

HELP YOURSELF TO POWER

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."
John 1:11-12

The Scriptures recognize the fact that by nature men are not in right relationship to God. The purpose of the Scriptures is to reveal the way by which man is to be delivered from the curse of sin, restored to fellowship with God, and conformed to the likeness of His Son.

No one can get into God's family apart from a miracle having been wrought. Each Christian is the product of the miracle-working power of God's Spirit. No one can possibly make himself a Christian no matter how hard he tries to do so. Salvation is not worked up from within, but it is sent down from above. It is given and not earned. It is supernatural in its origin. The physical birth does not make one a Christian. This is brought out plainly in John 1:13, which says, "Which were born, not of blood (ordinary descent), nor of the will of the flesh (natural instinct), nor of the will of man (human volition), but of God."

Salvation involves the reception of Jesus Christ. Whatever it may mean to receive Him, they are the children of God who have received Christ. When Christ came to the Jews, the privileged people to whom the oracles of God had been committed, they refused to recognize Him as the Saviour Whom they needed, and they "received him not." Christ was rejected by His own people. They rejected Him because of His teachings and their implications. They resented the fact that He revealed their inner character, and showed how far short they were of what God wanted them to be. They rejected Christ because they were unwilling to submit to His authority.

There was a small, independent, and courageous minority that received Christ. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." The receiving of Christ is the vital and saving act of faith.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." You become God's child when you receive Christ as your sin-bearer. The fact that we are the children of God is a miracle of God's great love for us. Love that goes upward from the heart of man to God is adoration. Love that goes outward from one heart to another is affection. Love that stoops, reaches down, and lifts up is grace. Our relationship to God as children was made possible through the work which Christ accomplished on the cross.

The salvation of the soul hinges upon the reception of Christ. There may be dew on one flower and not on another. Why? Because one opens its petals to receive the dew while the other remains closed and the drops run off. God pours out His love and offers His pardon as freely as the dew, so, if one soul is saved and another is not, it is because one receives the mercy, pardon, and salvation which Christ offers and the other does not.

The one who receives Christ is given the power, meaning the right, the authority, and the ability to become a child of God. He gives the privilege and power to become a child of God. Even a distaste for the sinful life and a desire for salvation are not produced by man, but they are the work of the Holy Spirit drawing the sinner to the Lord. The very first impulse to become a child of God comes to one from the outside, for it is God Who worketh in us both to will and to do. To as many as receive Christ, no matter whom nor how many, He gives the power. Regardless of their position, education, or character, this power is given to those who receive Christ.

To receive Christ is to receive Him as the One through Whom alone sin can be forgiven and put away. It is to receive Him as Saviour from the penalty of sin. Furthermore, it is to receive Him as Saviour from the power of sin. To the one who has received Christ and become a child of God, there has been opened up infinite possibilities of usefulness. One of the most thrilling facts of this life is that every human being has great potentialities built into him by the Creator. Indeed, so great are these potentialities that it is not exaggerating to refer to them as the power of God within you.

The Declaration of Independence says that all men are created equal. By this the Founding Fathers must have meant that all human beings are entitled to equal protection and equal opportunity before the law. Obviously we are not all equal in ability. By nature some have more capacity than others. But it is also a fact that people who have a lesser degree of capacity can step up their capacity to extraordinary heights. Ordinary people can become extraordinary people if they realize that built into them by the Almighty is this great potential that we call God-power. Having received Christ as our Saviour from the penalty and the power of sin, and having become the children of God, we ought to submit ourselves to the love and power of Christ, and stand up to our problems and handle them successfully and do great things for our Lord.

If you are a child of God, there is an amazing untapped power within you. There are powers within you that have never been released. You have not done with yourself everything that can be done. Are you willing to accept yourself as you are now, and assume that it is the best that you can attain?

Many people tend to think of themselves as having reached the limit of their development. If you are one of those who entertain that idea, you are even out of harmony with the best scientific thinking of our time. Modern scientists believe that the human being possesses almost illimitable possibilities of development, and can point to many facts that bear this out.

Consider the physical potentialities of people. Generally speaking, the American people have more energy, vitality, and vigor today than they had a decade ago. Within ten years the annual sale of vitamins in the United States jumped from 200,000 pounds to 7,000,000 pounds. Some twenty years have been added to the life span, and the average life expectancy is now well over sixty years.

But the greatest need is for the releasing of the untapped powers of human beings in the mind and in the spirit. Christ preached and taught the limitless possibilities of human beings. Christ loved people, believed in them, and had faith in them. He did not see them only as they were -- taxgatherers, prodigals, and harlots -- but saw what they might become. Every child of God can become a greater person. His aim should be to do the greatest good to the largest number of people.

The early American philosopher Henry Thoreau, who thought some great thoughts and wrote some great things by a little pond called Walden up in Massachusetts, said that all of us ought fervently to give thanks that we were born. Then he asked, "Has it ever occurred to you what you would have missed had you never been born?" That is an interesting thought isn't it?

Every day we should give thanks to God that we were born. I do not have any desire to add anything to the philosophy of Henry Thoreau, but I wonder if we should not also daily ask ourselves, Why was I born? For what reason came I into this world? Was there a purpose behind my being born? What am I supposed to do here? God would not have created you without a purpose. When the manufacturers make an automobile, they make it for a purpose: to sell, in order that people may communicate. If human beings are

capable of this much objectivity, and they are, do you think that Almighty God was any less purposeful when He created you? Every day you should ask yourself, What is the purpose of my life? Am I attaining that purpose? Am I becoming what God wants me to be?

