

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S NAME

NO. 2592

A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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*“And His name through faith in His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know:
Yes, the faith which is by Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”
Acts 3:16.*

YOU see, dear friends, that this notable miracle was worked by means of the name of Jesus. Twice is it mentioned: “His name through faith in His name has made this man strong.” It will be well for us to look back to see what name it was which Peter had used in working this miracle of healing. Turn to the sixth verse: “Then Peter said . . . In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” He did not omit either of our Lord's names, nor did he flinch from telling the Jews that it was the same Jesus whom they had despised, and called the Nazarene, or the man of Nazareth. It is always well to adapt our speech to those who are about us. You remember how Cobbett said that he used the English language. “I speak,” he said, “not only so that men can understand me if they will, but so that they cannot misunderstand me if they try to do so.” And I believe that it is a very wise way of speaking when you wish to convince men concerning an important truth which you desire to convey to their very heart. Peter here seems to say, “They shall not think that I am speaking of another Jesus, or of another Christ; it shall be ‘Jesus Christ.’ Neither shall they imagine that there may be another anointed Jesus, but it shall be ‘Jesus Christ of Nazareth.’” And, afterwards, when he had used that name, and the miracle had been worked, he went on still further to secure his purpose by making the most definite charges against his hearers, repeating them in detail, that they might know for sure that the Christ who had healed the lame man was the same Christ whom they had with wicked hands crucified and slain. It was important to convince them of this fact, that they might be brought to repentance concerning it, and then might be led to believe in that same Savior, and find life and peace through Him.

I desire to speak just as plainly now and always, that God the Holy Spirit, who would have all His servants use great plainness of speech, may be pleased to bless what is said. My first remarks upon the text will be concerning *a name of power*; and you will know the run of my thought when I tell you that I shall next speak upon *a case in proof of the power of that name*; and, thirdly—and a very important point that will be—I shall mention *a necessity in reference to the use of that name if we desire to see the power of it*.

I. First, then, here is A NAME OF POWER. We will meditate for a while upon that name, and consider each particular part of it. It was by that name, whatever it was, that this lame man was made strong; it was by faith in that name that he received “perfect soundness.”

The first name mentioned by Peter is “*Jesus*.” Of all the names of our blessed Lord, this is the most charming to our ear. Well might the Duke of Argyll say, when Rutherford began to speak upon the name Jesus, “Ring that bell again.” It has been so dear to Christians that they have tried to make something out of each syllable and even every letter of it—fancifully so, perhaps; but, still, thus clearly proving that the name was indeed as honey in their mouths, and as sweetest music in their ears.

Jesus signifies, *Savior*; and, for certain, He that was to save us had need of power; and we have cause to rejoice that our Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth. If Joshua had power to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land, and to drive out the Canaanites, much more power has our Lord Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who will surely bring into the Heavenly Canaan all the chosen seed, driving before Him every enemy. He that is our Redeemer was also the Creator of everything that exists: “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.” And He is also the Sustainer of all things: “By Him all things consist.” He is a Savior, and a great one; long before His birth, Isaiah wrote, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting

Father, The Prince of Peace.” In that name Jesus, slumbers omnipotence. The same power that made all worlds lies hidden in that name. The power that will raise the dead, and make new heavens and a new earth, is in that name, saving this poor fallen world from all its degradation, unswathing the planet of all the mists that now surround it, and bidding it shine forth, like all its sister stars, to the glory of God who made it. There is none like Jesus among all the sons of men; who among the mighty, is like unto him, a Standard-bearer among ten thousand, and Himself the Altogether Lovely? That name of Jesus has infinite power in it; but we must not dwell on that name alone, for Peter made use of others.

