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**DIVINE EFFICACY**  
WITHOUT HUMAN POWER

EDWARD REYNOLDS



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# **Divine Efficacy Without Human Power**

Opened in a SERMON Preached at St. Margaret's Church  
in Westminster before the Right Honorable the House of  
COMMONS, June 28. 1660. Being the day of solemn Thanksgiving  
for the happy Return of the Kings Majesty.

By EDWARD REYNOLDS D. D. And Chaplain in ordinary to his  
Majesty.

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**TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FOR  
ENGLAND,**

Right Honourable,

It may indeed seem strange to you, that joy, one of the soul's most rapid and impatient emotions, has not prompted quicker compliance with your commands. This sermon, delivered before you on one of the most joyous occasions this nation has witnessed, has taken its time in obeying your commands, akin to Cushite bearing the news of the restored king. The only justification I can offer is that one service's joy has delayed the rush of another.

Having been tasked, along with some of my esteemed peers, by His Sacred Majesty — who is keen to mend the divisions within God's Church amongst us — to prepare some elements towards this noble cause, I have found that such documents, scrutinised by varying opinions, can become the subject of lengthy debates over every clause, sometimes even individual words and expressions. As such, it's impossible to expedite the process as the urgency of the task might demand. The necessary and consistent dedication to this task temporarily postponed my compliance to your requests for the publication of this sermon.

Now, by God's assistance, it is finally here. It demonstrates how effortlessly God's Spirit and Providence can construct His temple and safeguard His truth and worship, even when human power is lacking. It is indeed a blessing when those with power use it for God and devote it to His house's service. However, even if they lack the hands or hearts to build the church, God always reserves a Spirit to progress His work and knows how to confound all adverse plans and thwart all schemes set against it.

We have seen how simple it is for God to dismantle the most artfully built structures that either cunning or power can uphold. He can do so quietly, without even needing to draw a sword or strike a blow. He can achieve the unexpected, rebuking seas, flattening mountains, melting arms, scattering reed beasts, and clearing an immediate path through insurmountable obstacles to bring our BELOVED SOVEREIGN back to his throne and native lands.

The same power that has worked wonders in our civil matters can do the same for His Church, whose interests are dearest to Him of all earthly matters. The recent upheavals and disturbances among us urge you to care for and safeguard its welfare and happiness. When the Lord shakes heaven and Earth, Churches and States, it is to clear a path for Him who is desired by all nations. If Christ, the glory of His holy ordinances, and spiritual worship are not more exalted; if the sons of Levi are not purified so they may offer unto the Lord a righteous offering; if the House of God is not purged of corruptions; if we prioritise worldly interests, pomp and splendour over the heart and essentials of religion, the great things of the Law, purity of Doctrine, spirituality of Worship, and power of Godliness: if we show a zealousness for minor things and manmade rules, without an equal passion for the Magnalia Dei, God will surely reckon with us and call us to account for the blood that has been shed, the treasure that has

been spent, for all the Judgments and mercies, for all the providences and wonders that have been laid upon us. I say this not to accuse, but to awaken; not to charge, but to urge you to consider whether, after witnessing such profound changes and wonders, especially with our GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN inclined towards moderation, healing, and reformation, you should join him in striving to make the Church of Christ amongst us holier and happier than ever before. Indeed, no Parliament has ever been better positioned to promote Religion than you are.

I shall conclude this dedication and address to you with the words of the Prophet Azariah to Asa, "The Lord is with you while you be with Him, and if you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you. The Lord shine upon all your Counsels."

From my Study, July 24, 1660.

Your Honour's most humbly and devoted in all duty and obedience,  
EDW. REYNOLDS

## **DIVINE EFFICACY WITHOUT HUMAN POWER.**

Delivered in a Sermon at St. Margaret's Church in Westminster,  
before the Right Honourable House of COMMONS, June 28. 1660.

Then he replied and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by

my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts. - ZACH. 4. 6.

In the first part of this chapter, we find a vision of a golden candlestick, complete with a bowl and seven lamps and pipes, and two olive trees on either side of the bowl, providing the candlestick with oil. Prepared by an understanding and acknowledgment of his own ignorance, the Prophet is humbly ready to receive a deeper understanding of this vision from the Angel. This teaches us not to despair or be deterred by the complexity of the Scriptures, but to humble ourselves in recognition of our own ignorance, and to kindle within ourselves a genuine desire for a deeper understanding of God through them, and to seek Christ, to reveal God's counsel to us. Then we can be confident that the Lord will help our weaknesses and give us an understanding of Him, as far as necessary for our condition and salvation, in accordance with those gracious promises, "The meek He will teach His way, and show them that fear Him His covenant," Psal. 25. 9, 14. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," John 7. 17. "Unto him that conducts his conversation rightly, I will show the salvation of God," Psal. 50. 23.

1. Firstly, we must ask why this word is sent to Zerubbabel? We find that the Lord stirred up Joshua and Zerubbabel as principal agents whom he would use in building the Temple and restoring His worship; which we accordingly find them beginning to do, Ezra 2. 68, 69. Ezra 3. 2, 8. The work, obstructed by the power and malice of the Samaritans, was halted from the days of Cyrus to Darius. The Lord, through the Prophet Haggai and Zechariah, inspired the hearts of Zerubbabel and Joshua to renew the work, Ezra 5. 2.

