

PRESENT TRUTH ARTICLES

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Chapter 1

The Power of Christ

One of the most intensely interesting occasions for the disciples of the Master was when He, their Saviour and Lord, "was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight." He had given "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection, "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3) Before His death He had instructed them concerning His return to the Father. That knowledge had brought grief and sadness to their troubled hearts. But He did not leave them without hope: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Absorbed with the idea of the immediate establishment of His kingdom, they were poorly prepared to grasp all the truth He tried to set before them. They thought that the right was His to reign as king; they desired that He should be king, and they were ready to give Him the homage of loving hearts. But a little later we see their King a helpless victim on Calvary's cross, and their hopes dying within them. But now the scene has changed. The bands of death have been broken, and He that was dead is alive again, and is once more with them. They hear His own sweet voice; they listen to the gracious words that fall from His lips; and by His resurrection they were

begotten "again unto a lively hope." (1 Peter 1:3) He bade them go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, but how little did they comprehend the meaning of all that! "Lord, wilt thou at this time," said they, "restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) "Ye shall receive power," said He, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

In this commission He entrusted to them, and through them to us, a mighty work to be accomplished--a work beyond the power of man to perform. He bade them go; the command was imperative; but, thanks be to His dear name, before the command was the promise of power to perform it. "Ye shall receive power" and then you can "be witnesses unto Me." (Acts 1:8) St. Matthew presents the same thought and in precisely the same order. "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Why were they to go? Because He had commanded it. How were they to fulfill this high and holy commission, and do this work which was beyond man's power to perform? The answer is found in this, that He had promised to be with them till the end, and He who made the promise possessed all power, and had said, "Ye shall receive power" and "ye shall be witnesses unto Me." "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

Shortly before this He bade them tarry "in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." But now what a spectacle is this! He, their great Leader in whom they trusted, is "taken up" and a cloud received "Him out of their sight," and they--they so poor and weak and erring--are left to carry on the mightiest work ever committed to mortals. I do not wonder that those disciples tarried in Jerusalem, and prayed till the day of Pentecost came; for just in proportion as they felt that the command to do the work was imperative, so must they have realized that Divine power would be a necessity. And when in response to their prayers and their faith, that power came and they rehearsed before the people the recent scenes of Calvary, and presented in its simplicity the Gospel of Christ, the effect of that power was seen in the conversion of three thousand souls on that same day. And the same power which existed then exists still, and awaits the demands of the people of God today. Personal consciousness on our part that without Him we can do nothing, and a self-surrender to His will, is the pathway that leads to success in the work assigned us; and the result will be the salvation of souls, and glory and honour to His name who has promised to endue His servants with power from on high.

Chapter 2

How the Word Came

Keeping in mind the text, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," we will place by the side of it the following: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

In a later article we shall consider more fully the scope of the word "prophecy;" but here it is sufficient to note that the statement made in regard to the prophecy, must be applicable to all Scripture, since it is all given by the inspiration, or breathing, of God. The Scriptures, therefore, did not originate from men, but from the Holy Spirit. This must settle the question as to whether or not the Scriptures are in any degree the reflection of the ignorance or the prejudice of the men who wrote them; for he who would claim that they are, must take the position that the Holy Spirit is capable of being moved by human prejudice, or that it cannot utter words of perfect, Divine truth through an imperfect instrument. But that would be to degrade the Holy Spirit to the level of man.

It is not our business to inquire how the Spirit of God could speak through a human instrument without destroying his individuality, and still the message be wholly Divine. That is a mystery that rests only in the power of God. We accept it just as we accept the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, without attempting to explain it.

When we have our attention specially directed to the fact that the Scriptures proceed wholly from the Spirit of God, we cannot fail to be struck with the frequency with which the statement occurs in the Bible. Let us note a few instances.

"Now these be the last words of David. David, the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. 23:1,2) David spoke the word, but it was the Word of God.

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Peter 1:10,11) Who was it that testified? It was not the prophets themselves, but the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets. The prophets did not understand the full import of the things that the Spirit testified through them, but had to study their own writings.

