

1064  
LAG 692

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, Sunday morning,  
December 1st 1963.

"The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning. Thou hast the dew of Thy youth." Psalm 110:2-3

These blessed words are spoken concerning the exalted Redeemer, the Great High Priest. Paul quotes this Psalm to the Hebrews: "Every priest standeth, daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Here we see that same glorious Man.

"The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou at my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." And He is there exalted having finished the work that His Father gave Him to do and sits down at the right hand of God. But the effect of all His finished work and all the power of it is to be exercised in the hearts of His people by the Holy Ghost - and this we have in the text. 'The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion.' Now the rod of Christ's strength is the gospel, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation a very wonderful word which we need to be translated into our experience. The power of God in a certain direction; and unto a certain end that is to be accomplished; and all that power moves toward the salvation of the soul.

Everything in the Gospel of Christ is divine; it is eternal. The gospel is omnipotent, and when the Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and makes them the experience of salvation in the hearts of His people, what a power it is! 'The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion.' So it is said in Micah, "Feed Thy people with Thy rod." And it was the same rod and staff which was a comfort to David as he walked through the valley of the shadow of death; "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me;" that is, Thy gospel and Thy grace. It is the same rod that we read of in Ezekiel: "I will cause thee to pass under the rod" - under this rod of Christ's strength - "and bring thee into the bond of the covenant." So that you see the eternal benefit that is derived from the victory of Christ, as He has ascended on high, led captivity captive and received gifts for men and there he is sitting on the right hand of God, ever making intercession for His people.

'The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion.' It is in Zion that He dwells. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early." There is no place in this world that God dwells, except Zion. His universal omnipresence is different from His presence in Zion; and it is a wonderful thing my friends, to be among a congregation of people who are gathered by the Holy Spirit, who have been caused to pass under the rod, who, as pilgrims, wander in the wilderness in a solitary way and can find no city to dwell in. Yet gathered, gathered according to the purposes and decrees of God, brought to feel their need of salvation, brought into a condition of condemnation, brought to be as outcasts and those that are ready to perish in the highways and hedges, exposed and pursued; and yet 'the Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion.'

It is really the same word as that beautiful opening to the 50th Psalm "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." And there will be times when you will feel some sacred distinct influence upon your heart as met together by the Holy Spirit. You realise that in Zion, in that provision that God has made, there is a perfection of beauty; and that perfection of beauty contains the divine glory of Christ, in all the saving benefits of the gospel. He shall send it out. O how this does fit the prayer of His poor people! It fits the case again of David. "O, send out Thy light and Thy truth." It is praying for an experience of this promise - 'God shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion.' Then

prays a poor troubled sinner - "O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me" there is nothing else can. It is a heavenly revealing light that is sent out and it is a light that reveals the truth.

For my friends, the true light never shines into a blank. When the Lord opens the eyes of His people and the true light shines, those eyes are not opened unto a mere blank, but opened unto the fullness, the richness of the everlasting gospel, for that light, as sent out, becomes 'the rod of Thy strength.' But it is the Lord that shall send 'the rod of Thy strength out of Zion.' It is the work of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus accomplished salvation. It was a work; a work undertaken by a man, a real Man. the justice and holiness of God was vindicated. The law was honoured. He went to the end of the law, magnified it. He suffered. He was made perfect through sufferings. He paid the mighty debt His people owed. He became their Substitute. Therefore, all that He is in all His sinlessness, His holiness, His righteousness, becomes theirs; and He swallows up all that they are in their pollution and sin. He finished the work and now is exalted in heaven; but He carries on that work in a work of grace in the soul, The Holy Ghost takes of the things of Jesus and all the strength and power and validity of the gospel are conveyed to the heart by the Holy Spirit. O what a good Spirit He is. O the vital living power He exercises in the soul! So that you will notice and perhaps recognise that in Psalm 45 the opening verses really are the same thing as the text - and a very beautiful comparison it is. 'The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion, rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.' "Thine arrows are sharp, in the heart of the king's enemies whereby the people fall under thee. Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh O most mighty! With Thy glory and Thy majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things." Now is not that what some of you need? The vital, mighty power of Christ in the gospel conveyed to your soul by the Holy Spirit, that it may be the power of God unto salvation?