Just as we find Joshua and Zerubbabel as the two main builders, we also find two main enemies resisting them in that service. Satan, a spiritual enemy resisting the spiritual office of the Priest, and Tatnai and others as statesmen opposing this enterprise in civil respects, as harmful to the King.

In the previous chapter, the Lord in a vision comforted Joshua and rebuked Satan. In this vision, He comforts Zerubbabel and rebukes the mountain of opposition raised against him. It was indeed necessary that both instruments should be encouraged, and both adversaries should be rebuked.

2. Secondly, we must ask how these words answer the Prophet's question and interpret the vision he saw? The resemblance between the vision and the word lies in this: as the candlestick was established without human hands, and nourished with oil directly from the olive trees without any human intervention, so the Lord alone, despite the resistance of men and the weakness of His people, would by His Spirit alone bring this work to completion, and magnify His power in the weakness of His instruments. Zerubbabel must not be dismayed, because mountains of opposition stand in his way; the Lord is capable of levelling and removing them all, Matth. 17. 20. As He said through Haggai, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," Hag. 2. 8. If He wished to make this Temple glorious in this way, He could do it as easily now as He did before, but He has another, greater glory with which to fill this House. So here, if He wished to erect this House by power, He could easily have done it, being the Lord of Hosts. But He has another way to do it, even by His Spirit, it will appear to be the work of His Grace alone, and to this His people will ascribe it with all thankful acclamations, crying Grace, grace unto it.



"My Spirit" here is contrasted with an arm of flesh, as in Isa. 31. 3, to signify that the Lord alone would bring this work to completion, without the aid of human power, as He said through the Prophet Hosea, "I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses nor by horsemen," Hos. 1. 7. Just as Christ was conceived not by human generation, but by the power of the Most High, Luke 1. 35, so the Temple, a type of Christ, was to be raised by the power of the Spirit guiding various concurrent providences towards that end.

1. The Spirit powerfully stirred up the hearts of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people to the work, Hag. 1. 14. 1. By impressing upon their hearts the judgments which they had suffered for their neglect of this great work, ver. 6, 9, 10, 11. 2. By comforting them with the assurance of His presence and assistance, ver. 13. 3. By reminding them of their exodus from Egypt, which was the work of the Spirit of God alone, that Spirit still remained amongst them, Hag. 2. 5. 4. By giving them assurance of a significant blessing, from the day that they should undertake this work, chap. 2. 19. 5. By promising them the Messiah, who was to come and to fill that Temple with His glory, thereby comforting them against their lack of silver and gold, which they might suppose ought to beautify that House as the previous one had been, chap. 2. 7, 8, 9, 21. 6. By assuring him that no power should stand in his way to hinder or obstruct the accomplishment of this work, v. 22, 23.
2. The Spirit manipulated the enemies' letters for hindering the work into promoting it against their wills, Ezra 5. 6.
3. The Spirit inspired Darius to confirm Cyrus's decree, and to add improvements to it, that they might offer sacrifices, and pray for

the life of the King and his sons, Ez 6. 6-12.

Consider the following phrases:

1. The overall context and purpose of these words are to encourage the construction of the Temple, even though they lacked the means to accomplish it at that time.
2. This encouragement stems from a Word of the Lord.
3. The means of delivering this Word, conveyed from the Angel to the Prophet, from the Prophet to the Prince, and then from him to me.
4. The focus of this encouragement is Zerubbabel.
5. The comfort provided is outlined in two parts: 1. Negatively, "Not by might nor by power", and 2. Positively, "But by my Spirit, says the Lord."

From this exploration of the text, we can conclude:

1. The Lord takes great care in addressing and dispelling the doubts of his servants, potentially undermining their devotion to any task he sets before them. If Satan interferes, he will be reprimanded; if mountains block the way, they will be flattened; if royal decrees obstruct, they will be withdrawn; if despair and doubt disturb, they will be assuaged. God never burdens his servants with a task and then leaves them alone to their anxieties, but always provides support and comfort proportionate to the challenges of the service to which he calls them.

Despite his authority alone being reason enough for his servants to follow his orders, he does not merely assert his sovereignty to demonstrate his rule over us, but also shows compassion and understanding of our human condition. He considers our fragility,

and accordingly, tailors his interactions with us. If he chastises, it's with the manner of a man (2 Sam. 7. 14). If he tests, it's with the trials of a man (1 Cor. 10. 13). If he draws us, it's with the pull of a man (Hosea 11. 4).

So he deals with Zerubbabel and Joshua. It might seem to the human mind an impossible venture, for a few impoverished men, freshly emerged from their proverbial graves, to erect such a grand edifice. Especially considering they're opposed by Satan, scorned by the wise, and previously thwarted by an imperial decree for many years. Thus, as the Lord provided Moses with Aaron and Hur to support him, so here he sends Haggai and Zechariah to fortify Zerubbabel, and to assure him that the task and the obedience would be his, but the accomplishment of the work itself would be done by God's own power, in such an extraordinary way, harnessing even the malevolence of enemies to further the very project they most oppose.

