

THE MIGHTY POWER WHICH CREATES AND SUSTAINS FAITH NO. 534

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“The exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all-in-all.”
Ephesians 1:19-23.*

TO believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart is one of the simplest things imaginable. To trust Christ, to depend upon His power and faithfulness, is such a childlike act that one sees no extraordinary difficulty in it. Yet, to bring the human mind to exercise simple faith in Jesus is a work of the most astounding power! To bring down the pride of man, to subjugate his will, and to captivate his passions so that he shall cheerfully accept that which God presents to him in the person of Christ Jesus, is a labor worthy of God! How strangely vile are they who cannot be brought to know their own mercies, except by an omnipotent power! The blessed Spirit of God is always the secret Author of faith; it is not of us, it is the gift of God. Our text twice over uses the strongest words which could be employed to set forth the Almighty power exhibited in bringing a soul to believe in Jesus, and in bringing that believing soul onward till it ascends to heaven. You will carefully notice we have first of all this expression, “The exceeding greatness of His power,” and then we have on the other side of the word “Believe,” lest it should escape from the sacred barrier, these words, “According to the working of His mighty power.” Now, the first expression is a very amazing one. It might be read thus—“The superexcellent, sublime, overcoming, or triumphing greatness of His power.” And the other is even more singular—it is a Hebrew mode of speech forced to do duty in the Greek tongue—“The effectual working of the might of His strength,” or, “The energy of the force of His power,” or some such strong expression as that. As if the apostle was not content to say, “You believe through the power of God,” nor “through the greatness of that power,” but “through the *exceeding* greatness of His power.” And not satisfied with declaring that the salvation of man is the fruit of God’s might, he puts it, His mighty power—no, as if that were not enough, he writes the energy, the efficacious activity of the power of that might. No amount of straining at the passage can ever get rid of the grand doctrine which it contains, namely, that the bringing of a soul to simple faith in Jesus and the maintenance of that soul in the life of faith displays an exercise of omnipotence such as God alone could put forth.

Nor need we, dear friends, be at all surprised at this, when we recollect what the work of salvation really is. Be it never forgotten by us that the salvation of a soul is *a creation*. Now, no man has ever been able to create a fly, nor even a single molecule of matter. Man knows how to fashion created substance into many forms; but to create the minutest atom is utterly beyond his might. Jehovah alone creates. “All things were created by Him and for Him.” No human or angelic power can intrude upon this glorious province of divine power. Creation is God’s own domain! Now, in every Christian there is an absolute creation—“Created anew in Christ Jesus.” “The new man, after God, is created in righteousness.” “regeneration is not the reforming of principles which were there before, but the implantation of a something which had no existence; it is the putting into a man a new thing called the spirit, the new man—the creation not of a soul, but of a principle still higher—as much higher than the soul as the soul is higher than the body. Since the life and principle created are the most glorious of all God’s works, being in fact a part of the divine nature itself, I may say most boldly that in the bringing of any man to be-

lieve in Christ, there is as true and proper a manifestation of creating power, as when God made the heavens and the earth!

Further than this, there is more than creation—there is *destruction*. No man can destroy anything. Since the world began, not a single particle of matter has ever been annihilated. You may cast matter into the depths of the sea, but there it is; it still exists. Cast it into the fire and the fire consumes it—but either in the ash or in the smoke, every atom survives. Fire does not destroy a single particle. There is as much matter in the world now as when God first spoke it out of nothing. It is as great an exercise of divinity to destroy as it is to create—

*“Know that the Lord is God alone—
He can create and He can destroy.”*

In the regeneration of every soul there is destruction as well as creation. The old man has to be destroyed—the stony heart has to be taken away out of our flesh; and though this is not done in all of us—no, nor in any of us completely—yet the day shall come when sin shall be utterly destroyed—both root and branch, and all evil principles shall be torn up by the roots and, like our sins, they shall cease to be—so that if they were searched for, they could not be found. When the morning stars sang together because a world was made, creation was their one theme. God made the world out of nothing. That was an easy task compared with making a new heart and a right spirit, for “nothing” at least could not oppose God—“nothing” could not stand out against Him; but here, in salvation, God had to deal with an opposing something which He has to fight with and to destroy; and when that has been reduced and overcome, then comes in the creating power by which we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. So that it is a *double miracle*, something more than creation—it is creation and destruction combined!

