And then moved on through the enamored air,  
Silent, with luminous uplifted brows —  
Time's sister, Daughter of Eternity,  
Death's deathless enemy, whom men call Love.

—*Thomas Bailey Aldrich.*