Next, consider the name which follows, “*Christ*.” “The Messiah” was probably the term which Peter used in speaking to these people, and it was the title which they would most readily recognize. “The Christ” is our name for Jesus; *the Sent One*, the believing Hebrews called Him—*the Anointed One*, we delight to call Him now. We see at once what wonderful power dwells in Jesus when we connect Him with His mission from God. He was no amateur Savior, but He was commissioned of the Father, and He received of the Father all that was necessary for the accomplishment of the work He was sent to perform. In the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, like a dove, and abode upon Him; and afterwards the Father said once and yet again, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Jesus, being both sent and anointed of God, when we believe His Word, we know that He speaks as the Ambassador and Representative of God in heaven; yes, He is even more than that, for He is Himself “very God of very God.” When we trust His work, we know that we are trusting to a work which the Father covenanted of old to accept, and which is part of the eternal purpose of the Ever-blessed. We are not resting our souls in the hand of one who promises to save, but has no Divine credentials. He is Christ, the Anointed, according to that verse of the psalmist: “You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.” That subject of the anointing of Christ is a very large one, and a very blessed one; think it over prayerfully and gratefully. But, just now, it is enough for my purpose to merely mention that a part of the power of our Savior’s name lies, first, in His personal title and office—Jesus, the Savior—and, next, in the character which has been bestowed upon Him as God’s Anointed Representative, doing all that He does with the authority of the Eternal Jehovah, and speaks to men as the fully-qualified Messenger of the Most High—Jesus, the Christ—the Anointed Savior!

But, oh! That other title, “Jesus Christ of Nazareth”—Peter did well to put it there, for though it provoked opposition, doubtless, yet what would we have done—wherein would lie the sweetness of the name of Jesus—if we could not connect it with all that is included in the mention of Nazareth? This term seems to bring the Savior—the Anointed One—into the most intimate connection with our poor fallen humanity: “Jesus Christ of Nazareth.” Many thought that He was born there; and though that was a mistake, yet it was there that He was brought up, and it was there that He spent those many years of His retirement. It was with that despised city, and with a despised people, that the name “Nazarene” still further connected Him. He was truly man, “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.” He was not called “Jesus Christ of heaven;” but “Jesus Christ of Nazareth.” His name is not associated with the grandest city on the earth; He is not called, “Jesus Christ of Jerusalem,” though there He went, early in life, that He might be about His Father’s business, and since it was the city of the great King, it was His city; and, one day, “the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end;” but for the present, we know Him as “Jesus Christ of Nazareth”—Jesus Christ of a rustic people—Jesus Christ of those whom they called boors—Jesus Christ of the poor and needy—Jesus Christ of the artisan class and the carpenter’s shop. You know that, at Nazareth, He was called the carpenter’s son, so this name reminds us of Jesus Christ in His humiliation—Jesus Christ taking upon Himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men, toiling and suffering here. This is the name which, from its very weakness, is fuller of strength than any other; for, inasmuch as Jesus descended into the depths of our humanity, now has He ascended to the highest place in glory. Though He came down, and was lower than the angels for the suffering of death, yet, because of that very descent, God has highly exalted Him, and crowned Him with glory and honor. Blessed be the love that has raised so high Him who was known here as “Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”

Now this name, as Peter pronounced it, gave strength to the feet and ankle bones of the poor man who was lame from birth, “and he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” Before I speak to you especially about this miracle, I want, for

a few minutes, to show you *what power there is in the name of Jesus*. The name of Jesus made the devils tremble; when they heard His name, they began to cry out, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with You, You Jesus of Nazareth? Are You come to destroy us? I know You who You are, the Holy One of God." At the very mention of His name, they began to quiver. That strong one, armed, who often keeps his house and keeps his goods in a horrible and deadly peace, yet knows well that there is One stronger than he is, and the very footfall of Jesus makes him turn pale with dread. These two met in the wilderness; three times they closed in single combat, and the devil remembers to this day the grip of those strong hands which afterwards destroyed his empire on the tree of Calvary, and therefore he does not want to come into collision with Him again, and he trembles at the very sound of His almighty name.