The work of salvation is most truly a *transformation*. “Be you transformed by the renewing of your mind.” You who have been made anew in Christ Jesus know in your own hearts how great that transformation is. The wolf, with all its bloodthirsty tendencies, feeds quietly with all the amiable gentleness of the lamb; the lion eats straw like the ox; the desert becomes a garden, and the dry land springs water. What is more wonderful still, stones of the brook become children unto Abraham. The Lord takes the man who is like the leopard—covered with spots—and cleanses him till he is whiter than snow; He takes the Ethiopian, black as night, and does but touch him with the matchless blood of Jesus, and he becomes all together fair and lovely. None of the fanciful transformations of which Ovid sang of old, could ever rival the matchless work of God when He displays His power upon the human mind! Oh, what a difference between a sinner and a saint, between “dead in trespasses and sins,” and quickened by divine grace! If God should speak to Niagara and bid its floods in their tremendous leap suddenly stand still—that were a trifling demonstration of power compared with the staying of a desperate human will! If He should suddenly speak to the broad Atlantic and bid it be wrapped in flames, we should not even, then, see such a manifestation of His greatness as when He commands the human heart, and makes it submissive to His love!

Remember, too, as if this were not enough, that the conversion of a soul is constantly compared to *quickenings*—the quickening of the dead. How great the miracle when the dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision suddenly became a great army! Greater still is the transcendent work of night when dead souls are quickened and made to serve the living God! Indeed it is not only the first act of conversion which displays divine power—but the whole of the Christian’s life, until he comes to perfection—is a clear display of the same. The spiritual life may be likened unto *the burning bush* which Moses saw in Horeb; it burnt, but it was not consumed. Such is the Christian—like a bush, he is most fitting fuel for the flame; yet the flame does not hurt him. It kindles about him, but he is not destroyed. Or the Christian life may be likened to *walking upon water*. As Peter trod the waves and did not sink as long as his faith looked to Jesus, so the believer, every day, in every footstep that he takes is a living miracle. Faith, too, in its life may be compared to *flying*—“They shall mount up on wings as eagles.” “I bear you as upon eagles’ wings.” The believer every day takes venturesome flights into the atmosphere of heaven, rises above the world, leaves its cares and its needs beneath his feet, and that, too, with no other wings but those of faith and love! Herein is a continued and splendid miracle of the divine power.

But, to come to our text—laying it down, then, as being most certain that the work of the conversion and sanctification of a believer is an amazing display of divine might—we have in the text given to us a most singular analogy. The apostle declares to us by the Holy Spirit that the very same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and exalted Him to the highest heaven is seen in the conversion and preservation of every individual believer! Now, we shall first *notice the analogy*; secondly, we shall *consider the reason of it*; and thirdly, we shall observe the *inferences which come from it*.

I. First of all, we shall consider THE ANALOGY WHICH THE APOSTLE HERE POINTS OUT.

Imagine that you hold a great pair of golden compasses. You are to put one foot of the compass here upon the grave of Christ. You are to open those compasses till you reach Christ ascending up into heaven. Widen them again and again and again, till you put down the other foot of the compass where Christ is head over all things to the Church, which is His fullness. Now, can you imagine such a stretch as that? You have to conceive of the power by which the dead body of Christ is brought to all that pre-eminence of honor—and then to remember that just such power is seen in you if you are a believer!

