

No.
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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

"BEYOND POWER"

OR
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THE VICTORIES OF FAITH.

(2 Cor. 8)

An Address (revised) at

Forest Gate.

26th October, 1919.

by

PERCY W. HEWARD.

*MEETING ROOM, 61, Upton Lane,
FOREST GATE, LONDON, E. 7.*

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THE VICTORIES OF FAITH.

2 Cor. 8.

An Address by Mr. P.W.Heward,

Forest Gate, 26th Oct. 1919.

Verse 3. "But to their power I bear record, yea and beyond

their power, they were willing of themselves".

There are many expressions of the present day, found even among children of God, which are used in a manner which is at least to some extent spiritually damaging. Too frequently the word "I cannot" shines forth, or perhaps, I should rather say "darkens forth", to hinder in the spiritual progress which God's people have a right to expect in one another. Then again we have the same thought, turned round the other way, "I am doing all I can", "doing the best I can", and so forth. There is a large amount of pride in the expression "I am doing all I can". We little realise how easy it is to use words of unconscious pride. The Holy Spirit shows us a beautiful commendation in this passage of Scripture. "For according to power, (you will notice the word "their" is in italics, - for according to power), I bear record, yea, and beyond power, they were willing of themselves". Here then we have brought before us the privilege of going beyond power. We have the Holy Spirit's approval of going beyond power. We have an encouragement,

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for the apostle used these Macedonian believers as a stimulus to OTHER saints. He wished that those at Corinth should equally go beyond power. At once we ask, How is this possible? It is possible by the mighty power of God. We little realise how mighty He is, and how graciously He is willing to enter into the varied details of our daily life, that we may act beyond power. We can so easily brought to the position of being "natural". We CAN do this, we CANNOT do that, we feel our limitation so much, and we reckon up our strength and our possibilities, and we are occupied with these, - and there is a grave danger. Scripture emphasises the Lord's approval of that which is beyond power, but we ask, How are we brought to experience this privilege? The Macedonian believers give to us a helpful lesson. God has used some poor suffering saints of more than eighteen hundred years ago to be a stimulus all along the centuries. They little knew how much they would "contribute" to the encouragement of the Lord's people, when they cheerfully bore the strain beyond power. They little knew how they were to be made a testimony as to what God can do through His people. These Macedonians of whom the apostle tells us that he desired fruit that might abound to their account, - these Macedonians who sent once and again to his need, and whose gifts were an offering of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God, - have been a lever all along the ages,

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to move God's dear people that there might be the enjoyment of a super-natural life, and an unwillingness to deal with things in the ORDINARY way. Believers are so readily drawn down to a human level. Again and again they tell us that something will take place "humanly speaking", and so much of their speaking is "humanly-speaking", whether they tell us so or not. It is better to become more acquainted with the Lord's standpoint, and to have a larger percentage of "Divinely speaking" in our lives, that we may realise the more fully that God never meant His people to be ordinary people, but extraordinary, since they have so remarkable a Saviour and Lord. How foolish we should be if we arranged our daily life, and arranged to do everything, but first of all appointed the tying up^{of} our hands, or something of that nature! If we first of all incapacitated ourselves, and then tried to struggle our way through the duties of life, how vain all would be. But yet it is common for us to incapacitate ourselves in our estimating for the spiritual life to which God has called. We put aside the living power of a living faith, and then make OUR plans and OUR arrangements, and look at OUR difficulties, and so forth. We live and act under the circumstances, instead of mounting up (Isaiah^a 40. 31). We leave out the chief factor. God's people are to be extraordinary people even in little things. But how did these Macedonians learn thus to act? FIRST we read "According to power". I suppose there is a twofold thought. They used,