It is truly wonderful to have the blessed assurance of Christian sonship. It is a great joy to make the words of the simple song yours:

"I'm a child of the King, a child of the King,
With Jesus my Saviour, I'm a child of the King."

You are a child of the King, for what? To enjoy the privileges of sonship? Certainly, but also its responsibilities. Having received Christ as your Saviour, you must not remain a babe in Christ, but you must grow up spiritually. He has given the Bible in your hand, and the Holy Spirit in your heart, and He expects you to understand the way of the Lord more perfectly every day.

Those of us who are Christians are not alone in this world. God, our Creator, is with us. Many times this fact is taken for granted. But just consider what our status would be if He were not here, if we were left alone. A fundamental message of Christianity to the children of God is that God is with us. Before the birth of Christ it was prophesied: "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." All of the important things in the life on the Christian can be built on this.

The great men of this country were those who had a strong sense of God's omnipotence. It is good to stop reading the newspaper occasionally and go back and read about some of the great characters who formed this nation. One of them was George Washington. He was one of the noblest characters ever to arise in history -- the father of his country. He brought the new nation through the dark days in which it was born.

On one occasion when his men were very discouraged, Washington shared with them his philosophy that the event is in the hands of God. This didn't mean that he, Washington, would not do his best about the event to which he was referring. But he knew that the outcome would be decided by Almighty God. That has been the decisive factor in American history all along. We need crises sometimes to make us realize it again.

Do you have a problem? Are you sick? Are you discouraged? Does it seem to you that everything has gone to pieces? It is true of most people at one time or another. What, then, is the remedy? What is the answer to a thing like that? Put yourself in the hands of God and let Him work things out in His way. Trust Him, do your best in His service, and remember that what He does will be right and best.

To as many unsaved people as received Christ to them gave He the power to become the children of God. To as many of the saved as receive the power of Christ to become the kind of Christians they ought to be and to do the work which He assigns to them in the manner in which He wants it done, the power is available. More of the divine power is available to you than you have ever dreamed. If you will receive and appropriate this power which God offers to you, your life will become much greater than it has ever been. There is an unlimited supply of divine power within the reach of every child of God. That power is so great that when you get it and use it nothing in this life can defeat you, nothing whatsoever. That is saying a lot, but it is a fact. With this power you can rise above the plague of fear. With this power you can overcome your divided personality. With this power you can rise above all the troubles and sorrows that life will ever bring to you. If you really want to live a life of dignity, of victory, and of achievement, then you must tap and receive the divine power. Plenty of this power is available to you, so help yourself to it.

Your lack of the divine power is due to your own personal limitations or your unwillingness to receive it and use it. God certainly will not waste His power by giving to those who will not use it. He provides an adequate supply for all His children, freely offers it to them, but they must receive and appropriate this power before it can be of any benefit to them. If you do not have as much of God's power as you ought to have, nobody is to blame except yourself. There is an unlimited supply of it and nobody else can prevent you from having all you want of that power. You have received all you have wanted. The Lord wants to give you all of His power that you will receive, appropriate, and use. If you want more of God's power, open the faucet and help yourself to it. Whatever limitation there is to the amount of that power which you have is self-imposed. Nobody can come between you and God and prevent the flow of His power into and through you except by your permission.

The Murray Water System provides a supply of water which is adequate for all the needs of every citizen in our city. Think of how silly and ridiculous it would be for me to criticize the manager and find fault with the system for my not having plenty of water for all purposes when the only reason for my lack of water was the fact that I kept all the faucets and spigots cut off. How silly and ridiculous it would sound to any person who might walk into my office and hear me complaining about it being hot and stuffy and criticizing the church for it being that way when the only reason for that condition would be the fact that I had the air conditioner turned off. Yet neither of these cases would be any more silly or ridiculous than church members complaining, finding fault, criticizing, and blaming somebody else when they have cut off the supply of the divine power into and through their lives. If your church is not as strong as you want it to be, then open the channel and let God's power flow into your heart and out through your life. Help yourself to the power which God has provided for and offers to you. Only you can prevent it flowing through you.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God," and to inherit His numerous and wonderful blessings. You receive from Him the power to improve yourself as a child of God. Your future is not going to be any better than you are in yourself. You limit your own future achievements. You draw into yourself according to what you are. You can only have that which finds hospitality within yourself. By sinful living, by a lack of faith, by a closed mind, or by your own unwillingness to receive and transmit, you cut off the divine supply. God doesn't do it, but you do it yourself. Nobody can block the flow of God's power and blessings into your life but you.

Each child of God should say: "I will be God's man" or "I will be God's woman," and "I will put a healthy spiritual life against the evil of our time." When there was disintegration and decay all around, Isaiah heard the Lord asking: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Now Isaiah did not respond by suggesting that the Lord send the prime minister, or secretary of state. He answered, "Here am I; send me." That is the right spirit and attitude for anybody who knows and loves the Lord. If you want to see conditions improve, get yourself filled with the transforming power of God and be a dynamic influence for spiritual health.

Unsaved friend, God offers you the power or ability to receive Christ as your Saviour, and to become a child of God. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."