In examining the wonderful picture before us, we begin with Christ in the grave, by noticing that it was in Christ's case *a real death*. Those loving hands have taken Him down from the Cross; those weeping eyes have let fall hallowed drops upon His face. Tenderly have the women wrapped Him about with spices and fine linen, and now He is about to be put into the tomb. He is assuredly dead. The pericardium of the heart has been pierced; blood and water have both freely flowed. Lift up the pierced hand and it falls at once to His side. The lids of yonder eyes, so red with weeping, do but cover eyes glazed with death. The foot has no power of motion. Take up the corpse, you loving bearers, carry it, and put it into the tomb—this is no trance, but a most certain death. So is it with us; by nature we are really dead. We were dead in trespasses and sins. Try to stir the natural man to spiritual action, and you cannot do it. Lift up his hand to good works; he has no power to perform them. Try to make his feet run in the ways of righteousness; they will not move an inch. The fact is that *the heart* is dead. The living pulse of spiritual life which was in our parent Adam has long ago ceased! Neither can the eyes perceive any beauty in Immanuel, nor can the nose discover the fragrance of the Lord's sweet spices, nor can the ear hear the voice of the beloved. The man is absolutely and entirely dead as to anything like spiritual life! There he lies in the grave of his corruption, and must lay there, and rot, too, unless divine grace shall interpose.

In Christ's case, He was not only dead, but as the text tells us, He was *among the dead*. "He has raised up Jesus Christ *from the dead*." Notice that. He lay for some time sleeping among those who dwelt in the tomb—among the dead. Three days and nights He is a denizen of the lonely shades; He was numbered among the victims of death's dart. "He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death." Such were some of us—we were among the dead—and "were by nature the children of wrath," even as others. In the case of some of us, our outward life was just that of other ungodly men. Were they drunkards? So were we. Were they immoral? So were we. Did they take delight in the flesh? So did we. Did they follow the desires of the mind? So did we. Were they hard-hearted, and impenitent, and unbelieving? So were we. Whatever may be said of any ungodly man, may be said of at least some of those whom God has quickened by His divine power! We, like Jesus, were reckoned among the dead. If you had seen His corpse, you would have discovered no difference between it and the body of another, save only that He saw no corruption. Dear brothers and sisters, in this our case is lower than that of our Lord, for we *did* see corruption; the old man is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Yes, more, we were "children who are corrupters," and in nothing did we differ from others, save that the Lord had predestinated that no bands of death should hold us forever, for He was determined to save and to bring us to His right hand!

Come with me again to the new tomb in the garden. Will that sleeper ever rise? Will that hallowed tomb ever be burst? No, never while time and eternity shall last, unless God shall interfere! Here comes a *heavenly messenger*; his face is like lightning, and his raiment white as snow—and for fear of him the keepers do quake, and become as dead men! So, when the time comes, in God's great power, He sends His messenger—it is no angelic spirit whose face is like lightning but it is some humble minister of Christ, who, nevertheless, is clothed with power; he has in his mouth a sharp two-edged sword, and when he speaks of Christ, for fear of Him sins tremble, and the prejudices and enmities of men's hearts

become as dead men! The divine power is seen all the more in the fact that the messenger in the second case is an earthen vessel, a poor creature of flesh and blood. There is a divine mandate for *our* resurrection, as much as for that of Jesus Christ!

There came with that messenger *a mysterious life*. You cannot see it, but inside that tomb a Spirit has fallen upon those once bleeding limbs, and entered that lifeless corpse; the eyes shall soon see the light, for the hands are already unwinding the napkin from the brow; the grave cloths are unbound, one by one; the feet are free, and the whole frame is clear of every encumbrance! No one saw the life come back. If anyone had watched that corpse, they could not have seen the vital spark of heavenly flame return to its proper altar. No, it was a mysterious thing. Ah, there was a time with us when the messenger of God came, but *he* could not quicken us; he could only make the keepers shake and tremble! But a mysterious life from God the Holy Spirit fell into our souls, and we were as we never were before! We trembled with a new fear, rejoiced with a new joy, believed with a fresh confidence, and hoped with a divine hope. We lived! And oh, can we ever forget the moment when first we began to live unto God? Divine Spirit, You did it. Let all the glory be unto Your name.