The Lord has always dealt with his servants in this way when they face difficult tasks. He addresses their concerns, resolves their uncertainties, quells their fears, and showcases the power of his grace in their weaknesses. Abraham and Sarah, too old to bear children, were raised above their doubts by his omnipotence and all-sufficiency (Gen. 17. 1. 18. 14). Jacob was afraid of his brother Esau; the Lord relieved his fear with a vision of angels and his victory in wrestling (Gen. 32. 1, 28). Moses was tasked with leading Israel out of Egypt, a difficult mission. We find him full of questions, and in each instance, God provided reassurances before sending him on his task.

When Moses questioned whether the Israelites would believe him, God promised to enable him to perform miracles (Exod. 4. 1, 2-9). When he expressed his own lack of eloquence and self-doubt about

his ability to persuade Pharaoh to release Israel, God responded with arguments based on his omnipotence, presence, and continuous guidance (Exod. 4. 10, 11-12). Moses then suggested that someone else might be better suited for such an important mission, and while God was displeased that Moses was challenging his choice of envoy, he condescended to allow Aaron to accompany him and speak for him (Exod. 4. 13-16). Finally, after Moses had become willing to go and had submitted his reason to God's will, God removed the last obstacle – the fear of those who sought his life (Exod. 4. 19). God left no stone unturned in assuaging any of Moses' fears that might have discouraged him from his mission.

Similarly, God treated Gideon, calling him to a great task to liberate Israel from the Midianites (Judges 6. 13). Gideon, like Moses, questioned his suitability: his family was poor, and he saw himself as the least among them. How could he save Israel? (Judges 6. 15) God assured him that it would be done by His power (Judges 6. 16). This sequence of doubt and reassurance continued until Gideon was fully prepared to undertake his task, with each of his fears addressed in turn.

This approach aligns with God's goodness. He knows we don't possess innate strength; we can only serve him through the grace and help we receive from him. He backs his servants in his own work when the opposition they encounter is not against them but is for his sake. This is what he has promised, never to abandon or fail us (Jos. 1. 5), to be with us as long as we are with him (2. Chron. 15. 2), and to keep us on his path (Psal. 91. 11).

From this, we learn:

1. Even when we undertake God's work, we should anticipate challenges. Some will arise from within ourselves – our own

ignorance, weakness, stubbornness, and impatience can make even simple tasks difficult. Regardless of how much love and determination we bring to the task, Satan will oppose us, the world will despise us, and God himself will test us. We will encounter mountains in our path when we seek to build God's house – mountains of pride, prejudice, and high imaginations within ourselves and from others who will always malign and obstruct the progress of such a good cause. Therefore, we cannot rely on worldly wisdom or self-confidence to carry out any duty, as we are entirely weak in and of ourselves. "Tertullian once said, 'Novi ego istos in pace leones, in praelio Cervos' – in times of peace, some appear as lions, yet in battle, they become deer. One can appear mightier than any man before conflict, yet in the midst of it, might show less courage than a woman, just as Peter did. None fall quicker than those who rely solely on their own strength," (Numbers 14:44).

2. We shouldn't grumble against the Lord, nor accuse him of being too harsh, as if he asked of us more than we can handle. This was Job's mistake when he protested that God treated him as if he were made of stone or brass (Job 6:12). We often view our challenges as unique and unparalleled, resulting in complaints about our situation and implicitly against God. However, oftentimes, it isn't the service's difficulty that is the issue, but our impatient hearts that magnify it. We err in our ways and then grow upset with God (Proverbs 19:3). A gentle and humble spirit will ease what we consider unbearable. Consider David's anger when Nabal refused him and his men provisions, and compare it with the humbled David under God's hand, enduring Absalom's rebellion and Shimei's curses. You'll see how a prepared heart simplifies even tough tasks and how a stubborn heart complicates the simplest things.

3. We mustn't resort to unspiritual solutions to avoid any danger encountered while carrying out our duty. If the Lord sets us a task, he can protect us from harm without us resorting to sin. God's all-sufficiency is a compelling reason to be sincere (Genesis 17:1). Why should I rely on sinful tactics when I have an all-sufficient God? In the Apostle's time, some Christians, confident in their knowledge and ability to resist, would eat meat at the idol's table to keep good relations with their idolatrous friends, fearing persecution. To these people, the Apostle gave a stern warning to beware of falling when they think they stand (1 Corinthians 10:12) and a reassurance that God wouldn't allow them to be tempted beyond their strength (verse 13).
4. Therefore, we mustn't shy away from our duties due to any discouragement, but follow God's call with sincerity. When we are obliged to obey, it is God's promise to protect us. Don't echo the sluggard's excuse in Solomon's proverb, "There's a lion in the way" (Proverbs 22:13), but remember that angels accompany us (Psalm 91:11). Jonah feared going to Nineveh, a large, wicked city. His mission to warn so many thousands of imminent destruction felt like a direct route to his demise. He believed the only way to escape this danger was by evading his duty. However, he who feared the city's rage encountered a sea storm, and he who feared destruction found himself swallowed into the belly of a whale. God's deliverance from that peril taught him to trust in His power, which could have saved him from any danger.