Notice in the following Scriptures how carefully the distinction is made between the men who were used as instruments, and the source whence the revelation came:--

"Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear,

and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." (Acts 28:25,26)

"Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." (Acts 1:16)

"Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" (Acts 4:24,25)

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, ... as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began." (Luke 1:68-70)

"And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:20,21)

In all the preceding texts the prophet is mentioned as the mouthpiece of the Spirit of God; but in the following quotation, the prophet is ignored, and the credit is given directly to the Holy Spirit: (Jeremiah 21:33)--

"Whereof the Holy Ghost also in a witness to us; for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." (Heb. 10:15,16)

Who gave this witness?--The Holy Ghost. The prophet Jeremiah was used as the instrument of transmitting it to the people; but it came so directly from the Holy Spirit that Jeremiah could without injustice be ignored in giving credit for the words. And so we learn that, since the Scriptures came not by the will of man, but that "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy ghost," the word which they spoke is not the word of man, but is indeed the Word of God.

Chapter 3

Perpetuity of the Law

The law of God is the righteousness of God. It may not be amiss to review the proof on this point. David, in these words, bears witness to the fact that the commandments are themselves righteousness: "My tongue shall speak of Thy word; for all Thy commandments are righteousness." (Ps. 119:172) Since there is no righteousness but that of God, the commandments must be His righteousness; but we have still more direct evidence. The prophet Isaiah thus contrasts the things of earth with the righteousness of God: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but My salvation shall be for ever; and My righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isa. 51:6) In the next verse he proceeds to tell what this righteousness is: "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law." Because the law is the righteousness of God, it enables those who are instructed in it to "give judgment upon good or evil."

The text says, "My righteousness shall not be abolished." Since there can be no question but that "righteousness" is here used with reference to the law of God, we may properly substitute "law" for "righteousness," thus: "The earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but My salvation shall be for ever, and My law shall not be abolished." This gives the

exact meaning, and is no more positive than we shall find stated elsewhere.

God is from everlasting to everlasting. (Ps. 90:2) As He cannot exist separate from His nature, or, in other words, separate from Himself, and the law is the transcript of His nature, it necessarily follows that the law exists from everlasting to everlasting. And since created beings, who are all subjects of God's government, cannot obey an abstract principle, but must have that principle clearly defined, we know that at least from the time that God created intelligent beings as subjects of His government, the law must have existed in written form, or must have been expressed in definite language. And from the beginning of His creation to everlasting ages, it must continue so to exist.

This is exactly what we are taught by the words of Christ in the sermon on the mount. Said he: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill [to ratify, establish, or teach]. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matt. 5:17, 18. Here two things are mentioned, the law and the prophets. Christ did not come to destroy either one. He came in fulfillment of prophecy, and also to teach the law, which he did in the sermon on the mount. He did not, however, fulfill all the prophecy; for some of it reaches far beyond His first advent. We read the following prophecy concerning the kingdom of David, over which Christ, as the Son of David, is to rule: (Ps. 89:20-29)--

"I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him; with whom My hand shall be established; Mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him; and in My name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto Me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven."

We read further:--

Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. (Ps. 89:20-29) His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

Here is a prophecy that will be in process of fulfillment as long as the sun and moon endure, even to all the days of heaven. Now the words of Christ are that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." Till all what be fulfilled? Evidently till all the prophets be fulfilled, for He is speaking of the prophets, in connection with the law. Then, in view of the prophecy that we just read, we know that not the slightest change can be made in the law

so long as Christ reigns on the throne of David; and that will be throughout eternity.

Chapter 4

Life in Christ

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10) Many act and talk as if Christ was dead, and irrecoverably dead. Yes, He died; but He rose again, and lives forevermore. Christ is not in Joseph's new tomb. We have a risen Saviour. What does the death of Christ do for us?--Reconciles us to God. He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Now mark! It is the death of Christ that brings us to God; what is it that keeps us there?--It is the life of Christ. We are saved by His life. Now hold these words in your minds: "Being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Why was the life of Christ given? "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then Christ gave His life that we might have life. Where is that life? and where can we get it? "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4) He alone has life, and He gives that life to as many as will accept it. (John 17:2) Then Christ has the life, and He is the only one who has it, and He is willing to give it to us. Now what is that life? "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (Verse 3) Has a person who knows Christ eternal life?--That is what the Word of God says.