Then came an *earthquake*, by which the stone was rolled away, showing that the power put forth was enough to shake the earth, and to make all the elements obedient. Surely when God shakes but common dust and clay, and rock and stone, we wonder, and men stand in awe; but when he rends the harder marble of our hearts, and moves the grosser cast and heavier earth of our spirits, *there* is reason to praise and bless His name!

The stone being removed, *the Savior came forth*. He was free; *raised up no more to die*; He stood erect, beheld by His followers, who, alas, did not know Him! And even so we, when the divine life has come, and the divine energy has burst our tomb, come forth to a new life—no more to die! Then men of the world know us not, because they knew *Him* not; they misunderstand our motives, they misrepresent our actions, they contort our words—because now we have a life of which *they* are not the subjects, and have come into a resurrection-state to which they are utter strangers!

You see the parallel holds. We, too, in the same manner as Christ was raised from the dead, have been made to live in newness of life, even as the Master Himself said, “As the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; even so the Son quickens whom He wills.”

Please note here, dearly beloved friends that in the resurrection of Christ, as in our salvation, there was put forth nothing short of a *divine power*. It was not angelic or arch-angelic, much less was it human. What shall we say of those who think that conversion is worked by the free will of man? Who ascribe man’s salvation to his own goodness of disposition, or to his willingness to accept that which God presents to him? Beloved, when we shall see the dead in the graves rise by their own power, *then* expect to see ungodly sinners turn to Christ! It is not the ministry, it is not the Word preached, nor the Word heard in itself; all the power proceeds from the Holy Spirit!

Observe again, that this power was *irresistible*. All the soldiers and the high priests could not keep the body of Christ in the tomb! Death could not hold Christ in his bonds. When the life-pangs first began to move in Jesus, He could no longer be held by death; then was death swallowed up in victory! The Father brought forth His begotten Son, and said, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” He was the first begotten from the dead! Irresistible is the power put forth, too, in the Christian. No sin, no corruption, no temptation, no devils in hell, nor sinners upon earth can ever stop the hand of God’s grace when it intends to convert a man! If God says, “You shall,” man shall not say, “I will not,” or, if he does, as the trees of the forests before the hurricane are torn up by the roots, so shall the human will give place to the irresistible power of divine grace!

Observe, too, that the power which raised Christ from the dead was *glorious*. It reflected great honor upon God and brought great dismay upon the hosts of evil. So there is great glory to God in the conversion of every sinner!

Lastly, it was *everlasting power*. “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him.” So we, being raised from the dead, go not back to our dead works nor to our old corruptions, but we live unto God. Because He lives, we live also, for we are dead and our life is hid

with Christ in God. The parallel will hold in every point, however minute; “Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

You see I have not stretched the compasses half-way yet. We have only proceeded as far as to see Christ raised from the dead; but the power exhibited in the Christian goes farther than this—it goes onward to the ASCENSION. If you will carefully read the story of the ascension, you will notice first that Christ’s ascension was *contrary to nature*. How could the body of a man without any means be borne upward into the air? “While He blessed them He was taken out of their sight.” So the Christian’s rising above the world, his breathing another atmosphere, is contrary to nature. How would you marvel if you saw a man suddenly rise up into the sky? Wonder more when you see a Christian rise above temptation, worldliness, and sin; when you discover him forsaking those things which once were his delight, and mounting towards heaven!

You will observe again, that the disciples *could not long see the rising Savior*. “A cloud received Him out of their sight.” So in our case, too, if we rise as we should rise, if the Spirit of God works in us all the good pleasure of His Will, men will soon lose sight of us. They will not understand us; they will be certain to run here and there, wondering at this, and marveling at that; they will call us mad, fanatical, wild, enthusiastic, and I know not what else! And we, on our part, must not wonder at it, for now we look down and wonder at them as much as they wonder at us! They think it strange that we should be looking for unseen things, and hoping for that which we see not; we, on the other hand, look down upon them, and wonder how it is that they can heap together things of clay, and find a living joy in dying things, and fix eternal hopes on shadows that are soon—so soon—to melt away forever!

