

*The Pulpit Associated with the Power of God*

Architect who is to rear and beautify the living temple. We cut the sinews of the Christian ministry when we depreciate the work of the Holy Spirit. Better, so far as the spiritual interests of men are concerned, demolish our sanctuaries than exclude from them this heavenly Guest.

We feel our dependence upon God for meaner things than the conversion of the soul. 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' The meanest seed does not vegetate without his power; the lily grows and is arrayed in all its gorgeous beauty by his unseen, but omnipotent hand. The achievements of science, the triumphs of liberty, the wealth and powers of man, are all his gift. Why his presence and power should be excluded from other scenes, and why men should be eager to throw it into retirement in that greatest of all his works, the perfected redemption of the human soul, it is difficult to tell. There is a point where every other work of God terminates and dies; this is onward, for ever onward, and because it is God's work.

No created thing is greater than the power of the human mind; it is power which Omnipotence only can control. The arguments of the pulpit may convince it; the eloquence of the pulpit may move it; but neither argument nor persuasion can effect the great moral transformation which it needs. It cannot break one chain of its fearful vassalage. It can scarcely arrest the ravages of the malady which curses it, much less reach the sources of the disease and cure the plague within. There is not even any great display of human instrumentality in the work. They are the weak contending with the strong; the instrument is like the saw and the hammer, effective only by extraneous power. The 'strong man armed' is to be overcome, and is vanquished only by One who is 'stronger than he'. Human instrumentality is never so effective in this work as when it is most conscious of its own weakness and keeps itself most out of sight. It is the secret agency of God that accomplishes it; and no flesh may glory in his presence. 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' His power shines and triumphs. It is an influence from above, designed to prostrate the creature in the dust, and give everlasting glory to him who died. 'He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and show it unto you.' If there is any thing in which man is nothing, and God is all, it is in the great work of quickening those who are dead in trespasses and sins.