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"THE POWER TO BECOME"

TEXT: John 1:12 - ".....as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become sons of God,....."

We live in an age in which "power" is a watchword. Recent discoveries of methods by which to harness atomic energy, and now the proposed plans by which man hopes to make use of the cosmic ray, staggers the mind of a power-mad age. These possibilities in nature, which may be used for good or evil, must become man's servants, or they will become his master.

We read of power politics, pressure groups in business, the globe-master airplane, capable of carrying a load of twenty tons, the new streamlined railroad engine, with greater speed and pulling power than had been imagined possible. All of these trends indicate man's search for new types of power. We must admit that there are all but unlimited actual and potential powers in inanimate nature; however, there are those who are sure that the greatest unused possibilities in the universe are those of the spiritual qualities in man.

Our topic is an unfinished sentence; the verb "to become" having no object. The reason is that few, if any, human beings have ever realized all of the potentialities in their lives. For those who abandon themselves to God, there is the continuing experience of "becoming" something. Each achievement in character or accomplishment opens up new and expanding areas in human life.

The text suggests to man the only possibility by which he may attain the spiritual power which is available for him. It declares that man must admit Jesus into his life and thereby receive the "power to become."

It is well to note that this power is available to "as many as receive him." Nothing is said about race, social standing, education, or any of the other standards by which man seems to think power is made possible. These words were addressed to people who were, for the most part, slaves to poverty and certain class distinctions. They were under the mailed fist of Rome. Yet Jesus dared to offer them undreamed-of possibilities in their lives. It has been this "who-so-ever-will" of the Gospel of Christ that has made it the answer for the world's ills.

Men who receive Him into their lives are enabled to become victors over certain human limitations. Those who deal with souls are impressed with this present power of the love of Christ to redeem lost humanity. Through Him is found a strange ability to overcome sin, in body, mind, and spirit. We note that The Methodist Church is in the midst of a Year of Evangelism. It is reported that during the past several months more than 700,000 persons have been received into the churches, a large percentage being on profession of faith. Of this group, a majority are men and women of mature years. Old fashioned revival fires are burning in many places

When Christ is permitted to take control of a life, the individual finds a change in certain attitudes. He becomes concerned about the spiritual and material welfare of his fellow man. Color of skin or social strata have no effect on the Christian's attitude toward his brother.

Man needs to be reminded that he is becoming something - a better or a worse parent, teacher, church member or minister. To accept leadership of Christ puts this becoming-process on a positive scale. The changes which take place in his life are of a constructive

the individual becoming changed

nature. He becomes enabled to say with the Apostle Paul that the things which once he hated now he loves, and the things which once he loved now he hates. To fail to avail oneself of Christ's presence and power is to live a negative existence. Such conditions result in "fightings within and fears without." Self and not service is the watchword.

The climax of the text is in its closing words when it declares that those who accept Christ have the power to become Sons of God. The Moffatt translation of the word power is "right." Those who receive Him have the right to become Sons of God. This does not mean that man is not a child of God. It does mean that he has not availed himself of the rights and privileges which are his as God's son.

Modern man finds more and more emphasis being placed on power as exemplified in inanimate nature. He will only be able to save himself from destruction by such uncontrolled forces as he finds the "Power to Become" the master of himself and in turn the master of nature. We believe this is as God intended it to be. He wants his children to accept their rights as Sons of his and inheritance which is theirs, as a result of this father-son relationship.

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