Remember also, dear friends that the name of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" not only made devils tremble, and cry out, but it cast them out of those whom they had tormented. Christ's disciples cast out devils in His name; the devils would not have gone because Peter, and James, and John, in their own names commanded them to depart. No; the devils would have laughed at them; and if the apostles had argued or reasoned with them, they would not have stirred; but one hot shot, fired in the name of Jesus, made them quit the fortress instantly. They were great cowards whenever the name of Jesus was mentioned, and away they fled down to the deeps, as they did when He allowed them to enter into the swine at Gadara.

A curious thing about that name of power is that it was able to cast out devils even when it was used by some who did not follow Christ. You remember that there was one who was a sort of freelance, who was not with our Lord's disciples, and that very orthodox Christian, the apostle John, said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Your name; and we forbid him, because he follows not with us." Have not you and I also sometimes felt as if people had better not try to help in evangelizing the world, because they do not work exactly in our way—our way, of course, being the most proper way possible? There are many people in the world who are very active in forbidding; but "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" said to John, concerning this man who was casting out devils, "Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me." But what a power there must have been in the name of Jesus that, even when it was mentioned by these irregular followers—these "unordained hedge-priests," as some would have called them—these people that had taken to preaching without having a bishop's hands laid on their heads in proper style—even when they mentioned the name of Jesus, away went the devils directly.

And, what is more marvelous still, even when ungodly men mentioned that name, the devils had to depart, because the force does not lie in the person using the name, but in the name itself. "Unto the wicked, God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My covenant in your mouth?" Yet, again and again, Christ has honored His name even when ungodly men have used it. In due time, He will let the ungodly know how ill they dealt with His holy name, but for the honor of His name He has proved what it could accomplish even by them. You know how our Lord told His disciples that there will be many who, at the last, will say to Him, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? And in Your name have cast out devils? And in Your name done many wonderful works?" But Christ's answer to them will be, "I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity." They were even working iniquity while they were mentioning Christ's name, for with them it was an iniquity that they should have presumed to do so; yet the name itself was not robbed of its power. Albeit it was out of its element, and, probably, might not exert all its force under such circumstances, yet, if it came into contact with a devil, sooner than the devil should conquer Christ's name, God would own that name even when a worker of iniquity used it. So it was in Christ's day, and so has it been since; what power there is, then, in that name!

We know, besides, dear friends, from Scripture, that as the name of Jesus had power with devils, so it had power also with men. All forms of sickness yielded to that name. There was great force in the argument implied in the centurion's words when he sent to Christ, saying, "Lord, trouble not Yourself: for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto You: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it." He recognized that Christ was commissioned of God, and that therefore He had Divine authority at the back of Him. Jesus had but to speak, and His Word was potent with leprosy, with fevers, with drowsies, yes, and with death itself; and His servants also proved

the power of His name in healing the sick. In the case of this lame man, "His name through faith in His name" had made the cripple strong, and given Him "perfect soundness" in the presence of all the people.

Once more, the name of Jesus is indeed mighty, for it has power with God Himself. Hence it is that we never pray without using that blessed name, that is to say, if we are wise. We love to feel all through our prayer, and to say when it is ended, "In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." The keys of heaven are in the hands of that man who knows how to use aright the name of Jesus. In your deepest sorrow, this name, like a life-buoy, shall keep you afloat on the very crest of the billows, if you can but plead it before God. When you appear to have no arguments in prayer, and heaven seems like brass above your head, use but the name of Jesus, and your prayer shall enter into the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth, and infinite blessing shall come streaming down to you. The name of Jesus is a mighty power in heaven, in earth, and in the deep places under the earth. There is no part of the universe where the King's name is without influence; the warrant from His throne may be executed among angels, and among devils, and certainly shall not be powerless among the sons of men. "Where the word of a king is, there is power;" and where the name of the King of kings is on the proclamation, who shall be able to resist it? The name of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" is full of power; oh, that those who are believers would more and more prove its power, and that those who are not believers may soon feel its gracious influence! May this double result follow from our gathering here; and unto His name shall be praise and glory, world without end!

