

THE POWER OF CHRIST

James Smith

"He is able even to subdue all things unto himself" Philippians 3:21.

THERE is nothing that we want so much as power. The Lord has been teaching us this for a considerable time. We have plenty of means, but without power they will not accomplish the end at which we aim. We have a tolerable stock of knowledge; but knowledge, without divine energy, is comparatively powerless. No sinners are converted, no saints are sanctified, no churches are raised, no foes are conquered simply by knowledge. There is power in the Church, or nothing would be done; there is not much power or good in the Church, or *more* would be done. God is working, but we want to see greater things. We look around us often on the masses, and feel discouraged; but when we turn to God's Word we see there is no need for this: Jesus, our Jesus, has power both in heaven, and in earth. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. *"He is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*

Let us carry this thought with us into the world. Look at its ignorance, how dense, how widespread, dangerous; look at its infidelity, how daring, how boastful, how mischievous; look at its formality, how freezing, how stupefying, how destructive; look at its enmity to God and goodness, how deep-rooted, how active, how powerful; look at its position, in the arms of the wicked one. Is not such a view calculated to paralyze our efforts, and fill us with despondency? Yes, if we look at it from man's standpoint. But look at it from the Christian's standpoint. Go to work in it as God bids you; and if tempted to doubt, if dispirited by the vastness of the work, or cast down by the apparent want of success, remember that your Lord and Master *"is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*

Aided by Him, a worm shall thresh the mountains and beat them small. Accompanied by Him, the feeblest labourer may face the greatest difficulty, and demand, "Who art thou, O great mountain?" and with confidence exclaim, "Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." Yes, yes, "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed; and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform this. Look then, Christian, look upon this poor, ignorant, infidel, formal, and wicked world, then take up the glass of prophecy and look forward, and what a glorious change you see. The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. God hath said it; there can be no doubt about it; for Jesus *"is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*

Let us carry this thought into the family. Believer, thy house may not be with God as you desire. There may be much sin, much disorder, and many things to pain thy mind. Look at thy wayward son, at thy trifling daughter; how obstinately they persevere in a course that wounds thy heart, and shows their preference for evil, after all thou hast said and done. Thy heart sinks at times. Thou art fearful of the worst. Thou thinkest, if they should die unconverted; if they should perish in their sin; if I should have to witness against them at the bar of God, and testify to their deliberate and often repeated rejection of Christ and the Gospel. Such thoughts and suppositions distress thee; yet thou hast used all the means thou couldst and now thou art

tempted to give up. Give up! Never: go on ploughing in hope, and sowing in hope. Thou hast sown thy seed in the morning, go on and sow it in the evening, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether both shall be alike good. Never doubt, droop, or yield to despondency; but remember, however careless, trifling, or bad thy relatives may be, Jesus *“is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”*

Sunday school teacher, carry this thought with you into the school. Your children, after all the prayers you have offered, after all the means you have used, after all the hopes you have encouraged, your children are unconverted still. Some of them are indifferent; some are dull and stupid; some are hard and unimpressive. After all you have done, you see no fruit, and are ready to cry out, “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain.” You are almost ready to throw up your commission, and desert your post, for you conclude that it is really of no use. Of no use! Did not your Saviour say to you, “Go and teach?” Did you not go because he bade you? Do you not teach for Him? Is it not His work? Is it not for His glory? Give up; no, no, never do that; but rather seize this strong staff, and say, I lean on this: *“He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”*

Servant of God! Minister of Jesus Christ! Pastor of the Church! Here is a source of comfort and encouragement for you. Look at the Church of God. What do you see? Among some, jealousies, envyings, and evil speakings. Among others, pride, worldliness, and much sensuality. Among others, selfishness, disunion, and inactivity. In all, something calculated to grieve thy spirit, draw sighs from thy breast, and earnest prayers from thy soul. Such a want of co-operation; such intense worldliness; such self-seeking. These things depress and discourage thee. In addition to which there are so few conversions, so little decision for God, or separating from the world, among the members of thy congregation. Thou hast prayed, laboured, and lived in hope; but hope deferred has made thy heart sick, and thou art yielding to gloom. Yield not, my brother; yield not. Grasp this thought firmly, and carry it with thee into every part of thy work, *“He is able to subdue even all things unto himself.”*

When we look into our hearts, let us carry this assurance with us there. For what we discover there at times shocks us and fills us with alarm. What coldness! What hardness! What carnality! What proneness to wander from all that is good, and to take part in all that is bad! What desperate depravity! What seeds of corruption! What unutterable evils we discover there. Often have we been made to cry out, Can ever God dwell here? Can any one with such a heart be the object of the Saviour’s love, or be at all the subject of the work of the Holy Spirit? Nothing appears to be so desperately bad, so fearfully wicked, as the human heart. What then are we to do? Doubt? No. Question our interest in Christ? No. Sit down in gloom and sadness? No. Rather, when we see the worst of ourselves, let us hold the promise with a firmer grasp; let us look to Jesus, with more intense desire; and let us take encouragement from this glorious fact, *“He is able even to subdue all things unto himself”* Yes, He can cleanse thy heart, and make it pure. He can purge thy spirit, and make it holy. He can purify thy affections, and fix them all on God. He can sanctify thee wholly, body, soul, and spirit, and present thee faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