'Rule Thou in the midst of Thy enemies' - and there are two kinds of enemies, at least as I view it. There are the enemies of the Lord which are the wicked and it will be a mercy if Christ's enemies are our enemies. We are surrounded with them. David felt that his enemies were lively and strong; and those enemies in our nature are enemies to God and to godliness. A mercy if they are our enemies. But the promise is, that 'He shall rule in the midst of thy enemies.' But there is another kind of enemy that the Lord rules among. "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee." There are enemies that the Lord will, by His Spirit make friends His arrows of conviction are sharp in their hearts. You look at the case of Saul. What an enemy he was to God and His people! How sharp were the arrows in his heart on the way to Damascus, when he saw a light above the brightness of the sun which brought him down to the earth! "He turneth man to destruction." He turned Paul to destruction. He destroyed his Pharisaism, his religious pride, his false zeal. "Thine arrows are sharp, in the heart of the king's enemies whereby the people fall under Thee." O what a good thing it would be to see this effect of 'the rod of Thy strength out of Zion' ruling in the midst of Thine enemies!

I say there are two kinds of enemies. Those that lie in wickedness in the world - reprobates; but there are enemies of Christ who are appointed to obtain salvation, and these the Lord turns to destruction in themselves. "When Thou dost rebuke a man for his iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth." "We had the sentence of death in ourselves." O these sharp arrows of the law taking effect in the conscience of poor sinners in a way of condemnation bring them to fall down under Him! It is a mercy to be brought down before the Lord as a lost and ruined sinner. This is a good work. A good beginning and 'the Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of thine enemies.' Then this is the effect - 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.' In that day when the rod of Thy strength is sent out of Zion, and these arrows of conviction enter the heart. It was the same thing with the Israelites who were stung, bitten by the serpent. What a beautiful figure that is, but has it ever been our experience? Have we ever felt the power of God in His law to condemnation and been shut up unto Him, when the same blessed

Spirit that convinces and condemns, reveals a way of escape? Leads a poor sinner to that door of hope in the valley of Achor?

'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.' Saul of Tarsus was made willing. O the sovereignty of God both in the gospel and in the law! The law of God has two different actions. The law of God with respect to the reprobate is eternal condemnation; but the law of God in the heart of those He determines to save is a schoolmaster. It is not a schoolmaster to a reprobate. But in the hearts of His people it is a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. It shuts up every avenue, locks every door except one door and that is the only door of hope. Paul knew it: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." O what a rod of strength was sent out of Zion and made the power of God unto salvation so that 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.'

We see this power exercised sovereignly in different cases. You take the case of Ruth and Orpah. Naomi must have taught them her religion, spoken to them about her God. Naomi was a gracious well-taught woman. The power was sent out into Ruth's heart; but Orpah, it had no effect upon her. She approved of it, she kissed her mother-in-law. Indeed they both began to return with Naomi. If you read that first chapter, they both began to return, and Orpah, when she heard of what fare she would receive, what difficulties, what sorrows, what losses, what griefs, she kissed her mother-in-law and went back to her people and to her gods. She had no fault to find with her mother-in-law or with her religion, but she had no life, no grace, no power entered, and therefore, she would give up nothing. Sovereign love attracted the heart of Ruth. 'The rod of Thy strength out of Zion' entered her soul. The quickening power of the Holy Ghost quickened her into divine life. She saw with new eyes. She had faith - faith to believe in the report that Naomi gave her. "Intreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee; thy people shall be my people." 'Thy people shall be made willing in the day of Thy power'" when this rod of strength is sent out of Zion. What a mercy it would be if the rod of Christ's power should be sent out, even by so unworthy and feeble an Instrument, as it is here! The power of Christ came so that Ruth clave unto her mother-in-law. When Naomi saw that she was steadfastly bent upon going with her she left off speaking to her. She had a steadfast heart. Her heart was fixed. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.' It is a great thing for a sinner who in nature is at enmity against God and an enemy to Him, to be made willing -willing to be saved by grace. Willing to leave her people and her gods, willing to take up her cross and to deny herself and follow Naomi.