II. But now, secondly, I have to call your attention to A CASE IN PROOF OF THE POWER OF CHRIST'S NAME.

The case in proof is this. There was a man who, being born lame, was all of a sudden perfectly restored; not by the use of any medicine or surgery, but simply by the apostle Peter's utterance of these words, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." *The man had never walked*, so you must remember that, when the power came into his feet and ankle bones, he did not know how to walk. You know that you have to teach your children to walk; as they gather strength, they acquire the art, for there is an art in it; and I should suppose that, if a man had been lame from his birth, and a surgeon could suddenly make his ankle bones strong, he would not be able to walk. He would not know what to do with his legs, having never used them; certainly, he would be exceedingly awkward in his first movements; but this man went through his gymnastic lessons very rapidly when the miracle was worked on him, for he walked, he ran, he leaped, to the glory of God, and that all of a sudden.

"But," says one, "he was a beggar, and perhaps he had shammed lameness." No, he had not, for he had been carried and laid daily at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; and, as Dean Afford very properly remarks, this was a clear proof that he was really lame, because no beggar would pay a man to carry him, and so have to divide the alms which he received. No, a man who was shamming lameness would get there as much unseen as possible, but he would not pay his bearers; and I suppose that they would not have carried him unless they had been paid. If we had to carry a heavy fellow every morning, and we had any suspicion that he could walk if he chose, we should drop him down, and in a very short time he would have to find out that he could not be carried about if he could walk, and I daresay that he would soon take to his legs. This is part of the proof that this was a real case of lifelong lameness.

This man, in his sad state through congenital lameness, *sat there begging*. I do not say that all forms of beggary have the same influence upon all men; but, as far as my observation goes, begging is a very degrading business. I would suppose that persons have risen out of almost all ranks of society, and have attained to eminence; and that out of every trade men of genius have come; but beggary, somehow, represses and quenches anything like a spark of genius within the spirit. Many of the mendicants whom one has seen give this impression; and in foreign travel one has sometimes been beset by scores and even hundreds of them. In some lands, the police strike them, and drive them away, as if they were so many dogs; and certainly the Neapolitan *lazzaroni* are by no means desirable companions. As I have looked into the faces of these people, they have seemed to me as if hardly anything could raise them from their degradation. It was probably much the same with this man, who was not only lame in his feet, but had gradually become very lame in his soul. Yet, notwithstanding all that, the name of Jesus kindled his very heart, it entered his inmost soul, and penetrated the very marrow of his being, so that he became capable of the same faith that was in the soul of Peter, and he was able to trust in Jesus, if not at once to the same degree, yet with the same truthfulness as John, who stood there, and looked upon him. Our Lord Jesus gazes upon all of us, wherever we may be, with an eye of pity; and if there are any who are degraded, not merely by poverty, but also by sin, if any have sunk as low as human beings can sink, He

is still able, by that mighty name of His, to bring them again from Bashan, yes, to bring up His people from the depths of the sea. Oh, the glory of that matchless name!

The way that Peter and John went to work was very wise; *the man could not walk, but he could look*, so they first of all called his attention to themselves by saying, "Look at us," in order that he might be ready to listen to their message, and might know what they said, partly by seeing what they did, for, in hearing, though we cannot hear with our eyes, yet, somehow, the eye mightily helps when the preacher has any kind of action whatsoever; and Peter needed to have action in his sermon on this occasion.

Having attracted the man's full attention, *Peter commanded him to rise and walk*. He not merely told him what he was to do, but he said to him, in tones of authority, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Having given the command, and perceiving that the man was ready to obey it, *Peter helped him to obey it*; and, as he raised him up, the strength came into his ankle bones so fast that the man sprang up; and he was so thoroughly cured that he began at once to walk and to leap.