The Lord has called upon you, Right Honourable, for challenging and significant tasks. The work at hand is indeed arduous; curing complex ailments, resolving the tangled interests of divided minds,

calming animosities and jealousies, moderating severe judgements, reconciling disparate views, and distinguishing precious truths and God's worship from the numerous errors and irrationalities that have assailed it for so long. It is a task to solidify God's house and the hearts of men on firm foundations of truth, peace, and righteousness; to bring together the disparate factions and to mend the fractured bonds of unity and beauty.

Should you now echo the words of David, asking God to clear your path; or of Jehoshaphat, admitting you are uncertain of what to do but keep your eyes on Him; or like Paul, asking the Lord what He wants you to do; acknowledging that He has done great things for us, for which we are grateful, and has saved us from tears and despair; you might then ask, what can we give back to the Lord for all His blessings? Indeed, we are His servants, and we willingly act in our roles for His name, for the cause of His Christ and His Church.

Our highest ambition is this: to ensure that God, who has worked miracles for us, may be solely glorified and uplifted by us, through the orthodox doctrine, pure ordinances, spiritual worship, and united affections, that no unnecessary elements remain that could lead to offence, division, and separation, but that all conciliatory and unifying measures may be employed to bring us all together in heart and soul.

If you thus address the Lord with a sincere and upright heart, I can confidently relay His message to you: that He will be with you and support you. His Spirit will flatten all mountains before you and shatter any gates of brass and cut any iron bars obstructing your way. The service He requires of you, He will carry out through you. He will not only instruct you with His authority but will also aid you with His grace. When our interests and God's align, when we make His will

our will and His purpose our purpose, we are certain to never fail in our endeavours, because He can never fall short in His.

We have seen how the Lord encourages His servants against all difficulties that might dishearten them in His service. The means by which He does this is through His Word, as was the case with Zerubbabel.

Nothing can more effectively uplift people's spirits amid the difficulties and disheartenments they encounter in their duties than a timely word spoken to them by God. The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel is reassurance enough against all opposition, even from the most powerful adversaries. As it was to Joshua: "I will not fail you nor forsake you," (Joshua 1:5,8). Similarly to Asa, who, upon hearing the words of the prophet, took courage (2 Chronicles 15:8). "The righteous are as bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1), their confidence founded on a word from God. And indeed it may be, when considering:

1. The truth of it, which is confirmed by signs, wonders, and God's solemn oath. It is impossible for God to lie; every word of His is based on His unchangeable being. These are indeed strong sources of comfort (Hebrews 6:17,18).
2. The authority of it, which is sufficient to inspire any person to obedience. A man with a broad mandate from a supreme power acts courageously, aware of the backing power he possesses. No mandate carries as much power as that given by God. This empowered Moses and Aaron to confront Pharaoh and his sorcerers, Amos to challenge Jeroboam's court, and Peter and John, men of humble education, to speak boldly despite the prohibitions from the high priest and his council (Acts 4:19,20; Acts 5:29).



3. The efficacy of it. Nothing is more effective than the word of God. It was a mere word that created the world. "Let there be light," He said, and light came into being; "By the Word of the Lord, the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6). Eusebius calls it the 'divine fiat'. It is also the word that sustains the world (Hebrews 1:3), and it is capable still of giving reality to every promise and fulfilment to every intention He has for His people (Psalm 44:4; Isaiah 57:19). God's plans and promises are always supported by His power. "He will not leave until He has accomplished what He has said" (Genesis 28:15). "I have spoken, I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will do it" (Isaiah 46:11).

God has designed all duties to come with their own set of challenges. And the very word that outlines the duty also provides comfort against the challenge. We find solace in the authority of His commands, as the work He has given us isn't something we've presumptuously taken upon ourselves. We are heartened by His promises that motivate us, for every command comes with an accompanying promise (2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 10:36). We're comforted by His grace, which, together with His word, simplifies the required duties and tailors our souls for service, providing the heart to accomplish His word (Ezekiel 11:19,20). So, through faith and hope, we can apply every word to find comfort and courage in our duty. Faith gives a kind of reality to the promised things (Hebrews 11:1), and hope joyfully awaits their fulfilment, powerfully raising our spirits above difficulties, encouraging cheerful obedience. Faith quenches temptation, overcomes the world, purifies the heart, works through love, removes fear - the discourager and obstacle to duty (1 John 4:18). Hope prompts us to purify ourselves (1 John 3:3), to constantly serve the Lord day and night (Acts 26:7), to deny ungodliness and worldly desires (Titus 2:11,12,13), to wait on the

Lord and maintain His way (Psalm 37:34), to renew our strength, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

When a person's soul is in such a state of distress and confusion that all the comfort in the world isn't enough, a single sentence from God's word, skilfully wielded by the hand of faith, can buoy the heart, making it victorious over all dark powers. Wit, wealth, power, strategy, youth, strength, security, sensuality, and worldly occupations might provide a temporary shield against fear and discouragement. But they're like a bush in a storm, offering momentary shelter before the annoyances of its drippings. Only a timely word from God, brought to the conscience, can provide lasting and final comfort against all doubts and fears. It alone can bolster the heart against Satan's roars and the powers of darkness. You may find yourself facing many complex and challenging debates, unsure how to guide your judgement or use your influence; men may argue persuasively and plausibly on either side, and the real merits of a question may be obscured by eloquent speeches for and against it. In such cases, don't just listen to what you've heard spoken, but, like David, take God's word as your counsellor (Psalm 119:24). Don't let frowns discourage you, interests bias you, or false arguments dazzle you. Seriously consider what aligns most closely with God's will, what is most likely to advance the great ends that His will calls for: God's glory, human salvation, the cause of religion, the simplicity of the Gospel, the spiritual nature of worship, the peace, unity and integrity of the Church, the healing and realigning of men's fractured and divided affections, and the unbiased establishment of judgement and righteousness in the land. When you hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way," walk in it, don't deviate to the right or left (Isaiah 30:21).

