

Revivals And Church History :: The Spiritual Life by Evan Roberts

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The Spiritual Life. *by Evan Roberts*

“Finally . . . Be Strong.” — Ephes. VI. 10.

THE Apostle urges in Ephes. VI. 10, that the believer should be strong in order to be prepared for the conflict. The “old man’s” weakness must be put away, for the onslaughts will be terrible from the powers of darkness. Your strength must be equal to the forces against you. You will have to wrestle against principalities, and you should be able to call to your aid all Divine and human and angelic power. These evil forces of darkness will make daily and hourly onslaughts on you; therefore “Be strong.” But how? “BE STRONG IN THE LORD,” A tower of strength is He to them that trust in Him. How can I be strong in the Lord? Notice how truth enables a believer to be strong and to stand. Ananias could not stand before Peter, because of his lie: TRUTH becomes strength.

Strength here, in this passage (Eph. VI. 10), is not only physical force; not only soul force; not only spiritual force; but the strength of truth, of righteousness, of peace, of self-preservation, of faith, of Scripture, of prayer.

The disciples, on the day of Pentecost, had more than force. They had had understanding, when Christ opened their minds to the interpretation of the Scriptures; they had had knowledge in the three and-a-half years in Gospel work: in healing the sick, in casting out demons, in seeing miracles performed, in listening to the things of the Kingdom uttered in parable and without parable — uttered in illustrative and picturesque language, and in open truth — the flaming swaying sword of truth. They had been trained to watch; trained to pray; trained to observe; trained to detect the presence of evil spirits in men and to cast them out; trained to heal the sick. Things, which they had never comprehended, were now, on the day of Pentecost, rightly interpreted to them by the Holy Ghost. Sin they knew had to be dealt with, and Satan, too.

Note how David became weak before Nathan’s charge: “Thou art the man.” David’s previous and just judgment on the unnamed criminal fell back heavily upon himself. Sin is a weakening factor — then get rid of sin, and let it not reign; and cast off the works of darkness. In fact, get rid of all that morally weakens you. There is moral strength; there is physical strength. The man of Belial can never be a leader of men; his courage is rage, bordering on madness, and is overfull of folly. The just alone can stand in the place of the righteous. Sin weakens you, because it brings all the power of God and of goodness against you. Israel could not stand before the men of Ai because of sin in the camp. Then “Be Strong” BY NOT BEING WEAK. Remove all that makes you weak; remove all that hinders you being strong. Cain’s moral strength was weakened by the acceptance of Abel’s offering. The strong became weak through sin.

Ignorance is a source of weakness. Joshua’s ignorance of the wile of the Gibeonites led him to lose a victory over a section of the Canaanites. John the Baptist in prison fell into doubt concerning Christ and his own prophecy, because he did not understand the ways of God. He said: “Art Thou the Christ?” He possibly reasoned thus: “If Thou art the Christ, and Thou art undoubtedly doing wonderful things, then why not do one miracle more and release me from prison?” Joseph’s soliloquy in prison is not recorded, but he must have undoubtedly questioned his “theology.”

Peter, in declaring his allegiance to Christ, said, in order to prove its genuineness, that he would abide with Him unto death; yet by the taunt of a Roman maid he revoked his utterance, revealing his allegiance to be less than superficial. In reality there was none when he said, “I know not the Man.” What a descent from the highest point of declaration of allegiance to the lowest point of denial! The “old man’s” words and the “old man’s” deeds do not agree — there is painful discord. He said, “I will die with Thee,” but the truth was, “I will deny Thee.” “Die with” and “Deny” are two irreconcilable extremes. But the man’s volition only needed, and needed, a clothing with the new man’s power. The words were those of a courageous man. But he who has suffered not can well promise to die. The poor would give alms if only they were rich. The promises of the experienced are to be trusted. The sufferer is the one to promise “to die with,” He knows what suffering is, and how to bear and how much to bear. Peter’s declaration savoured of courage; his faithlessness that of a coward.

If you desire physical strength you must pay the price by complying with the laws of strength. In the spiritual world suffering — spiritual suffering — is one condition of strength. In the physical world it means a long course of sustained physical exercises, and obedience to the laws of health, but prior to that an understanding of them. Then CONFORM WITH LAW IN ORDER NOT TO BE WEAK; conform with law that you may be strong. Sin in the camp, or congregation, or in the life, will cause the foe to win. No strength is substitute for righteousness.