What this man really did was to yield to the gentle pressure that Peter put upon him. After the word of command was given, he expected that power would come with that command; and, yielding and expecting, he was incited to make the attempt to rise; he did make the attempt, and up he stood, exerting the power as God was pleased to grant it to him. He stood; he walked; he leaped; and in it all he was "praising God." Surely, there never came from any lips a song that was truer than his. I think I see him leap up, and say, "Hallelujah!" And then leap up again, and then again, showing to everybody how perfect was the cure, letting everyone see what perfect soundness he had received, and all the while saying, "Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord!" There never was before their eyes a finer specimen of what the name of Christ could do. I am not going to dwell upon that point, because it is clear enough, and every converted man is just as plainly a proof of Christ's power. He, too, hears the word of command; he, too, obeys; and, when he obeys, the strength goes with the command; and, obeying, he also is made perfectly whole.

III. I shall want you to think of that case in proof while I close my discourse with this point—A NECESSITY IN REFERENCE TO THE USE OF THAT NAME OF POWER if we would see blessed results following.

Let me read the text to you again, that you may see how very remarkably the name of Christ and faith are mixed up. They both occur twice in the verse. What was it that worked the miracle? Was it the name of Christ, or was it faith in that name? Listen: "His name through faith in His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know." And then it is added: "Yes, the faith which is by Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all," as if to put the crown on the head of faith rather than on the name of Christ, for faith is sure never to steal that crown. Faith always crowns Christ, and therefore Christ crowns faith. "Your faith has saved you," said Christ to the woman that was a sinner. "No," says someone, "it was Christ who saved her." That is also true; but Christ said that it was her faith that saved her, and He knew. So, here, it was the name of Christ that worked the miracle, but it was worked through faith in that name.

Whose faith was it? It would puzzle any of us to tell for certain except we say that it was the faith of all three. I believe that, first, it was *the faith of Peter and John*. It was their faith that brought healing to this man, just as when, on another occasion, when the man was let down by his friends into Christ's presence, He saw *their* faith, and said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, your sins be forgiven you." In this case, it was beyond doubt the faith of Peter and John that made them use the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth; it was their faith that made them give the command, "Rise up and walk;" it was their faith that made Peter stretch out his hand, expecting that, by helping the man, he would be restored. Now, dear friends, you and I go forth—the most of us—to preach and to teach. I am happy to be able to say the most of us, for there are very many here who, in one way or another, are busy in the Lord's service. When we go to speak to men, let us always go in the name of Christ. If we go in our own name—well, they may receive us or reject us as they please, without any sin; but if we go in the name of Christ, we can plead His own words, "He that despises you, despises Me." We may speak very boldly, and very positively, when we speak in His name. If you have any doubt about what you are going to preach, do not preach till you have gotten rid of your doubts. If you have smoke in your room, do not ask your friend in; enjoy it yourself if you like it; but, until the chimney has been swept, and the air has been purified, do not invite visitors. Doubts about this doctrine and that had better not be brought forward by us; we certainly cannot expect to do any good by what we ourselves do not believe; but we must preach that

which we are sure is true because we dare set the hand and seal of Christ to it as the very truth which He has made us to know by the effectual working of His Holy Spirit.