We've observed how God encourages His servants in their difficulties, and how He does it - by the word of His mouth. This word is brought by the Prophet to Zerubbabel, and by the Angel (1) by Christ to the Prophet. The Angel in the previous chapter spoke directly to Joshua; here, he speaks indirectly through the Prophet Zechariah to Zerubbabel. The initial revealer of God's counsel to the Church is the Angel of the Covenant; it was His spirit that spoke through the prophets (1 Peter 1:11). He preached by His Spirit in the days of Noah to the spirits now in prison (1 Peter 3:19,20) - so, both the learned Catholic Andradius and the Protestant Beza, among others, have interpreted that passage. No one has seen the Father except through the revelation of the Son (John 1:18; Matthew 11:27). He was the Angel who spoke to Moses (Acts 7:30,38) and to Isaiah (John 12:40,41). He instructed His Apostles about matters relating to the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). They were only to impart to the Church what they had first received from Him (1 Corinthians 11:23).

Those who preach their own visions, not the word of the Lord, gravely disrespect the ministry of the Word and betray the trust Christ has placed in them as His ambassadors. Such high presumption earns them a dreadful curse (Deuteronomy 18:20). The less Christ and the Spirit's evidence and demonstration are present in a sermon, no matter how filled it might be with exotic learning, accumulated citations, witty remarks, or elaborate language, the less it possesses God's power to save human souls. For we aren't meant to preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord (2 Corinthians 4:5). And just as the best ministers preach in this way, so the best listeners appreciate nothing more in a sermon than the gracious and powerful revelation of Christ to the conscience, and the evidence of the preacher's commission from Him.

2. When the Prophet delivers nothing other than the Word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, it is his duty to listen. Princes and Magistrates, people of the highest rank and authority, must accept God's advice from the lips of His messengers, and be content to be guided, comforted, and encouraged by their ministry. David, although himself a prophet, had his own seers - Gad, Heman, Asaph, Jeduthan, Nathan - to advise, reprimand, and comfort him as his situation required. Similarly, we see Shemaiah the Prophet sent to reprimand Rehoboam, Oded and Azariab to bolster Asa, Jehu and Jahaziel to warn and console Jehoshaphat. We read of Elijah's letter to Jehoram, Zachariah's threat to Joash, the Prophet Isaiah counselling and chastising Ahaz, comforting and inspiring Hezekiah, Jeremy and Ezekiel foretelling judgments against Zedekiah; Hosea and Amos, against Jeroboam; Jonah sent to the King of Nineveh, and John the Baptist to Herod. And while we must approach high-ranking and ordinary individuals differently, we owe the same fidelity to all. "Cum eadem omnibus debeatur Charitas, non eadem omnibus adhibenda medicina," as Saint Austin says. If a Minister must show all meekness to all people, he should deliver his message with even more reverence, humility, awe, tenderness, honour, and wisdom to those of high status, whose dignity demands our respect as much as their consciences require our integrity. We must be as true to their souls as we are respectful and courteous to their persons. Especially in this case, humble preaching is like a fall of snow - as Homer compares Ulysses's eloquence - which soaks and sinks more gently than a sudden shower.

In doing so, the Lord greatly extols the power of His Word and the subtle imprint and character of His divine Majesty stamped upon it. Through the mouths of humble instruments, He gives it effectiveness

on the hearts of the greatest men and causes even Princes themselves to humbly accept His counsel from the lips of poor and insignificant individuals, whose only authority is the evidence of the Spirit of God and the ministry in which they serve Him, to uphold them and encourage them in His service. Thus, great ships are steered by a very small helm, and as some say, halted in their course by a very small Remora. We possess this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the power might be of God, who chose not the earthquake or the strong wind, but the still, small voice to demonstrate His presence, 1 Kings 19:11-12.

We have seen the encouragement in building God's House, the means of it - a Divine Word, the vehicles of that word - Christ, the great Angel of the Covenant delivers it to the Prophet, and the Prophet, as His messenger, to Zerubbabel. Thus, Zerubbabel is the individual enlivened by this word, and the task for which he is inspired is the construction of the Temple.

1. Then, Princes and Magistrates are tasked with building the House of God, caring for the interests of Religion, and ensuring that His truth and worship are promoted in their territories. Although we find no examples of this in the New Testament, when the Empire and the Church were separate, in the state of the Jews where they were united, we see examples in many of the good Kings: David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah. They were diligent in purifying God's house of corruption, abolishing false worship, tearing down high places, sending Priests and Levites to teach the people, establishing true Religion, compelling the people to enter into Covenant with God, building His House, and arranging its services. Similarly, Christian Princes like Constantine, Theodosius, Valentinian, and many others summoned Synods, enacted laws to condemn and

suppress heretical doctrines, and supported and encouraged the orthodox Bishops and Pastors of the Church.