Now this, in substance, will be known in every one that is called by grace. It is a beautiful testimony concerning Abraham. God called him alone and blessed him. Called him to go out unto a place that he should after receive for an inheritance; and he obeyed. He was made willing. Have we known this willingness? You take again the case of Rebecca. When Abraham's servant, with much labour and prayer and watchfulness was directed to Rebecca, he described the person of Isaac and Rebecca believed the report and they asked her saying "Wilt thou go with this man? she said, I will go." She left all her friends and all that was near and dear to her, and went with this stranger to Isaac. I wonder how many here would be willing to part with all and follow Him? And you see from whence this power is derived - "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

'The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of Thy enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.' This day of power is a personal experience. It was a day of power that we were considering regarding the woman at Samaria's well. O how the Lord gradually sent the rod of His strength out of Zion into that poor sinner's heart and how willing she was to leave her water pots which contained only the water of this world, the things, the provisions

of this world. If we are exercised about our own cases, my friends there are plenty of examples in the Word of God by which we may try our state and condition.

'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.' It is a particular day and the Lord knows that time; it is fixed. As we sing - "He that fixed my first and second birth." O I have desired that that day of power might be seen in our midst; for I do believe there are those in whose hearts there is a desire to receive the Lord Jesus, but fear to presume. "It shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria and the outcasts in the land of Egypt; and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount in Jerusalem." That is the day of power and this great trumpet, the gospel of the grace of God concerning great salvation, shall be blown with such power that they shall all come; "All that the Father hath given me, shall come to Me" - be made willing to come, glad to come.

*Lo! Glad I come; and Thou blest Lamb  
Shalt take me to Thee as I am,*

*(Gadsby's 144)*

It is very sacred to feel that falling down under the power, the truth of the gospel. To see in Christ and in the provision that He has made in Zion, greater riches than the whole world beside. Moses was made willing, made willing to leave the honour and riches of the royal court, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. O, it was a day of power to Moses! And power belongeth unto God and He is the same yesterday, today and for ever. So also is His power and His grace.

'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.' O, it is power you need! Nothing else is of any use; and all those need and seek power have something for the Lord to do. What power is needed to raise a sinner from the depth of the fall, from the very gates of hell! What power is needed to turn an enemy into a friend! What power is needed to change the heart and renew the will! What power is needed to create a sinner into a new creature in Christ Jesus! 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning.'

Well, I believe some of you will recognise the connexion here of the whole thing, it brings us to that 50th Psalm: "Out of Zion the perfection of beauty Thou hast shined." And you will see the perfection of beauty as it is traced to the Lord Jesus, in all the beauty and glory of His victory, of His finished work. To see Him enthroned on high, the Great High Priest, the Advocate, the Intercessor above; and the perfection of beauty also in the gospel, because the whole of the gospel derives its strength and life and beauty from Christ, and all the blessings of the gospel partake of the same divine properties. O how rich it is! This was the meaning of Solomon when he said, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich." It does not give riches, it makes a person rich. There is a very great difference. There are plenty of people may possess millions, but they are poor, destitute of life and grace, ignorant of God, without God, and without hope in the world. But Christ and His unsearchable riches in the Gospel makes the person himself rich, enriches his soul!