Again He says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:36) These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we know that we have this life? This is an important question. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Says one, "We know that we will get eternal life by and by." Yes, that is true, but there is something better than that; we get it now. This is not a mere theory, it is the Word of God. Let me illustrate: Here are two men--brothers--to all appearances they are alike. But one is a Christian, and the other is not. Now the one that is a Christian, although there is nothing in his external appearance to indicate it, has a life that the other has not. He has passed from death--the state in which the other one is--to life. He has something that the other has not, and that something is eternal life. The words, "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," would mean nothing if nobody else had eternal life abiding in him.

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." (1 John 5:10) God cannot lie, and so when we say that the words of God are not so, we make liars of ourselves. Now, according to this Scripture, we make God a liar, if we believe not the record that God gave of His Son. What, then, must we believe in order to clear ourselves of that

charge,--of not believing this record and thus making God a liar? The next verse explains it: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

We are to believe that God has given to us eternal life in Christ. As long as we have the Son of God, we have eternal life. By our faith in the Word of God we bring Christ into our hearts.

When Jesus went to Bethany, He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." We have already read about passing from death unto life; how was that done?--Only by a resurrection. In Christ we have a resurrection to a new life. Note the following: Paul prays that he may know Him, and the "power of His resurrection." What is the power of that resurrection? "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us [made us alive] together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)." (Eph. 2:4-7)

Notice, He hath done this, and He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We were dead, we are quickened, and we are raised up to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. We must have, and we can have, the life of Christ today; for when He comes, He will change our vile bodies by the same power by which He has changed our hearts. The heart must be changed now. It cannot be changed except by the life of Christ coming in and abiding in it. But when Christ is in the heart, we can live the life of Christ, and then when He comes, the glory will be revealed. He was Christ when He was here upon earth, although He

did not have a retinue of angels and glory visible about Him. He was Christ when He was the Man of Sorrows. Then, when He ascended, the glory was revealed. So with us. Christ must dwell in our hearts now, and when He comes and changes these bodies, then the glory will be revealed.

We learn that the work of the high priest was to be one of compassion. (Heb. 5:2) "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him [Christ] to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Heb. 2:17) What is done by the compassion of Christ?--Strength is given to us. What benefit is the compassion of Christ to us?--He knows the strength we need. He knows what we need, when we need it, and how we need it. So the work of Christ as priest is for one thing,--to deliver us from sin. What is the power of Christ's priesthood?--He is made priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." That is the power by which Christ delivers you and me from sin this day, and this hour, and every moment that we believe in Him.

No one could take life away from Christ. The wicked had no power to kill Him. He laid His life down. But God raised Him up, "having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." He had power in His life that defied death. He laid life down, and took death upon Himself, that He might show His power over death; and when the time came for Him to do so, He took His life again. Why was it that death could not

hold Him?--Because He was sinless. Sin had spent all its force on Him, and had not marred Him in the least. It had not made a single blot upon His character. His was a sinless life, and therefore the grave could have no power over Him. We have that same life when we believe on the Son of God. There is victory in that thought. We can have it by believing on the Son of God. Give your sins to the Lord, and take that sinless life in their place.

The life of Christ is divine power. In the time of temptation the victory is won beforehand. When Christ is abiding in us, we are justified by faith, and we have His life abiding in us. But in that life He gained the victory over all sin, so the victory is ours before the temptation comes. When Satan comes with his temptation, he has no power, for we have the life of Christ, and that in us wards him off every time. Oh, the glory of the thought, that there is life in Christ, and that we may have it!

The just shall live by faith, because Christ lives in them. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

Chapter 5

Good Works

The Bible holds out no promise of a reward for laziness. In God's plan no provision is made for idleness. Heaven is pictured before us as a place of activity, and heavenly beings as untiring workers. The Saviour said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17); and again, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me." (John 9:4) Of the angels we read that they are all "ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." (Heb. 1:14, R.V.)