Physical strength does not guarantee moral strength. Samson was perfect, by the Lord, in this sense of physical strength, yet his very abnormal strength was not correspondingly matched by the highest morality. He failed in wisdom. Solomon was perfect in wisdom, yet failed in morality — much wisdom, and much less moral strength.

Saul in height was head above all of that camp in Israel, yet he lacked moral strength. A javelin served him to express his anger and jealousy. In heart and purpose this revealed him to be a murderer. He sought the life of David. Worldly or social position is no guarantee of moral strength; the high in office may be the low in practice. The injunction to Joshua indicates a great moral secret of success with God and man. It was this: "Only be courageous." And again to Jeremiah: he the one to be against the whole land, against the Kings of Judah. Ah — but the secret God had made him "A defended city, an iron pillar and brazen walls."

Strength of health is needed for the battle. But above all is needed the strength of the spirit, that the spirit may be in position and power to dominate both soul and body strength.

The great strength of the Christian will be through his full conformity of spirit, soul and body to divine laws, both spiritual and natural. See to it that you conform to the laws of the body, the laws of the brain — the whole of the mental faculties — and the laws of the spirit. Remember that sin slays its tens of thousands; trouble more than work; anxiety more than heavy problems. Avoid strain; avoid evil-work and over-work.

The last great effort of the world's whole moral and physical strength in unison was seen in the attempt to build that gigantic tower of salvation at Babel. But it was never roofed. These men endeavored to fight God with His own weapons. But NATURE NEVER SIDES WITH SIN. They attempted to get nature on their side against God's possible vindictive judgment. Nature is God's, and should not be sought to aid or to cover evil. With nature — not contrary to her — is the best way of salvation.

Divine strength is not withdrawn, even after moral laws have been transgressed. See how Samson sinned at his entrance into Gath. Even after sinning he took away by his own divine-given strength the gates of the city. His strength left him not, because he had not violated the conditions for maintaining the special gift of strength, which was his through the law of the Nazarite. Even after lying to his wife, his strength still remained. You are punished by the law you transgress. But did it remain after violating the law of the Nazarite? Then strength was gone. And when strength goes, it is often because some law has been transgressed. There is a violation of law which brings physical weakness; a violation of law which brings intellectual weakness; a violation of law which brings spiritual weakness. DIVINE LAWS ARE NO RESPECTERS OF PERSON. They only smile on those who respect them; a frown only for the transgressor. Violated and transgressed law will have its revenge. Human laws may sometimes be violated and the transgressor escape unpunished. But this can not, and never does, happen concerning divine laws. When violated the man may be unseen by human eyes, but the law is never asleep, and will immediately chain the transgressor to her prison, and keep him there until he has made full recompense, to the uttermost farthing; not the round sum, but the exact and precise sum. Not unto poverty, but unto satisfaction. Not until the man be penniless, but unto uttermost propitiation. SIN MAY BE COVERED FROM MAN, BUT NOT FROM LAW.

Intemperance brings weakness. Add to patience, temperance. The Apostle Paul said: "When I am weak then I am strong." Not that he cultivated weakness. His own weakness was the occasion for divine assistance. The infusion of Satanic strength into a human being generally ends in his being marked by great weakness. Deterioration of strength sets in after transgression of law. Neither of the last named were faults of the Apostle Paul. His WEAKNESS WAS THE RESULT OF GREAT SPIRIT BURDEN — burdens for the Church; battlings with the Jews, wrestlings with evil spirits; tackling difficulties. Made weak through these, but clothed with divine strength to meet the facing and oncoming work and burden.

Keep me, Lord, from fainting
In this fierce fight,
When the foe is rising,
Clothe me with Thy might.

Re: The Spiritual Life by Evan Roberts - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/1/10 17:04

I LOVE this article! It really means something to me. I have had to struggle with letting go of "physical" strength and focusing more on the spiritual strength. I really do believe that suffering brings about a spiritual strength that nothing else can

I remember once in particular when I was lifting weights and I was concerned if the Lord did not want me focusing my time on being so strong in body. Right away He said to my spirit "I want you strong in faith- in your spirit. Don't work so hard at getting strong in body- focus on inner strength".

I have always kept this in mind when I work out- not to put too much emphasis onto it. At least, not more than what I put into the "inner strength training". :-)

Your physical strength can be taken away- but not your spiritual strength.