

F.B. Meyer:

MAN longs for Power. The young man will give all he has for love; the older man counts no sacrifice too great for power. He who wields power is the idol of his fellows, even though, like the first Napoleon, he has won it at the cost of the suffering of myriads. We are not wrong in longing for spiritual power, if only we desire it for the glory of our Master and the blessing of man. It is even our duty to covet this great gift, and to take all means to procure it, that we may be strong and able to do exploits.

Let us never forget that the power of the spiritual realm is never to be had except in submission to the laws of its operation. All around us in our world-home great forces are throbbing, prepared to do our bidding, to carry our messages or draw our carriages; but we must obey them ere we can use them. Once learn the laws of their operation, and yield to them exact obedience, and there is nothing they will not do, toiling like another Hercules in notable deeds. And similarly we must learn, by prayer and watching, the laws of the operation of the power of God; that we may adapt our lives and methods to benefit by each throb and pulse of it which may be within the reach of man.

We must remember also that spiritual power is not a separate entity, which we may possess independently of the Holy Spirit. The power of the spiritual world is the indwelling and inspiration of the Holy Spirit Himself. We cannot have it apart from Him. We diminish it when He is grieved or quenched. We are most evidently the subjects and vehicles of it, when He resides in his gracious fulness in yielded and loving hearts. We covet the gift, let us then make welcome the Giver. Let us no longer speak of it, but of Him.

THE POWER OF GOD IN THE ASCENSION LIFE. (Ephesians 1:19)

We are bidden to follow our Master in his up ward track, and to sit with Him, in daily happy experience, where He is already seated at the right hand of God. But this is as impossible to our unaided energy, as for the swallow to follow the majestic flight of the golden eagle, soaring sunward. So strong is the gravitation that holds us to earth, so dissipating our cares, so fickle our resolution, that nought but the Divine power and grace can lift us to the level of the Divine life.

But God waits to realize in us all that He has prepared for us; and the third item in the apostle's prayer for his converts is that they might know "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."

It is power. It is his power. It is great power: nothing less would suffice. It is exceeding great power, beyond the furthest cast of thought (such is the literal rendering of the word, employed here). It is equivalent to "the energy of the strength of his might, which He energized in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at his own right hand in the heavenlies."

A marvellous lift was there! From the grave of mortality to the throne of the eternal God, who only has immortality; from the darkness of the tomb to the insufferable light; from this small world to the centre and metropolis of the universe. Open the compasses of your faith to measure this measureless abyss; and then marvel at the power which bore your Lord across it, and know that that same power is towards you, if you believe, waiting to do as much for you in your daily experience if you will but let it have its blessed way.

It is a matter of constant complaint with Christian people that they fall so far below their aspirations and hopes. They sigh at the foot of cliffs they cannot scale. The fault is with themselves. As we step into the lifts which are attached to so many factories and offices, and expect them to bear us upward, never doubting for a moment that they will do it if only we keep in the line of their ascent; so, if we would keep in abiding fellowship with the Holy Spirit--i.e., if we would not wilfully step out of the range of his blessed help--we should find ourselves mounting with wings as eagles, and going from strength to strength.

THE POWER OF GOD IN THE COMMUNICATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFT. (Ephesians 3:7)

The apostle took a very lowly view of himself. He was but a minister, a deacon, a servant; like the Master, who, when none of his disciples essayed to wash the feet of the rest, put an end to the hesitation as to who should do it, by doing it Himself. Only the greatest can stoop to these menial offices without loss of position or self-respect.

But the position that the great apostle occupied was distinctly, in his judgment, the gift of the grace of God. And he never ceased magnifying the exceeding abundance of the grace which had not only saved him, but had given him an office in the church.

The grace of God which calls us into his blessed service is connected with the energy of his power; so that whatever the work may be to which we are called, there is ever sufficient power waiting within our reach for doing it. The grace of God permits us to be his fellow-workers in the salvation of men; and the power of God moves parallel with the line of our activities, to do that which would baffle our unaided efforts. Whatever you are called to do by the grace of God, you may be enabled to do by the power of God; and you will acquire the marvellous faculty of making men see the meaning of mysteries long veiled from their view.

THE POWER OF GOD IN PRAYER. (Ephesians 3:20)

In this marvellous doxology the apostle seems to have come to the limits of human speech, though not of thought or conception. Here the two seem to be on the point of parting company. The speech remains below, while the thought goes forth on its glorious way.

He had a wonderful glimpse of what God would do in answer to prayer. For notice--the power of God without is always commensurate with his power that works within. It is the same Greek word in each case. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above our prayer or thought, according to the power that worketh in us. As I write these words, I am passing up the great Hardanger Fiord; before me rise the mighty mountains, sheer from the edge of the still green water to the snows which cool the air; the steep slopes, seamed with water-courses and covered with firs; the rock, standing forth in its naked grandeur or covered with patches of fresh green grass. But lofty and overwhelming as the mountains are, it is probable that the depth below us is equal to the height above us. So the power of God that waits to answer prayer in yonder heights, is equivalent to the power of God the Holy Ghost, who makes intercession within us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Conceive of all that the saints have asked. Think what John Knox asked for Scotland; Luther for Germany; Brainerd and Schwartz for the heathen. Compute the agony of supplication that has been made by parents for their children; by lovers for their beloved; by patriots for their fatherland. But the God who taught them to pray was able to do exceeding abundantly above all.

Conceive of all that the saints have thought. Imagine the unspoken prayers of the saints. Things that could not be uttered because speech failed; thoughts that have flashed to and fro between the Father and his children, like love glances between those who can read each other's heart through the eyes. But God who inspired them, was able to do exceeding abundantly above all.

ABOVE ALL.--He is not scanty in his gifts, eking out their measure by stretching them, just coming up to the brink of our emptiness, just topping the Himalayas of our sin. Where sin abounds his grace much more abounds. He not only feeds our hunger, but gives us twelve baskets full of fragments over and above.

ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL.--We think of the profusion of spring flowers with which He carpets the glades; of the star-dust, collected in wreaths of light on the midnight sky; of the wealth of his creative fancy in every corner of the world around us. Ah, how prolific his thought, how rich his imagination, how fertile his power! Such is our Father in nature. Think, then, O child of his, what He will not be to thee, whom He loves as He loves his Son! Ask great things of Him for his work and his world; and believe that He will far exceed thy furthest reach of desire. Thy least word will stir and bring down a blessing, mighty as an avalanche, but as soft as summer rain.

EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY.--We will stay here. The words cease to mean more than we have already learned. Our faculties are too immature and limited to understand their depth of meaning. Only let us yield our hearts more to the power that waits to strive and yearn within them, that the depth within may cry to the depth above.

THE POWER OF GOD EQUIPPING US FOR CONFLICT. (Ephesians 6:10)

We are seated with Christ above the power of the enemy, but we are still assailed by it in our daily experience. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. The darkness of the world, and especially of heathen lands, is the vail beneath which malignant and mighty spirits set themselves against the Lord, and against his Christ. What are we, that we may hope to prevail, either in our own temptations, or in our efforts to dislodge them from human wills, unless we have learnt to be empowered in the Lord, and in the strength of his might?

By his own conflicts, and notably by the mighty act of his Ascension, our Lord Jesus has become, in his human and representative capacity, the storehouse of spiritual force, which has proved itself more than a match for all the power and craft of Satan. He holds in Himself a plenitude of spiritual power, which is destined finally to issue in the binding of Satan and the destruction of his realm. That power is not yet exerted to its full measure. But it is nevertheless in Him, and in Him for us. We may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner

Power

man (Ephesians 3:16). We may become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us.