This being the case, it cannot be thought that those who are to inherit salvation should be idle. The apostle Paul labored with his hands, as an example to the believers, and left on record the Divine commandment, "If any will not work, neither let him eat." (2 Thess. 3:10, R.V.) But the frequent exhortation to work is with special reference to spiritual things, rather than physical. Jesus said, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." (John 6:27) So the apostle Paul says that the reward will be given to those who patiently continue in well doing (Rom. 2:7); and the Saviour says: "Behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. 22:12)

Again we read that Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for

His own possession, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14, R.V.) And again, the Holy Spirit, through the apostle James, puts a premium upon good works, in these words: "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." (James 1:25) Many other texts might be quoted to show that the Christian life is to be one of activity, and that good works are not only necessary, but are the one indispensable requisite.

Works, and works alone, in the judgment, will determine a man's condition for eternity. God "will render to every man according to his "works:" (Rom. 2:6) The question which the judgment will settle will not be, "What has this man believed?" nor "How has he felt?" but, "What are his works?" There is no place for the cavil of those who think that they are enunciating a principle of which the Bible is ignorant, when they say, "God will not damn a good man for his opinions nor for his belief." People are neither condemned nor saved because of their opinions, but because of their deeds.

"What!" exclaims one, "are you going to deny the doctrine of justification by faith?" Not by any means. I would go so far as to claim that the doctrine of justification by faith is the one great theme of the Scriptures, and that all others things are but parts of it. But the thing to be emphasized by the above remarks and quotations, is that faith works. (See Gal. 5:6) No truer statement was ever made than this, that "faith is not a sedative, but a stimulant." Faith is intensely active, and the source of all spiritual activity. While it is true that

only a man's works will be considered in the judgment, it is equally true that the character of his works will be determined by his faith. Where there is no faith, there can be no enduring works.

The works which are acceptable to God are "good works." But perfect goodness resides in God alone. (See Mark 10:18) The righteousness which we must have is God's righteousness. (Matt. 6:3) Of His own ways God says: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:9) Who, then, can hope to present to God the good works that will be equal to His? None but those who, like Paul's brethren, are ignorant of God's righteousness, would be presumptuous enough to think such a thing possible. Only God can do the works of God. Therefore when the Jews said to Christ, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" He replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." (John 6:28,29)

The words of Paul to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" are often quoted by those who forget the words immediately following, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12,13) God Himself does the good works which when exhibited in the lives of men, render them pleasing to Him. So the Saviour said: "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:21)

How, then, do they appear in men? This is the "mystery of godliness." It is the mystery of "God manifest in the flesh." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1:1,14) This was done to demonstrate the possibility of God's dwelling in human flesh. The mystery of the works of God being manifested in the lives of men, is simply the mystery of the incarnation.

In Christ dwelleth "all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily." (Col. 2:9) Therefore when Christ in His completeness dwells in the heart by faith, that person will be "filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:17-19)

What words could be more full of comfort, and more suggestive of the infinite possibilities of the Christian life than these in Ps. 31:19: "Oh how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!" Think of it! God Himself has wrought the good works with which we are to appear before His throne. And how are we to get them?--Simply by trusting Him; by appropriating those good works by faith. God Himself comes to dwell with those who believe His word, and He lives out His own life in them. This thought is enough to fill every soul with love and joy and confidence.

The Christian life means an actual life. But life means activity. To live a godly life, therefore, means the living of a life in which the

acts of God Himself are manifested. The apostle Paul said: "But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all;" and then he added, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. 15:10) And again: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

The secret of the whole matter is to acknowledge that in us dwells no good thing; and that God alone is good; that we are nothing, but that He is everything; that we are weakness, but that power belongs to God, and that God has the power to manifest Himself in the flesh today as well as eighteen hundred years ago, if we will but let Him; and to submit ourselves to the righteousness of God. Exaltation comes only through self-abasement. Christian activity comes only through passive submission to God, as the clay is passive in the hands of the potter. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

Chapter 6

The Miracles of Jesus

A belief in miracles is a necessary consequence of a belief in God. He who does not believe in miracles does not believe in God. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8,9) Miracles, therefore, are simply God's natural actions. His smallest acts must be miraculous in the eyes of men, simply because He is God. Since God is infinitely above man, and His ways are as much higher than man's ways as the heavens are higher than the earth, it follows that no one can deny the existence of miracles at the present day without denying that God lives and directs the affairs of the universe.

