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The Evangelical Churchman

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THE BEST ESTATE.

Art thou thine own heart's conqueror?
Strive ever thus to be;
That is the fight that is most sore,
The noblest victory.

Art thou beloved by one true heart?
O prize it! it is rare;
There are so many in the mart,
So many false and fair.

Art thou alone? Oh, say not so!
The world is full, be sure;
There is so much of want and woe,
So much that thou canst cure.

Art thou in poverty thyself?
Thou still canst help a friend;
Kind words are more than any pelf,
Good deeds need never end.

Art thou content in youth or age?
Then let who will be great;
Thou hast the noblest heritage,
Thou hast the best estate!

ABIDE IN CHRIST, AS YOUR STRENGTH.

'All power is given UNTO ME in heaven and in earth.'—
Matt. xxviii. 18.
'Be strong in THE LORD, and in the power of His
might.'—Eph. vi. 10.
'My power is made perfect in weakness.'—2 Cor. xxii. 9
(R. V.).

There is no truth more generally admitted among
earnest Christians than that of their utter weakness.
There is no truth more generally misunderstood and
abused. Here, as elsewhere, God's thoughts are
heaven-high above man's thoughts.

The Christian often tries to forget his weakness:
God wants us to remember it, to feel it deeply.
The Christian wants to conquer his weakness and

to be freed from it: God wants us to rest and even
rejoice in it. The Christian mourns over his weak-
ness: Christ teaches His servant to say, 'I take
pleasure in infirmities; most gladly will I glory in
my infirmities.' The Christian thinks his weakness
his greatest hindrance in the life and service of
God: God tells us that it is the secret of strength
and success. It is our weakness, heartily accepted,
and continually realized, that gives us our claim
and access to the strength of Him who has said,
'My strength is made perfect in weakness.'

When our Lord was about to take His seat upon
the throne, one of His last words was: 'All power
is given unto me in heaven and on earth.' Just as
His taking His place at the right hand of the power
of God was something new and true,—a real ad-
vance in the history of the God-man,—so was this
clothing with all power. Omnipotence was now
entrusted to the man Christ Jesus, that from hence-
forth through the channels of human nature it
might put forth its mighty energies. Hence He
connected with this revelation of what He was to
receive the promise of the share that His disciples
would have in it: 'When I am ascended, ye shall
receive power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts
i. 8). It is in the power of the omnipotent Saviour
that the believer must find his strength for life and
for work.

It was thus with the disciples. During ten days
they worshipped and waited at the footstool of His
throne. They gave expression to their faith in
Him as their Saviour, to their adoration of Him as
their Lord, to their love to Him as their Friend,
to their devotion and readiness to work for Him as
their Master. Jesus Christ was the one object of
thought, of love, of delight. In such worship of
faith and devotion their souls grew up into intensest
communion with Him upon the throne, and when
they were prepared, the baptism of power came.
It was power within and power around.

The power came to qualify for the work to which
they had yielded themselves—of testifying by life
and word to their unseen Lord. With some the
chief testimony was to be that of a holy life, reveal-
ing the heaven and the Christ from whom it came.
The power came to set up the kingdom within
them, to give them the victory over sin and self, to
fit them by living experience to testify to the power
of Jesus on the throne, to make men live in the
world as saints. Others were to give themselves
up entirely to the speaking in the name of Jesus.
But all needed and all received the gift of power,
to prove that now Jesus had received the kingdom
of the Father, all power in heaven and earth was
indeed given to Him, and by Him imparted to His
people just as they needed it, whether for a holy
life or effective service. They received the gift of
power, to prove to the world that the kingdom of
God, to which they professed to belong, was not in
word but in power. By having power within, they
had power without and around. The power of God
was felt even by those who would not yield them-
selves to it (Acts ii. 43, iv. 13, v. 13).

And what Jesus was to these first disciples, He
is to us too. Our whole life and calling as disci-
ples find their origin and their guarantee in the
words: "All power is given to me in heaven and
on earth." What He does in and through us, He
does with almighty power. What He claims or de-
mands, He works Himself by that same power.
All He gives, He gives with power. Every bless-
ing He bestows, every promise He fulfils, every

grace He works,—all, all is to be with power.
Everything that comes from this Jesus on the
throne of power is to bear the stamp of power.
The weakest believer may be confident that in
asking to be kept from sin, to grow in holiness,
to bring forth much fruit, he may count upon these
his petitions being fulfilled with Divine power.
The power is in Jesus; Jesus is ours with all His
fulness; it is in us His members that the power is
to work and be made manifest.

And if we want to know how the power is bes-
towed, the answer is simple: Christ gives His power
in us by giving His life in us. He does not, as so
many believers imagine, take the feeble life He finds
in them, and impart a little strength to aid them in
their feeble efforts. No; it is in giving His own
life in us that He gives us His power. The Holy
Spirit came down to the disciples direct from the
heart of their exalted Lord, bringing down into
them the glorious life of heaven into which He had
entered. And so His people are still taught to be
strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
When He strengthens them, it is not by taking
away the sense of feebleness, and giving in its place
the feeling of strength. By no means. But in a
very wonderful way leaving and even increasing the
sense of utter impotence, He gives them along with
it the consciousness of strength in Him. "We
have treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency
of the power may be of God and not of us." The
feebleness and the strength are side by side; as the
one grows, the other too, until they understand the
saying, "When I am weak, then I am strong; I
glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ
may rest on me."

The believing believer learns to look upon Christ
on the throne, Christ the Omnipotent, as his life.
He studies that life in its infinite perfection and
purity, in its strength and glory; it is the eternal
life dwelling in a glorified man. And when he
thinks of his own inner life, and longs for holiness,
to live well-pleasing unto God, or for power to do
the Father's work, he looks up, and, rejoicing that
Christ is his life, he confidently reckons that that
life will work mightily in him all he needs. In
things little and things great, in the being kept
from sin from moment to moment for which he has
learned to look, or in the struggle with some spe-
cial difficulty or temptation, the power of Christ is
the measure of his expectation. He lives a most
joyous and blessed life, not because he is no longer
feeble, but because, being utterly helpless, he con-
sents and expects to have the mighty Saviour work
in him.

The lessons these thoughts teach us for practical
life are simple, but very precious. The first is, that
all our strength is in Christ, laid up and waiting for
use. It is there as an Almighty life, which is in
Him for us, ready to flow in according to the mea-
sure in which it finds the channels open. But
whether its flow is strong or feeble, whatever our
experience of it be, there it is in Christ: All power
in heaven and earth. Let us take time to study
this. Let us get our minds filled with the thought:
That Jesus might be to us a perfect Saviour, the
Father gave Him all power. That is the qualifica-
tion that fits him for our needs: All the power of
heaven over all the powers of earth, over every
power of earth in our heart and life too.

The second lesson is: This power flows into us
as we abide in close union with Him. When the
union is feeble, little valued or cultivated, the inflow