2. They are the people's fathers, and therefore must care for the souls of those to whom they are so closely related.
3. They are God's Ministers for our good, Rom. 13:4. Hence, they certainly should not neglect our chief good.
4. We are instructed to pray for them so that we may lead peaceful and tranquil lives in all godliness and decency, 1 Tim. 2:2. Therefore, it's certain they bear responsibility for both the godliness and the peace of their people.
5. They should continually have the book of the Law before them, Deut. 17:18-19, not only to abide by it themselves but also to ensure others do the same.
6. They should be a nurturing Father to the Church, Isa. 49:23. God's people are promised that they will nurse at the breasts of Kings, Isa. 60:16. Therefore, it certainly falls within their duty to ensure that people are provided with the pure milk of the Word, where Religion and its means are lacking, to establish it, where it exists, to preserve it, where it is corrupted, to reform and restore it. As Saint Austin says, it's one thing for a Prince to serve God in his private capacity as a man by living faithfully, and another to serve Him in his public capacity as a Prince by robustly enforcing laws, requiring righteous acts and forbidding the contrary.

The Church's construction is twofold: one is doctrinal and persuasive, through the Ministry of Pastors and the preaching of the Word. The other is legal and coercive, through the approval,

establishment, and command of Princes, as they are said to build up the Church's walls, Isa. 60:10. Since the State's safety is significantly tied to the Church's welfare and peace, it is the duty of those who have the responsibility to preserve the former, because without the latter, the former cannot be preserved. Therefore, even Aristotle, a pagan Philosopher, ranks divine worship as a key component, without which a City or Civil Polity cannot exist.

In this way, we find Constantine, through his laws, prohibiting pagan sacrifices and idolatry. When Julian restored them and Valens permitted them, Jovinian and Theodosius eliminated and removed them again. We see the same Constantine establishing the Christian Religion in his Empire by his royal authority, judging in the matters of Athanasius and Caecilianus; Emperor Gratian authorising a commission to remove Arians: Aurelian expelling Paulus Samosatenus from the Church, Justinian enacting specific Laws regarding Religion. I conclude this with that notable quote of Saint Austin, "In hoc Reges Deo serviunt in quantum Reges, si in suo Regno bona jubeant, mala prohibeant, non solum quae pertinent ad Humanam societatem, verum etiam quae ad divinam Religionem." Thus, Princes serve God as Princes when they command good and forbid evil, not only in relation to human society, but also in regard to divine Religion.

The Church of God amongst us has, during our recent distressing and chaotic disturbances, suffered significant dilapidations in holy truths, and in its unity and peace. I will not tarnish the joy of this solemn day by providing (which is hardly possible) a catalogue of them. It falls to you, Right Honourable, and the other ranks of the Kingdom, to repair our divisions and restore paths to dwell in. Accomplish this as it ought to be done, and there will certainly be nothing more conducive to settling our tranquillity, establishing

government, reuniting the fragmented and divided hearts of the people, and edifying the Church, which concerns all wise and good men far more than any individual, domestic or separated interest. You are not without guidance in the Text for this significant task. For,

2. Zerubbabel cannot proceed without the Word of the Lord. In constructing God's House, political leaders must seek God's guidance and advice. It's noted no less than eight times in a single chapter, Exodus 40, that in establishing the Tabernacle and worship of God, Moses did everything as the Lord commanded Moses; he received his instructions this way, Exodus 25.9. In a similar vein, David gave to his son Solomon the blueprint of everything inspired by the Spirit, 1 Chronicles 28.11, 12. So runs the Apostle's commission from Christ, teaching them to observe all things I've commanded you, Matthew 28.20. "We serve God not at our discretion, but at His command," says Tertullian. Even pagans insisted on their superstitious rituals being carried out by rule. If humans, prone to error and misjudgement in their commands, take offence at those who disobey them, even if in doing so they offer better service, seeing it as a corruption and contempt of commands when they're not obeyed, even if they're improved, how much more must the all-wise God be irritated with us when we do His work not according to His will, but our own, thereby presuming to understand what is fitting and appropriate better than God Himself, thereby assuming the role of controllers of His wisdom, as learned Hooker suggests.

Emperor Sigismond's proposal to the Council of Trent, as recounted in the scholarly review of that Council, was indeed devout, suggesting that they should align their rules with the obligations of God's Law.



Certainly, the more Religion and the Church of God are grounded on the rule of the Word, the less scope for pure dispute and discrimination is permitted, the less human interest, and individual design are pursued, the more people seek the Glory of God, the Salvation of men, the Peace of the Church, the more they in simplicity and godly sincerity consider what is intrinsically necessary, what is expedient for edification here and now, which path will be most healing, most unifying, most likely to establish truth, peace, and holiness in the Church, to heal the divided minds of people, and unite them in that wherein they may all agree, or draw as near as possible to an agreement; the more certainly will God be pleased and honoured, and the more will the Churches of God abroad be delighted and comforted, with whom it is undoubtedly our Religious Interest, to achieve as firm a union as we can.

We've looked at the encouragement, the means of it, a Word, the Vehicles of that word Christ and the Prophet, the subject to be encouraged, Zerubbabel, the Magistrate, who is to build the Church with the assistance of the Word and Prophet. What remains is the matter of the comfort, presented, 1. Negatively, Not by Might, nor by Power. 2. Positively, But by my Spirit, says the Lord.