It is idle to speculate as to whether or not miracles are a setting aside of the laws of nature. What are commonly known as the "laws of nature," are nothing less than God's ways of working in the inanimate world. We cease to wonder at them because they are so common that we do not recognize God in them. Familiar as the phenomena of the weather are to us, no man can make it rain. The most learned botanist cannot make a single blade of grass. No matter how deeply scientists may explore the operations of nature, there is still something in every one of them which they cannot explain.

The life of Jesus on earth, from His birth to His ascension was a miracle, because it was the life of God. Thousands of people who never heard of Jesus, had tried to live sinless lives, but not one had been able to do so. Philosophers had set forth lofty moral sentiments, but not one had been able to live out his own teachings. But Christ lived a sinless life, in the face of such temptations as all the world together had never known. It was because He lived the life of the infinite God.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Cor. 5:19) All His acts were the acts of the Father, who dwelt in Him. Said He: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." (John 14:10) So the miracles that Christ did were the natural working of that life of God, which was His life.

These miracles were wrought for a definite purpose. After having told of many miracles that Jesus did, and His resurrection as the crowning one of the whole series, the apostle John said: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John 20:30,31)

Every miracle of Jesus, therefore, was for the purpose of showing us how we may receive His life, and have the same miracle wrought in us. It is truly said that His miracles of healing were the

natural outgrowth of His sympathetic loving nature; "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Love to man prompted every step in the plan of salvation. Christ did not perform the miracles simply for the purpose of calling attention to Himself, but to show the love and the power of God toward man. The healing of the bodies of men was only an object lesson. They were aids to faith, to enable men to grasp unseen realities; to show them the power of Christ to heal the disease of the soul. Whoever reads the accounts of the miracles of Jesus with this in mind, and not as stories told for our entertainment, will receive of the life which was manifested in the doing of those miracles. Each one illustrates some phase of the work of Christ in supplying man's spiritual needs.

In subsequent numbers of this paper we shall study some of these miracles, to the end that we may receive life through His name.

Chapter 7

The Inspired Word

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

So much effort has been made by unbelieving men, even in the ministry, to make the Revised Version appear to teach that some Scripture is not inspired, that it is necessary first of all to show that a literal rendering of the Bible does not diminish its claims to inspiration. In the Revision we read, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable, etc. This is even stronger than the other, for instead of making a positive statement that all Scripture is inspired, it mentions it as a fact so well known that it needs no proof, and proceeds to a statement of the result. Without going into grammatical technicalities, it is only necessary to say that the present participle "inspired," limiting the term "all Scripture," conveys the simple idea that since all Scripture is inspired it is also profitable. Add to this the fact that the revisers placed in the margin the exact reading of the old version, it is evident that we are fully

warranted as a positive declaration that all Scripture is inspired of God. (2 Tim. 3:16)

The word "Scriptures" is a term used to denote the sacred writings commonly known as the Old and the New Testament. It corresponds to the word "Bible." "Bible" means "book;" when we say, "the Bible," we really say, "the Book." Now the number of books in the world is almost beyond computation; yet the Bible is so prominent, and so much above all other books, that it cannot be classed among them, but is distinguished as "the Book," or the Bible. Everybody knows what book we mean when we so speak. It is the same way with the parallel term, "the Scriptures."

We read of Christ, when He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus, after His resurrection, that "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27) Thus we see that the term "the Scriptures" includes the whole of the Old Testament. They are inspired. (2 Tim. 3:16) Indeed, when Timothy was a child there was nothing but the Old Testament written. It is especially to the Old Testament that the apostle Paul refers when he says that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and that it is able to make a man wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works.