Jesus Christ continued to ascend by that same divine power, until He had reached the seat of heaven above; He was gone, really gone from earth altogether. Such is the Christian’s life. He continues to ascend—the Lord makes him dead to the world, and the carnal multitudes know him no more. Where his treasure is, his heart is also. He is risen with Christ, and his affection is set on things above, not on things on the earth.

See, beloved, we have stretched our compass somewhat wide now, when we say that there is as much divine power seen in raising the Christian above the world, as in raising Christ from the grave into heaven. But that is not all. When the Master had come to heaven, we are told in the text that He was made *to sit down at the right hand of God*. Sitting at the right hand implies *honor, pleasure, and power*. Conceive the change! “He was despised and rejected of men; a man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” They spat in His face, and bowed the knee, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews.” He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High! He was full of misery—“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death,” He said. The plowers made deep furrows upon His back, and His visage was more marred than that of any man. But now His joy is full; He is at the right hand of God, where there are pleasures forevermore! He was a worm and no man—the despised of the people. “All they who see Me laugh Me to scorn.” They shake their heads; they thrust out their lips, saying, “He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, seeing He delights in Him.” But see Him now! He has sat down forever at the right hand of God, even the Father! Note the change from depths of reproach to heights of glory; from fearful deeps of sorrow to glorious summits of bliss; from weakness, shame, and suffering, to strength, and majesty, and dominion, and glory! Such is the change in the Christian—just such a change. You, too, what were you? Were you worthy to have been cast upon a dunghill? No, scarcely fit for that; you were like salt which had lost its savor, neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, and God and man might have cast you out; you were utterly worthless and fit for nothing! As for suffering, ah, how were your bones broken by convictions of sin! The sorrows of death compassed you, and the pains of hell get hold upon you, for the arrows of God stuck fast in your loins, and the sword of God pierced to the dividing asunder of your soul and spirit. As for power, what power had you? You could not lift a finger! You could not pray! You could not believe! And yet, where are you now? Why, if you know where you are, you are this day as a believer sitting down at the right hand of God—God’s beloved one, ministered unto of angels—God’s son, endowed with power, and made to sit and reign together with the Lord Jesus Christ! All that sitting at the right hand of God can mean in respect to the man Christ Jesus, it means in respect to every believer! For the apostle Paul, in Hebrews, writes con-

cerning man in Christ Jesus, “What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.” At the right hand of God is the believer’s place at this very day! May an act of faith give you a sweet enjoyment of it!

But note next, that Christ was not only put at God’s right hand, but He had a complete triumph given—*far above all principalities and powers*, that neither good angels have eminence compared with Him, nor evil angels any power in contrast with Him. It is not only said that He was above them, but *far* above them. And so is the believer. As for evil angels, the Lord shall tread Satan under your feet shortly; as for holy angels, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” So that we, in the person of our Lord, are far above all principalities and powers!

You will not fail to observe that man has also universal dominion, Follow the passage—“*And has put all things under His feet.*” And so has the Lord put all things under His people’s feet. Their sins and corruptions, their sorrows and afflictions, this world and the world to come, are all made subject unto us, when He makes us kings and priests, that we may reign forever! No, as if this were not enough, Christ is then honored with a gracious headship. He is made to be head over all things to His Church, and He is made the fullness of that Church, for, “He fills all-in-all.” But, as if the believer must be made like his Lord even here, observe that if Christ fills all-in-all, the Church is His fullness. In Christ, the Church is the head of the universe under God. For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the sea.

I do not know whether I have brought forth the parallel completely. If you view our Lord as descending in His agony ever so deep, and then behold Him in His glory ever so high; if by combining judgment and imagination, hope and fear, you can get some glimmering of a thought of how low the Savior went, and how loftily He climbed, then you may transfer that to your own state—the same power is at work today, has been at work, and will be at work in you—to lift you up from equal depths to equal heights, that in all things you may be like unto Christ; and having been like He is, numbered with the transgressors, you may like He obtain the lot and the heritage to reign forever and ever at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens!