Might and Power are denied here, not generally, as if God was prohibiting human power from concerning itself with the Church's affairs, for the Magistrate is the Church's Guardian. The same Lord provided for Solomon's Temple through the victories and spoils of David, who wouldn't use such aids for Zerubbabel's glory. But it's excluded conditionally in this particular situation. Even though they had formidable enemies, even though they were bereft of Might and Power in themselves, God still wanted them to maintain their post, and not lose hope of success, Because 1. He can thwart every Sword that's formed against them, Isaiah 54.17. 2. He can convert that very

power which opposes the Church to its advantage, and make Haman's tongue petition for Mordecai's honour, Esther 6.6, 7. 3. He can build the Church upon the sufferings of His servants, as seed in the ground first dies and then multiplies, the more adversaries of Paul, the wider the door of his Ministry, 1 Corinthians 16.9. The weakness of the Instrument is irrelevant when God is the Agent.

The Church and worship of God is revived and restored by the power of God's Spirit alone. In the current situation, the Lord through His immediate providence arranged various contributing means to the completion of the Temple, which in themselves had no natural influence or propensity to it. It was the Spirit of the Lord, that by the Ministry of Moses and Aaron, brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage. It was the Spirit of the Lord that preserved them by miracles in the wilderness, with bread from heaven, and water from the rock. It was the Spirit of the Lord that overruled Balaam's heart and tongue to bless when he was paid to curse them. It was the Spirit of the Lord that divided the waters of Jordan, and brought down the wall of Jericho by the sound of rams' horns. It was the Spirit of the Lord that rallied Saviors for His oppressed people, and delivered them. It was the Spirit of the Lord that brought the Ark from the Philistines back to its place, driven by cattle against their nature. It was the Spirit of the Lord that saved the Jews from Haman's spite, by a series of events, which had no connection with each other, nor any natural propensity to such an end: It was the Spirit of the Lord, that when they were as trapped in Babylon as dry bones in a grave, stirred up the Spirit of Cyrus to give them a resurrection.

This divine power can be observed both in the Head, and in the mystical body of the Church. For Christ the Head, 1. His Incarnation spiritual, A stone cut without hands, a Tabernacle pitched by the Lord, and not by man, conceived in the Virgin's womb, by the

overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. 2. His Economy in the work of Redemption wholly spiritual, borrowing nothing of human power, by the eternal Spirit He offered Himself to God, Hebrews 9:14. 3. His Resurrection spiritual, made the chief cornerstone after being rejected by men. Thus, the foundation of the building was laid not by Might nor by Power, but by the Spirit of God, Psalm 118:22, 23.

2. The Church, or Christ's Mystical Body, owes its origin and propagation not to human power, but entirely to the Spirit of God.
3. The origins of the Church are divine and spiritual, born not of human will but from God, as John 1:13 and John 3:5, 6 suggest. It's a kingdom not of this world, as indicated in John 18:36. Its formation is guided by a heavenly calling, as mentioned in Hebrews 3:1, and takes shape like dew, not waiting for mankind, as expressed in Psalm 110:3 and Micah 5:7.
4. The propagation of the Church also fully originates from the Spirit. It has faced mountains of opposition and persecution, with the gates of Hell and powers of darkness arrayed against it. The success of a doctrine that teaches self-denial, world-renunciation, cross-bearing, affliction-suffering, and following Christ outside the camp bearing His reproach, is beyond human comprehension. The triumph of such a doctrine, promoted by twelve ordinary and unassuming men, based on unseen promises and hopes of rewards in another world, can only be ascribed to the Spirit of God, by whose power our spiritual warfare becomes mighty.

This is a spiritual construction and, therefore, cannot be built by human power. It's a kingdom without worldly magnificence and therefore arrives without observation, as said in Luke 17:20. Its foes

are mostly spiritual, and hence, only a spiritual power can conquer them, as referred to in Ephesians 6:12 and 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5. No human strength or intelligence can stand against or outwit the gates of Hell. Only He who is the power and wisdom of God, can defeat the kingdom of darkness.

The specific aim of God in establishing the Church was to magnify His power, wisdom, and grace in creating something out of nothing. Just as the visible world displays the glory of God through its beauty, order, and magnitude, so the Church, even more so, exalts God's glory. The world is like a ring, and the Church is the jewel set within it. The world is like a house for creatures to live in, while the Church is God's own palace, where He resides, as referred to in Psalm 132:13. The magnificence of this glory is that it's a creation from nothing, with no material suitability, nor active contribution from the subject to the heavenly state which is solely achieved by God's spirit. We contribute no more to our own conversion than water does to its own heating, naturally resisting the fire that heats it. All goodness is bestowed upon us by the Spirit of God; we can't generate it from within. No one should boast except in God's free grace, which alone could transform a corrupted mass into such a grand palace.