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in the grace of God, the physical and mental and financial power they had {but all this ability and earnestness of theirs were according to a greater power. But that is not the full explanation of the thought, as the context shows. The primary thought is that God first enabled them to work ACCORDING TO their power; "Beyond their power" comes AFTER. There is a grave danger in impulsiveness and LEAPING FORWARD to the position of beyond one's power. We naturally like to do great things. But observe the order. "According to power", THEN "Beyond the power", or as it may be literally rendered "Contrary to power", for out of weakness were they made strong. "According to power" and "contrary to power". This word "contrary" is one of the most remarkable words used by the Holy Spirit. It occurs in Romans 1. 25 where we read "They worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator". It first of all signifies "To the side of", but this often has the thought of rivalry, therefore the meaning comes to be - "stretching beyond" as the rival outreaches. Next the word is extended yet further, to signify "Contrary to". Thus you have the history of idolatry in Romans 1. Man begins with a rival of God; then serving God and Mammon, he worships mammon more, and soon the "beyond" is illustrated by the "contrary to". But the same thoughts may come in a very beautiful and contrasted context here. First, there was a working according to power, and then there was that which went

beyond power, and then that which was contrary to power; and indeed these dear saints seem to have understood "Contraries" in a rather remarkable way. We read that their DEEP POVERTY abounded to the RICHES of their liberality. This was contrary to their power. Why did they give so much? They were SO poor. That was the reason. Why did they do so much? They were so WEAK. They had learned the lesson of "contraries". "Contrary to power". And until we learn the lesson of contraries we are very ordinary people. The word "liberality" here denotes simplicity, and no doubt many looked on them as poor simple minded people. There is a great advantage in being sufficiently simple-minded not to have worldly wisdom. Simplicity means "oneness", that is, the possession of one object in life. That was all these believers had. Hence they spent themselves for the one Object. Consequently their deep poverty overflowed into the riches of their simplicity. God in His wonderful love caused this simplicity, to make them those who prepared for the coming kingdom rather than arranged things with earthly thoughts of advantage. Such simplicity of a child of God is the result of communion with God, and a realisation of the realities of the Lord Jesus and that Day. Nor did they go through this experience with a dismal dullness. We are told "the abundance of their JOY abounded", the overflowing of their joy. Thus contrary to power they were WILLING of them-

selves with an overflow of joy which was delightfully contrary to mere human logic. When Peter said to the Lord Jesus, "Pity Thyself, Lord", the Lord's answer was "Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou (savourest) the things that are of men". The ^{things} ~~things~~ of men and of worldly prudence are the things of the devil. Pitying ourselves and looking after ourselves is a devil-arranged opposition to the will of God.

And thus we have brought before us the privilege of believers, in which we all fall short. The privilege of confidence in our living God against appearances, against circumstances, against feelings, against, as well as beyond, everything from a human standpoint; Romans 4 illustrates this in Abraham's life. God has given to us a NEW standpoint. I desire to speak, beloved friends, on this deeply important subject, not from the position of one who has attained, but with a desire consciously to feel unworthiness, and yet to long for you, and for myself, that there may be SOME attaining to this privilege of contraries, in the power of the Holy Spirit - this privilege of being marked off from the world, because we are empowered by Him Whose strength is made perfect in weakness, is very wonderful - and real. It is very easy to take our subject as a lesson in theory, it is vastly different to put it into practice. It seems so enjoyable to advise someone else, it seems so difficult to experience when the strain surrounds. For example, though I have no doubt the primary context is the context of very

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important GIVING unto the Lord, one would not limit it to this, - surely we may apply in many ways. Also if a saint thinks he "cannot" do any more, there is a lesson in contraries to be preciousy learned. The only giving which is commended is "beyond power" - "contrary to power". It is a mercy to remember this. But the principle applies further as to the use of this physical frame, this body of humiliation. We are apt to be very much occupied with our NATURAL limitations, and the words ring out "contrary to power", because the Lord delights to prove Himself sufficient for felt needs. The Lord delights that His people might be in a condition not to glory in themselves, but simply to trust Him, and take this principle through all the arrangements of life. Weigh up your powers, then feeling utter weakness, realise the mighty God, and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, seek to understand in the application to daily life, the meaning of the Divine words, "Contrary to power".