Then, next, we must command men to believe. I do not think that there is enough of this done by any of us; we ought to say to them, not merely as an entreaty, "Please, believe in Christ;" but as a command, "Believe in Christ." Oh, that we had faith enough sometimes to address people in that fashion! There are some who do not appear to have any faith at all, for they say, "It is no use telling dead sinners to believe." Probably it would be no use for them to do it. I heard one of them say, "You might as well shake a pocket handkerchief over the dead in their graves, as bid sinners believe," so they might, because they have not faith; but preaching is an exercise of faith; and when we address sinners, it ought to be as if we were about to work a miracle. We should never go to talk to a single sinner, or to a Sunday school class, or to a congregation, as if we had any power whatever in ourselves to influence them. We must go in the name of Christ to be miracle-workers, and say to the sinner, "Believe in Jesus. We command you, in Christ's name, to believe on Him." My dear friends here who are unconverted, it is not a thing that you may do, or may not do, just as you like; but it is God's command that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent—a command which He has sanctioned by a most solemn threat: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." Nothing could be more solemn than that. Remember how Paul spoke to the Athenians on Mars' Hill: "The times of this ignorance, God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent." The gospel is in the nature of a command of Christ; and what if they say, "There is no power in the creature"? That is quite true. Was there any power in Lazarus when Jesus said to him, "Lazarus, come forth"? No, but Lazarus came forth, as Christ commanded him; and He still bids His servants say, "You deaf, hear the Word of the Lord. You dead, awake and arise." This is even as Ezekiel spoke in the valley of vision: "Thus says the Lord, you dry bones live." If we can speak like that, it will be by our faith that the strengthless man receives strength.

After giving the command, we are still to believe, and to put out our hand to help the man who is going to rise. That is the work of those who look after people when the sermon is done. Two or three friends here (I wish there were more of them) always expect to see converts after every service. You will see them on the lookout in the aisles or at the doorways as soon as I have finished, and some of them, I daresay, have been on the watch at the back of the galleries even while I have been preaching. Perhaps they have brought you here, or else somebody else has brought you here, and that somebody else has let them know, that they may be after you. They want to give you a hand, to help you up out of your lameness that you may leap up, and begin to praise the name of the Lord.

Still, lest I should send you away with any mistake upon your mind, let me say that *this man would not have been healed if it had not been for his own faith*. There must be the personal faith of the saved one; and that this man had faith, I firmly believe, because he went into the Temple praising God. He did not receive the blessing, and then have a dead, cold heart about it; but he began at once to praise the Lord. What did this man do? When he was told to look at the apostles, he did so; he attended to their word, and when they told him to rise, he yielded to them. He did not say, "I cannot," but he made an attempt to rise; and, yielding, he believed that what they said could not be said in mockery—that if he was commanded to rise, he would be enabled to rise. I would that some poor sinner here would think after the same fashion: "I was not brought to the Tabernacle tonight for Mr. Spurgeon to tell me to believe in Jesus, and for me to wish to believe in Him, to desire to believe in Him, to attempt to believe in Him, and yet for me not to find the strength to do it." The gospel is never sent to mock any of you, depend upon that. God has set before you an open door—not a closed one; or if it seems to be closed, He bids you knock, and He will open it to you. Some will not knock, they will not believe; they get into a sullen state of desperate despair, and they will not rise. But the poor soul whom God blesses, no sooner hears the command, than he is on the alert to obey; and he no sooner feels the cheering touch of the friend who has come to help him up, than he responds to it; and though he has no strength of his own, the needed strength comes pouring in, and he stands. Oh, how surprised he is to find that he can stand! What a treat it is to stand! I know what a pleasure it is to be able to walk across the room, and downstairs, with the aid of a cane, after I have been unable to put my feet to the ground for weeks; but I cannot know a thousandth part of the pleasure of this man, who had never walked a step before, when he followed the two apostles, who had spoken to him in the name of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth." He not only walked, but he felt strength enough to leap; and then he cried, with all his might, "Hallelujah! Bless the Lord!" till all the people around took up the strain. Well, that may happen to you also, dear friend. "Believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved"—saved at this very moment. God grant it, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ACTS 3:1-21

Verse 1. *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.*

Peter and John seem to have been linked in closest friendship. Peter had been brought back by John when he was almost despairing after having denied his Master. John lovingly found him out, and made him his associate; and now they "went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer." Observe, here, how very sweetly the Old Testament dispensation melts into the new. The Temple was no longer what it had been before; the type was of no further use now that the great Antitype of the Temple had come; yet these apostles still went up to it at the hour of prayer. There are some men who are great at destroying. It will be time to destroy the old when the new is quite ready; and even then, it may be very possible to let the darkness gradually melt away into a twilight, and so the day shall come with no great gap, no marked surprise. So Peter and John went up to the Temple at the same hour as others went. It is folly to be singular, except when to be singular is to be something more right than others.

