

A CITY WITHOUT WALLS

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“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”—Prov. 25:28.

FORCEFUL, indeed, is the simile found in our text. A city, especially in olden times, was a place where people were congregated for mutual advantage and protection. Marauders were abroad ready to plunder, and the wall of the city was very much in the nature of a preservation from harm, that the inhabitants might be able to protect their valuables, their rights, their interests.

For a like purpose God, in creating man, gave him a **will**. It is one of the strong elements of man's likeness to his Creator. We may have a will, however weak our bodies, or however strong our passions. That will may be strong whether we are brought into outward subjection to others or not. Our bodies may be enslaved, but our wills cannot be enslaved without our permission. Our will is something which cannot be taken from us; but it needs to be defended; it needs to be repaired; it needs to be made strong in weak places.

The Necessity for Strengthening the Will

Those who do not attend to this and do not strengthen the will where they find special liability to assaults, are sure to have it much broken down, so that, by and by, they reach a place where they have no will, no self-control. Just as in a devastated city the protecting walls have been destroyed and the enemy finds easy access, so the human being who yields to sin and weaknesses and assaults of the Adversary has lost his real manhood and is in danger of losing everything.

It is a part of our duty as Christians and as New Creatures to withstand all assaults of the Adversary; and these assaults come, not from the visible forces alone, but from evil spirits; from those who seek to obtain possession of us—as is the case with those who come under the control of these evil spirits. Their wills are subdued, broken down, and they are in the hands of their enemies, exactly as pictured in our text. Let such strive to cast out the enemy, to resist him, to strengthen the walls of their minds and to make an alliance at once with the Lord Jesus. Let them give their hearts fully and completely to Him and accept His will, His Word and His guidance.

True, when thus released from the bondage of sin and of Satan, they become bond-slaves of righteousness and of Christ; but when it is realized that to be the bond-servants of Christ means to serve that which is good and true and right, and to be in harmony with

the Father, all should rejoice to place themselves fully and unreservedly under the control of Him who hath so loved the entire race of mankind as to purchase them with His own blood. Surely all are safe in His hands.

But it is not sufficient that any of us merely place ourselves in the hands of the Lord. The Psalmist counsels us, “Commit thy **way** unto the Lord; **trust also in Him**, and He shall bring to pass; and He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.” (Psalm 37:5.) The Apostle Paul tells us that “It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13.) He works by means of the promises of His Word; by means of the various experiences of life, its disciplines and humbling processes, and it is well that we take heed to each lesson as it comes if we desire to have a character developed in the likeness of our Head.

“He that Ruleth His Own Spirit Is Greater Than He that Taketh a City”

We are not to lose sight of the fact that we are to be “workers together with God” in the accomplishment of this great transforming work to be wrought in us by the renewing of our minds. Our battle with **self** is our greatest battle, and we have the Lord’s Word for it that he that “ruleth his own spirit [his own mind, will] is better than he that taketh a city,” because he has to that extent learned to exercise the combativeness of a true character in the right direction—that of self-control.

But, lest we become discouraged with the slowness of our progress, we should ever remember that the attainment of the control of our own spirits, our own minds, the bringing of these into full accord, full harmony, with the Lord and so far as possible, into accord with all of the Lord’s people who are in accord with Him, is attained “**finally**,” as the Apostle informs us; it is gradually reached by “patient continuance in well doing,” relying upon the Divine assurance of grace to help in every time of need.

Let us all strain every energy toward this final and grand development. We are to have it continually before us as the standard, the ideal, the aim, and although we may fail time after time, if we are rightly exercised in the matter, we shall be stronger as the result of each failure; for each failure will show us, more clearly than we previously discerned, the weak points of our characters, naturally resulting from the fall. And if each weak point be carefully noted and guarded against as respects the future, we shall come, by and by, by the grace of God and under the direction of our Great Teacher by His Word and example and providential leadings, to that subdued condition, that harmonized condition, which will fully accord with the will of God.

To such, looking back, even the failures which, subsequently recognized, led to greater fortification against the wiles of the Adversary and the weaknesses of the flesh, may be

seen to have been overruled by the Lord for our blessing, according to His promise that “all things shall work together for good to them that love God.”