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Sunday Sermonette
A Continuing Series by Local Religious Leaders
"A Christ of Power"
By the Rev. Emil Kontz
Pastor, First Baptist Church

New vividness and vigor are put into an unfamiliar sentence of Scripture by James Moffatt. He translates the reference in 2 Corinthians 13:3 as follows: "It is no weak Christ you have to do with, but a Christ of power!"

There is an illuminating insight into the real character of Jesus, which both His friends and enemies had better note more carefully. That is a statement about Jesus Christ which is amply buttressed by the historical facts of the Gospels. For the Bible reveals not a Jesus who was weak and sad and pale (as the classical artists have done), but rather a vital and vigorous Christ who possessed and exercised unique and amazing divine power.

It is significant that at the very outset of His earthly ministry, following a forty-day fast, the account reports that "He came forth from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit." Let us get this fact straight. It is not only that others ascribed unusual power to Him, but also that He claimed exceptional power for Himself. Hear Him tell His disciples: "Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye do well, for so I am!" In a glorious galaxy of great affirmations beginning with "I AM" . . . He sets forth clearly and confidently the nature and authority of His person. The compelling command known as "the great Commission" is prefaced by the mighty assertion: "All authority is given unto me, in heaven and on earth!" Scripture, history and experience all bear witness to the truth of His claims.

PONDER THOSE significant words again: "It is no weak Christ you have to do with, but a Christ of power!" That is a truth which those OUTSIDE the church had better reckon with. It is no use to oppose Him—ultimately His divine authority and sovereignty is bound to have sway over the hearts and lives of men. Someone has very truly said: "You may doubt Christ as Thomas did; deny Him as Peter did; betray Him as Judas did; patronize Him as Annas did; oppose Him as Caiaphas did; try to evade Him as Pilate

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did; condemn Him as the mobs did; stand by Him to the last as Mary did; laud Him as did one thief, or accept Him as did the other . . . but you cannot silence the questions that clamor like bells in your soul about Him, while life continues to be the insistent interrogation that it is!

Precisely, for He is THE answer. Furthermore, those INSIDE the Church may take fresh courage from this testimony of Paul. For it was this same strong Christ Who gave the solemn assurance: "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!"

In this brief meditation there is space left to point out the areas in which Christ's authority is so potent. Think of His matchless power over PEOPLE. By His message, His ministry and His moving sacrifice, He exercised a magnetic power over all kinds of people. Conscious of this He declared: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself."

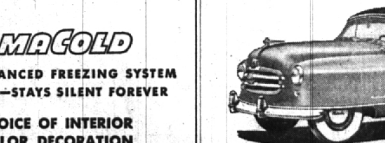
ACROSS THE centuries and the continents He has done just that. Think, too, of His unprecedented authority over the forces of SIN. Whatever we call it, "the downward drag," "the backward pull," that evil power which keeps men from being and doing their best—Jesus had the power to free men from its bondage.

When we confront these sinister forces, we do well to have Christ as our ally. In His strength alone can we meet and master temptation.

And then, think of the power of Christ over DEATH. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is centered around the theme of life. "I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." And, standing in a cemetery before the tomb of

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What's Being Planned By BIRMINGHAM CHURCHES

Copy for the church page must be in The Eccentric office by 3:30 p.m. Thursday.

First Methodist
An 8 p.m. session is scheduled by the Wesleyan group for May 20 at the home of Mrs. Theodore

SUNDAY SERMON TOPICS
Sunday, May 18
Christian Science

That the real man is immortal is shown in the Lesson-Sermon entitled "Mortals and Immortals" to be given at all Christian Science churches this week. The text is from Romans 8:3, 9, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

Unity Center
Frank Unshack will speak on "The Peace of the Subconscious" when this group meets at the Unity Reading Room, Theater building, at 11 a.m.

Redeemer Lutheran
"Christ's Prayer for Me" will be the sermon topic of the Rev. Theodore Wuggazer for both Sunday morning services. He has taken his text from John, 17:9, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

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Presbyterian Supper Club To Fete Choir Members
Members of the First Presbyterian choir will be guests of the Supper club on May 20, when their annual dinner is held in the church parlors at 7 p.m. Hosts of the evening will be Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Seaholm and Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Scott.

As is customary, following the supper and a social hour, the choir will present a program of vocal numbers for their hosts.

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First Presbyterian
The Elizabeth Trowbridge group will meet May 20 with Mrs. H. H. Bushnell, 438 Larchdale.

Missionary A is planning a 2 o'clock meeting for May 21. It will be held at the home of Mrs. Edgar Parks, 356 Pierce.

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