'In the beauties of holiness.' In the beauty of holiness is Christ himself, O but when the rod of His strength is sent out, the strength of His love, the strength of His everlasting righteousness, the strength of His invincible grace, possesses the heart of poor sinner, then the willingness of that sinner to follow the Lord whithersoever He goes has in it the beauties of grace and holiness; and this is as He is made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The righteousness of Christ is imputed, His holiness is imputed. His precious blood so blots out sin as a thick cloud that it renders a black sinner to be whiter than the snow. O the beauty of holiness that is upon a poor sinner who is made willing under the power of the gospel to follow Christ!

'In the beauties of holiness.' And not only so for in this day of power of the gospel in the experience of His people the work itself has a beauty of holiness in it. It is a holy gospel. It is a Holy Spirit that works the work of grace in the heart. It is the beauty of sanctification. In the 90th Psalm, Moses prays, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." O what a sight is a real saint! to be possessed of such a kingdom, to be the subject of such a heavenly mighty work of grace in the soul, to be a new creation altogether, to be possessed of an inner spiritual man. So this is a powerful willingness in the day of the power of the Holy Ghost under the Gospel. Then there will be worship. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," and there is something very sacred about that - perhaps some of you can taste it now and feel how willing you would be for the Lord to come and save you if He would.

To worship Him in the beauty of holiness is to worship Him in God's dear Son in whom all holiness and all beauty and glory are contained. But it is also to worship Him in the beauty of the holiness of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart and the two are the same. Yes, if we have the life of God in our souls, it is Christ's life derived from His resurrection; it is His merit which is the virtue of a living soul, the power of faith, the strength of hope. Therefore, you will worship Him in the beauty of the inward work and influence of the Holy Spirit and worship Him in the beauty of holiness, the blessed object of worship. Sometimes you will sit in a pew and feel the sacred and heavenly power of Christ communicated by the Holy Spirit - and you could live in His courts and join with David - "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the courts of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and enquire in His temple."

'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning.' We would speak according to the analogy of faith, for we don't want fanciful things my friends, they won't do when we come to die; but what is the womb of the morning? Well, the womb of the morning in creation was when God said, "Let there be light." That was the womb of the morning in creation. The womb of the morning with respect to salvation and the Gospel was when Christ condescended to become incarnate. It was the first opening of the gospel. Those angels heralded His birth; "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." O what a morning that was! Had the Son of God never condescended to this world, what an eternal black night of despair it would have been! 'From the womb of the morning.' But then there are many mornings. Naturally every day brings a fresh morning, and new every morning is the light, so that there is a morning of experience to every soul whose eyes are opened, who are quickened into divine life and, therefore, this day of power and the womb of the morning are simultaneous really. When one is called by divine grace and their eyes are opened, what a morning that is in experience. Then the true light shines, you see with different eyes. 'The womb of the morning.' The Son of righteousness arises in the heart with healing in His wings. Then that light and truth is sent out into the heart, shines upon the sacred pages of Scripture and makes it new as though it is a new book. Has that morning ever come to you?

'The womb of the morning - the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning.' But there is another womb and that is the covenant of grace and that was a womb of the morning, that was pregnant with all the blessings of salvation, that precious covenant of grace which contained in it those provisions for His unworthy people, that would enrich them, carry them through life, wherein they were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. Predestinated unto eternal salvation and to all the blessings of the gospel of His grace. O what a womb of the morning was the covenant of grace!

But there will be another morning. Paul, writing to the Romans says, "The night is far spent and the day is at hand." It is a wonderful thing that, my friends, if this is true of us, if in this world it is night and the dayspring is at hand, the night is far spent. In Isaiah we read concerning the watchman,

"Watchman what of the night, what of the night?" He says, "The night cometh and also the day." To some this is their day, and the night cometh. To His dear people they have their sorrows and affliction and conflicts here, but the day is to come.

May the Lord grant that the rod of His strength may go forth even in this place, that His people might be willing in the day of His power, in the beauties of His holiness! O the attractions of Christ are a great deal to do with this willingness of His people. There is a power in His attractions, a power in His beauty, a power in His love.

Amen.