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The Power of God

God must reveal Himself,

His greatness, grace, and glory, or with all our fancied knowledge we must remain in ignorance of Him. How varied are the opinions of men as to His character. One man speaks of Him as though He were a cruel tyrant, more than willing to crush the creatures of His hand. Like the "hard and austere man," who "gathered where he had not sown" (Mt. 25:24), they think of Him as exacting from other men what they cannot give.

Another speaks of God as though He were such as themselves, who would wink at sin. And even though He had threatened judgment on account of it, He would fail in the execution. In other words, they think of God as a weakling, unable, and perhaps unwilling, to deal with the rebellion of His creatures.

But those who are the children of God know Him as He is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (Jn. 1:18). They know His matchless love, His boundless grace, His inflexible righteousness, the exceeding greatness of His power, and rejoice in them all.

Regarding this latter attribute of His character, His power, Scripture is blessedly clear. Shall we note a few of its manifestations?

1. His Power to Judge: "Fear not them which kill the body, but [have not power] to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. 10:28). Man can put an end to this life, but

God cannot only kill the body, but cause both body and soul to miserably perish in hell! This judgment all have deserved, and from it none can deliver himself, or redeem his brother. Neither can any future obedience cause the old debt to be canceled, so that, humanly speaking, our case is hopeless. And--solemn thought for the Christ-rejecter--the One who is ordained to be the Judge is the same One who was despised, rejected, and crucified. To Him the Father has given "authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man" (Jn. 5:26-27). But, blessed be God, He is now exercising His power to show grace.

2. His Power to Save: "The

Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mt. 9:6). He still has "power," and the "earth" is still the scene of His gracious activities. The gospel of Christ is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). For, while the "preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness," to those who are saved it is the "power of God."

What a mighty change is involved in such an act! Once lost, now found. Once treading the ways of sin and death, now brought to God. Once exposed to wrath, now rejoicing in His great salvation. As the Son of man, He is appointed to be the Judge, but it was the Son of man who came to "seek and save" the lost.

3. His Power to Make Alive:

"Dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) is man's natural condition. What could be more terrible? Not dying, merely, but dead. Medical aid may reach a dying man, but the physician stands impotent in the presence of death. Nevertheless, the proverb is true that "Man's

extremity is God's opportunity," for those who were once dead in sins are quickened by God's power and now have life in Christ.

Thus the apostle prays that the Ephesian saints might know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1:19-20).

In other words, the same almighty power that brought again our Lord from among the dead has now quickened us in Him. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us...hath quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. 2:4-5).

4. His Power to Keep: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them Me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are One" (Jn. 10:28-30). What a place of absolute security!

He has "begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5). The inheritance is being kept for us, and we for the inheritance.

Paradoxical though it may seem, we who are assured of salvation now are being saved, and still hope to be saved. Saved from the penalty of our sins by His atoning death, we are being saved from the enslaving power of sin by His priestly intercession. And we hope to be saved

from the very presence of sin in all its humiliating and defiling character at His coming again. Then will our salvation be complete, and we shall enter into our eternal inheritance (see Eph. 5:25-27).

Jude addresses the saints as "them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (Jude 1, RV). He closes by saying, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now and for evermore. Amen" (Jude 24-25, RV).

5. His Power to Serve: "Let

My people go," said the Lord to Pharaoh, "that they may serve Me" (Ex. 8:1). That is God's order still: liberty first, then service. And surely God well deserves our best service! But how humbling it is to learn that we have no power to serve Him, except as it is given. "Without Me ye can do nothing," said the Lord. As it is His power that saves and keeps, so it enables us to serve.

Before His ascension, the

Lord Jesus told His disciples to wait until they were "endued with power from on high." This power they received on Pentecost when they were filled with the Spirit. Later, when Peter and John were surrounded by a curious multitude who had heard of the cure of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, Peter protested: "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man walk?" The power of the risen Christ had enabled them to speak strength into his helpless body.

None were in their labors more abundant, or in blessing to souls more fruitful, than Paul. He makes known the secret of the power he had for his service: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Again he says, "When I am weak then am I strong." God's grace was sufficient for him, and His strength was made perfect in His servant's weakness. The enemy was puzzled at the power of God's witnesses, but when they, by threats, sought to stop them, they merely drove them to God for fresh grace and more power, which He gave them (see Acts 4:21-33).

6. His Power to Subdue:

Sin has created widespread rebellion against God, as well as ruin in God's fair creation. While the Lord Jesus was on earth He went about as a man among men. A mighty Man, a wonderful Man, a gracious Man, a powerful Man He was--His enemies themselves being judges. He went about "doing good, and healing all those who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him," but after all, it was but a slight amelioration of the outward condition in which the world then was. The rebellion was in the heart of man, and that remained.

It is true there were a few who, seeing deeper than the surface, believed on Him, but the mass neither knew Him, nor would they receive Him. A Roman gibbet was their answer to the grace of God in sending His Son. The power of sin and Satan seemed to prevail, but the triumph was only temporary. God has Him at His right hand till His enemies become His footstool. And this result will be brought about not by the civilizing effects of the gospel, as some would tell us, but by the

exhibition of His mighty power to "subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

The world doesn't know this, but His people do, and are looking for the time of His manifested glory, when He will change their bodies to be like the body of His glory. But that power which He will use in them, He will also later use in the suppression of all evil "till He has put all His enemies beneath His feet." To Him shall every knee bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God (Phil. 2:10-11).

Well might we echo then that heavenly song, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb forever" (Rev. 5:13).