I cannot speak on such a topic as this—it overpowers me; it is by far too grand for my limited gifts of utterance, but I trust not too great for human delight. We can delight in it, and suck honey, marrow, and fatness from it.

II. Now we must note, in the second place, THE REASON OF THIS.

Why does God put forth as much power towards every Christian as He did in His beloved Son? Well, my brothers and sisters, I believe the reason is not only that the same power was *required*, and that by this means He gets great glory, but the reason is this—*union*. It lays in the word—union. There must be the same divine power in the member that there is in the head, or else where is the union? If we are one with Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, there must be a likeness. Note, first, that *there cannot be a body at all*—I mean not a true living body—unless the members are of the same nature as the head. If you could conceive a human head joined to bestial limbs, you would at once understand that you were not looking upon a natural body. If here were a dog’s foot, and there a lion’s mane, and yet a man’s eyes, and a human brow, you could never conceive of it as a body of God’s creation. You would look upon it as a strange monstrosity, a thing to be put out of sight, or to be shown for fools to gaze at as a nine-day wonder; but certainly not as a thing to display divine wisdom and power! Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, you remember, had an image of which the “head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay.” Do you think that the person of Christ is to be so odd a medley? Our head, we know, is like much fine gold. Thanks be unto God, we are well persuaded that a body of God’s making will be of the same

material all the way through! He will not have, I say, a perfectly glorious head allied to members in which the divine energy has never been seen. The same power which sparkles about the head must shine in the members, or else it cannot be a body constituted according to the analogy of nature, or according to the usual methods of the divine Worker.

This is not the most forcible mode of putting it. Let us notice that if all the members were not like the head, and did not display the same power, *it would not be glorious to God*. Some of the old tapestries were made at different times and in different pieces, and occasionally the remark is heard, "That part of the battle-scene must have been worked by a different needle from the other. You can see here abundance, and there a deficiency of skill; that corner of the picture has been executed by a far inferior hand." Now, suppose in this great tapestry which God is working—the great needlework of His love and power—the mystical person of Christ—that we should say, "The head has been worked, we can see, by a divine hand; that glorious brow, those fire-darting eyes, those honey-dropping lips are of God, but that hand is by another and an inferior artist, and that foot is far from perfect in workmanship." Why, it would not be glorious to our great artist; but when the whole picture is by Him, we see that He did not begin what He could not finish, and that He had not inserted a single thread of inferior value!

Note again, that *it would not be glorious to our head*. I saw the other day a cathedral window in the process of being filled with the richest stained glass. I think the great person of Christ may be compared to that great cathedral window. The artists had put in the head of the chief figure in the most beautiful glass that ever human skill could make, or human gold could purchase; I have not seen it since, but imagine for an instant that the workers afterward found that their money failed them, and they were obliged to fill in the panes with common glass. There is the window, there is nothing but a head in noble colors, and the rest is, perhaps, white glass, or some poor ordinary blue and yellow. It is never finished. What an unhappy thing, for who will care to see the head? It has lost its fullness. There is the head, but it is strangely circumstanced. If you complete it with anything inferior, you mar and spoil it; it is the head of an imperfect piece of workmanship. But, dear friends, when all the rest of the picture shall have been worked out with just the same costly material as the first part, then the head itself shall be placed in a worthy position, and shall derive glory as well as confer glory upon the body! You can read this parable without an interpreter.

I must add that if anything, the power manifested in the member should be greater than that manifested in the head—*if anything, it should be greater*. A marble palace is to be built. Well, now, if they build (and oh, how many people do this kind of thing in their houses) the front with costly stone, and then erect the back with common stock bricks; if the pinnacles are made to soar with rich Carrara to the skies, and then down in the walls common stone is seen, everybody says, "This was done to save money." But if the whole structure throughout, from top to bottom, is of the same kind, then it reflects much honor upon the great builder, and declares the wealth which he was able to expend upon the structure. But suppose that some of the blocks of marble used in the foundation have lain in a very dark quarry, and have been subject to damaging influences, so that they have lost their gloss and polish—then surely they will need more polishing—more workmanship to make them look like that bright cornerstone, that noble pinnacle which is brought out with shouts. Christ Jesus was in His nature *fit*, without any preparing, to be a part of the great temple of God. We in our nature were unfit, and so, if anything, the power should be greater; but we are compelled to rejoice that we find in Scripture that it is just the same power which lifted the man Christ Jesus to the throne of God, which now shall lift each one of us to live and reign with Him!