If human nature is to be transformed, if we who bear the image of the earthy, are to bear the image of the heavenly, divine agency must be employed. Jesus, Jesus only, can raise the dead, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the weak, holiness to the depraved, and salvation to the lost. The power necessary to subdue the stubborn will, to transform this

miserable world, to regulate the disordered school, to sanctify the unholy family, to adorn and beautify the Church, and to purify and elevate the heart, is possessed by Jesus. *"He is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*

Jesus is accessible and yields to prayer. We know where to find Him. We know how to approach Him. We know what to say to Him. We know what will prevail with him. His disciples constrained him, and He went and supped with them. So may we, by frequent, importunate prayer. He will yield to the hearty, earnest, persevering prayers of His people. Let us therefore aim and strive to bring the all-subduing power of Jesus with us wherever we go. So that, if we go into the world, seeking the conversion and salvation of its poor deluded votaries, we may succeed. For what is sin before the power of the Saviour? What is the resistance of the creature before the omnipotence of the Creator? What is Satan with all his artifices, before the name and energy of the Son of God? If the Lord be with us, we shall be strong and drive the devil out. If we have Christ's warrant for what we do; if we aim at God's glory in what we do; if we proceed by the rule of God's Word in doing; then, never, never let us succumb, or yield to fear; for greater is He that is with us, than all that can be against us. O wicked world! thou hast slain God's servants, thou hast rejected Christ's Gospel, thou hast boasted of thy prowess, thou hast gloried in thy shame, thou hast thought thyself to be invulnerable - but there is One who will conquer thee, either by His grace, or His majesty; for *"He is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*

Let us set our hearts upon bringing the all-subduing power of Jesus to bear upon our families; then will our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters will be like the polished corners of the temple. Mother, despair not of thy daughter; she may be haughty, she may treat thy efforts to subdue her proud spirit with contempt; she may wring thy heart, and force tears from thy eyes; but the power of Jesus will subdue even her. Pray, pray; plead, plead; give the Lord no rest until she bows to His sceptre, and begs for pardon. Father, give not up thy son, but try to bring him to Jesus; and if thou canst not, try and bring Jesus to him. He may choose bad companions. He may indulge in vicious practices. He may set at nought all thy counsel, and reject all thy reproofs. He may be sunk low, very low. But Jesus can subdue him. Jesus can bring him up out of the most horrible pit, and extricate him from the miry clay. He can make the proud rebel a humble, obedient, subject; and the child that has almost broken thy heart, thy chief comfort and joy.

Teachers, set your hearts upon bringing the all-subduing power of Jesus down upon your schools. Never give up a child unless you can find a match for omnipotence. Never yield your point until you gain it; and let that point be the conversion of every child in your class. You may be weak. Your talents may be small. Your advantages may have been but few. Your scholars may be worse than ordinary, the very riff-raff of society, and the scum of the lowest parts of the town. Never mind; pray, pray; plead, plead, plead; until the Lord shall make bare His arm. *"He is able to subdue all things unto himself."*

Ministers of Christ, let us set our hearts more than ever upon bringing the all-subduing power of Jesus into our churches and congregations. There is no evil that it cannot rectify. There is no mountain which it cannot level. There is no foe which it cannot subdue. There is no work which it cannot achieve. Do we want more love, more union, more self-denial, more active efforts - in a word more holiness, and more usefulness? Well, we do; then let us remember, however rough the materials, however difficult the task, however uncongenial the soil, *"He is able even to all things unto himself."* Or, do we look into our congregations and desire the conversion of the

unconverted, the decision of the inquiring, and the entire consecration of all who know the Lord? Or, do we look upon empty seats and long to see them filled; or upon neglecters and despisers of the means of grace around us, and long to see them brought under the Word? If so, let us pray, pray; plead, plead; until the Lord opens the windows of heaven and pours us out the blessing. Let us set our hearts upon the work more than ever. Let us consecrate ourselves to our one object more than ever. Let us cry mightily unto God, while we employ all legitimate means; remembering that *"He is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* And this mighty one is our Master. This mighty one loves us. This mighty one is deeply interested in us and our work. This mighty one will get glory by granting us our desires.

Let us, finally, set our hearts upon bringing the all-subduing power of Jesus to bear on ourselves! This will subdue our corruptions, correct our tempers, control our lusts, strengthen our graces, brighten our evidences, beautify our lives, and fill us with the fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. Heart-evils can only be conquered in the strength of Jesus. Only by the Spirit of Christ can we mortify the deeds of the body, crucify the old man with his deeds, cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Let us then, pray, pray; plead, plead; until we are endued with power from on high, and stand forth as living, speaking illustrations of the fact, that Jesus *"is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*