Therefore, we must not despair when situations appear, to human eyes, to be beyond repair and hopeless, but rather we should trust in the Spirit of God. He can make those dwelling in dust awake and sing beyond our wildest imagination. However, if we base our hopes on human strength or power, we'll find them to be in vain. Each man proves fallible: sometimes weak and unable to help us, sometimes false and unwilling to help us, always changeable, and possibly unable to assist us. The more we attribute to individuals, the more we detract from God. So, let's not be disheartened by formidable opposition or any obstacles we face in God's work. It's His promise to

subdue all Christ's enemies. Let's believe it, and He will do it, even if we don't see how.

And now to conclude and bring everything back to the mercies of this day. No nation has had more experience of the truth of these words than we have had in this country. When the Lord had commanded the sword of a civil war to return to the sheath, and things seemed to be drawing towards a comfortable close with the king's gracious concessions in the final treaty, divine providence chose to lead us back into sorrowful confusions, back into the surges of the sea, through the cunning tactics of a divided party. This party, possessing the sword and intending to use it to alter the basic constitution of government, deprived the Lords of their rights, removed all such worthy individuals from the Commons who might obstruct their work, laid the foundations of their utopia in the blood of their natural ruler, and in the exile of his children and family. They resolved to impose their will by might and power.

But then the spirit of the Lord intervened to halt this streak of domination. First, he stirred up a rebel against these men, who disagreed that 70 people should rule and preferred to rule himself. His actions put a stop to their domination until, by the bizarre workings of the same providence, his dynasty was overthrown by his own allies. And so, the 70 regained the throne. These political confusions were matched by desperate confusion in religion; with the ministry and universities, and all supports of truth and learning endangered, and through a mixture of all religions, no single one was able to hold sway. The Spirit of the Lord then acted again, instilling a discordant spirit between them and their military officers, dividing their strategies, and using yet another force to expel them.

The same divine providence stirred up an honourable person in the North to resist this new plot. Suddenly, by the hidden power of the Spirit of God, the military officers, who had long been the nation's terror, became, inexplicably, like women, their hearts filled with fear, their strategies in disarray, their soldiers dispersed. By that divine providence, which they had often used to justify their irregular actions, they were, in one day, rendered powerless and ineffective, as if erased, merely by the hand of God. By the same divine intervention, the hearts of the people of the land were everywhere strangely inspired as one to call for the return of the excluded patriots, to pave the way for a free Parliament, and through them to bring back our dear and revered monarch from exile. Not only to the throne of his father but also to the hearts of his people. Those who had long known what it was to fear where they did not love, were now eager to love where they need not fear.

And now that the Lord has reestablished these kingdoms on the basis of their ancient and fundamental constitution and has returned to your embrace, a Prince of the greatest gentleness and mildness of spirit, one of the best dispositions in the world for government, that ever held these sceptres. He has been prepared, like David, in a school of affliction to sit upon a throne, equipped by a crown of thorns to wear a royal diadem, and through the bitter cup of his own sufferings, to provide against the sufferings, and to heal the wounds of his poor weary people. What remains but these two things?

1. We are called to fill our hearts and voices with praise for God for these mercies, so divinely designed, accomplished without shedding a single drop of blood, and beyond human counsel's capacity to achieve. We should attribute all to the Spirit and Grace of God, saying, 'Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory'. We should thank him for this first essential

step towards stability, without which we would always have been at risk of conflict and bloodshed. We should thank the Lord for influencing his Majesty to inaugurate his government with such a devout public declaration against profanity, an act which strongly encourages us to support his Majesty's zeal. We should thank the Lord for his Majesty's Christian gentleness in preempting and addressing his people's pleas for forgiveness, and in expediting their security in this matter. We should thank the Lord for his Majesty's unwavering commitment to, and zealous care for the Protestant Religion, and his resistance against all temptations which would have led him astray. We should thank the Lord for his gentle tolerance towards those of sober, peaceable, and pious demeanour, who cannot align themselves fully with the judgement or practice of their brethren. We should thank the Lord for his Christian prudence, and healing moderation, in fostering such a fraternal understanding among brethren that may put to rest all past hostilities, prevent all future disorders, and bring matters to a fair and amicable balance.

2. We must consider how to utilise these mercies to glorify God, who bestowed them, and to benefit the entire body, not just the specific, divided interests of any one group alone. As the historian tells us, it's one virtue to achieve victories, and another to utilise them. And so it is with receiving mercies and making the most of them.

Please consider what the Lord is asking of you in a time like this. After such seismic upheavals and confrontations, such afflictions and trials, such scarcely short of miraculous changes of divine providence that we've witnessed, after the shedding of so many thousands of men's blood, after the expenditure of so many millions in treasure,

does he not justifiably expect you now to be more passionate for his Glory, more considerate of his Church, and the souls of men within it, more rigorous against all impiety and profanity, more attentive to the power of godliness, and to the powerful preachers and preaching of it, and purity of Divine Ordinances; more active and anxious to mend divisions, to eliminate offences, and by the most satisfactory provisions possible, to avoid the risk of any further disorders than any Parliaments have done before you. May it be recorded among the annals of this nation, as once was of Josiah, akin to this King and this Parliament (who have been so graced with such a sequence of mercies and wonders) that there was no King or Parliament before them that turned to the Lord with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might, in accordance with all the Law of God. This shall be written for future generations, and the people that shall be created shall praise the Lord.

FINIS.

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## **MONERGISM BOOKS**

Divine Efficacy Without Human Power, by Edward Reynolds,  
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