Moreover, to conclude this point, the loving promise of our Lord never be fulfilled (and He will never be contented unless it is), unless His people do have the same power spent upon them as He has. What is His prayer? "I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." And then He adds, "The glory which You gave Me I have given them." You know how the union stands—"I in them, and You in Me." We must be like our head! Is He crowned—we must be crowned, too. He is a good Husband; He will enjoy nothing without His Spouse. When she was poor, He became poor for her sake; when she was despised, He was spit upon, too; and now that He is in heaven, He must have her there! If He sits on a throne, she must have a throne, too; if He has fullness of

joy, and honor, and glory forever—then so must she! He will not be in heaven, and leave her behind; and He will not enjoy a single privilege of heaven without her being a sharer with Him! For all these reasons, then, you see it is clear why there should be the same power in the believer as there was in Christ.

III. Well, WHAT ARE THE INFERENCES FROM ALL THIS? Two or three—they will only be hinted at, so do not grow weary.

The first inference is this—*what a marvelous thing a Christian is!* I am a marvelous person if I am a believer in Christ. I am by doubting and fearing led to look down upon myself as despicable—but when I reflect that the Eternal has put His engraving tool upon me—no, that He has exerted the whole of His omnipotence in me, and will continue to exert it till He brings me to Himself—Lord, what is man? How strangely honored! How near have You brought him to Yourself, so that now there is no creature between God and man! God first—man as a creature far distant, but yet second—as an adopted and regenerated being, brought as near to God as a son is brought to a father! And who shall tell how near this may be? Lord, what a mighty thing can Your grace make out of that poor crawling worm called man! How have You exalted him, and made him to be higher even than principalities and powers! Let us love and bless God who has done this much for us!

Then, secondly, *why should I doubt God's power for others?* If God has put forth so much power to save *me*, cannot He save *anyone*? The might which brought Christ from the dead, and took Him to heaven is such a tremendous power that it surely can bring the drunkard, the harlot, the blasphemer to Christ! Let me pray, then, for the chief of sinners; let me encourage the vilest of the vile to believe in Jesus, for there is ability in Christ to save just such!

Again, *why should I ever have any doubts about my ultimate security?* Is this irresistible power engaged to save me? Then I must be saved! Does the devil vow that he will destroy me? Do my corruptions threaten to overwhelm me? Who can stay Omnipotence? Who shall come into the struggle with the Most High, or match himself with the Eternal? Aha! Aha! You enemies of my soul, I laugh you to scorn! If God is with us, who can be against us?

And lastly, *how doleful the state of those who are not converted.* See where you lie—so dead, so helpless, so ruined, so undone—needing nothing less than this eternal power to save you from the wrath to come! Ah, indeed I know this to be the case with many present here. Our preaching does you very little good. You come here in the morning, and I know what you do in the afternoon. You would not be absent from listening to the morning's sermon, nor would you be absent from the evening's pleasure! And when the Bible and the hymnbook have been put up, the newspaper will take their place. There are some who sit under our earnest appeals (and thank God they are earnest, and often prevalent), and yet they are as unmoved as slabs of marble when oil runs down them! You are in a state of death and ruin! I see no human power that can help you—in vain the minister, in vain the preaching; your damnation is sure, you will go down to hell and perish, and that without mercy. Yet gladly would I hope that God would have pity upon you! Still Christ is lifted up and, “whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” If you can now believe in Christ, the mighty power of God is working in you! Trust Him now, and you give the best evidence that Jesus' irresistible power has been displayed upon you, as it was upon the person of the King of kings! The Lord bless you with His mercy, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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