2, 3. *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.*

This seems to have been the custom about the Temple gates, as it is about the doors of many churches on the Continent. For instance, you could not approach the door of a certain church in Rome without being solicited, perhaps, by a score of beggars. I do not suppose that it was so in Judea in its prosperous days; but when religion does not prosper, beggars are sure to be multiplied; and now that the very spirit of godliness had gone, almsgiving was done in public, and hence the beggars appeared in public.

4-7. *And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, I give to you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

The man had never stood upon his feet in all his life, and was so unable to move that he had to be carried to the Temple gates to beg; and yet, at the mention of the great and glorious name of Jesus, his feet and ankle bones immediately received strength.

8-11. *And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

You are not at all surprised that he held Peter and John; it was but natural that he should follow them wherever they went, for he owed so much to them, and they were the best friends that he had ever had. He was filled with reverence for them because of what they had worked upon him; and now, lest they should go away, he held them; and "all the people ran together unto them . . . greatly wondering." He who was healed by Christ's wonderful name was wondering, and the people who saw him healed were all wondering. I suppose that wonder mingles with all true worship. All wonder is not worship; but where there is adoration of God, and a sense of His great goodness and of our unworthiness, there seems always to be a large amount of wonder. We shall even—

*"Sing with wonder and surprise,
His lovingkindness in the skies."*

12. *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, You men of Israel, why marvel you at this? Or why look you so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

Peter could well see that the people attributed to himself and John more than was right, so he thus had an opportunity of preaching the gospel to them, and you may be certain that he did not miss it.

13. *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus;—*

Or, rather, as you have it in the Revised Version with more correctness, “has glorified His *Servant* Jesus,” for His Son may be said to be glorified already. But Jesus had taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and God had “glorified His *Servant* Jesus;”—

13-15. *Whom you delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead; of which we are witnesses.*

I want you to note here how Peter will have it that the God of the gospel is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. I do not hesitate to say that the god of a large number of professors now is not the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; and the reason I say so is this—that they often treat the Old Testament as if it were an altogether secondary volume, and speak about the imperfect ideas of God which the Hebrews had, and the imperfect revelation of God in the Old Testament. I believe that Jehovah—that very Jehovah who divided the Red Sea, and drowned the Egyptians—the terrible God of the Old Testament—is the same God who is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and we are to take the Godhead as it is revealed, not alone in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament also. There are some who would pick and choose that part of Scripture which they like best, and construct a god for themselves out of those chosen texts. These are they who have other gods before Jehovah; and these are they who make unto themselves an image which, if it is not engraved upon stone, is yet made out of their own imaginations, which they set up, and worship in the place of the one living and true God.

“The God of our fathers has glorified His Son Jesus; whom you delivered up, and denied.” See how plainspoken Peter is—how boldly he presses home upon the crowd around him the murder of Christ—the rejection of the Messiah! It took no small amount of courage and faith to speak like that, and to speak so to persons who were full of admiration of him before, and who would be pretty sure to be filled with indignation against him directly. A man can speak boldly against those who are his enemies; but, when people begin to flatter you, and admire you, a softness steals over the bravest heart, and he is inclined to be very gentle. I admire Peter that he puts it thus plainly: “You denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead; of which we are witnesses.”

16. *And His name through faith in His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know:—*

“You see him now, and you know what he used to be; there is no question about the identity of the man.”

16, 17. *Yes, the faith which is by Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance you did it,—*

How like his Master does Peter now speak! Instead of drawing his sword, as he did when he cut off the ear of Malchus, he puts the truth thus mildly: “I know that through ignorance you did it,—”

17-21. *As did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He has so fulfilled. Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

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