But the fact that the Old Testament is particularly referred to does not exclude the New Testament writings from the term "the Scriptures." (2 Tim. 3:16) The apostle Peter refers to the writings of

Paul, and says that they contain "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:16) The popular idea is that the Old Testament is scarcely inspired, and it is thought a great concession to give it a place with the New; but this is directly opposite to the Scriptural idea. There we find that the writings of the New Testament are declared to be worthy of a place by the side of those of the Old. Both are from the same source; both were given by inspiration of God, and are of equal authority. He who regards the Bible as it should be, will make no difference between the Old Testament and the New.

Now that we have before us a plain statement of what is included in the declaration that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, we may consider the fact of inspiration itself. Not that we can understand it, or set forth any theory of inspiration, but that we may form some conception of its greatness. We consider the works of God in creation, not that we may understand the mystery of creation, but that we may glorify God, whose greatness it proclaims. So we consider the inspiration of the Bible, in order that we may rightly appreciate the infinite power of the Word of God.

"Inspiration" means literally, "breathing." A full inspiration is a full breath. This is so common an expression that the reader does not have to know Latin or Greek in order to appreciate the statement that the term, "inspired of God," means simply "God-breathed." (2 Tim. 3:16) The fact is, then, that all of the Scripture is the direct breathing of the Almighty. We are not required to explain how this

can be, since it was all written or spoken by men, inasmuch as it does not rest with us to explain or understand how the omnipotent God works. No man can by searching find out God, and know the Almighty to perfection. We may, however, at some later time, note a few parallel cases, showing the fact that God does work directly through the agency of men, and even through the unwilling agency of evil men. What we are now concerned with is to show that the Scriptures declare themselves to be emphatically God's own word.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:20) The Revision has it: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." In order to get the full force of the verse, we will read the tenth verse also: (1 Peter 1:11)--

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Take the two statements from Peter, and put them together, and we find that the Spirit of Christ--The Holy Spirit--was in the men who wrote the Bible, and that it used their voices or hands to express its own words and thoughts. How this could be, and the men still retain their individuality, and write and speak from the fullness of

their own hearts, we shall not attempt to explain. Illustrations will, however, be given later.

Additional proof of the statement that the Holy Spirit itself is the real author of the Scriptures, the men being only its agents, is found in the following texts:

"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty), Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas." (Acts 1:15,16)

"But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer He hath so fulfilled." (Acts 3:18)

"And when they [the disciples] heard that [namely, the report of Peter and John] they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" (Acts 4:24,25)

Speaking of the interview that Paul had with the Jews in Rome, the evangelist says: "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto

this people and say, Hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and shall not perceive." (Acts 28:25,26)

Again, Peter said to the people who gathered to look upon the lame man that was healed: "And He [God] shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:20,21; Luke 1:70; 2 Sam. 23:1,2)

But there are still plainer evidences that the Scriptures are God's word alone, and not man's. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts." (Jeremiah 31:33) In the book of Hebrews this same language is quoted, thus: "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." (Heb. 10:15,16)

Although these words occur in the prophecy of Jeremiah, they are not his words. The Spirit of Christ was in that holy man testifying, so that when the writer to the Hebrews quoted the words, he credited them directly to the Holy Ghost, omitting all reference to Jeremiah. In this no injustice was done Jeremiah; he himself would have acknowledged that the words were the Lord's, and not his own.

In like manner we find in the first chapter of Hebrews several verses quoted from the Psalms, yet the writer of the Psalms is not once mentioned, but God is declared to be the speaker. (See verses 7-12)

But this is all that the limits of this article allow. Let the texts herein quoted be pondered carefully, and in the next paper we shall, God willing, read some other Scriptures showing further that the Scriptures are wholly inspired by God, and that by whatever agency they come to us, they proceed from the Holy Spirit, and are as much the Word of God as though uttered by Him with an audible voice.

Chapter 8

The Unconquerable Life

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not." (John 1: 4, 5, R.V.) The marginal rendering, "overcame," gives us the exact meaning of the text, and conveys a message of great comfort to the believer. Let us see what it is.

Christ is the light of the world. (See John 8:12) But His light is His life, as the text quoted states. He says, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The whole world was in the darkness of sin. This darkness was due to lack of knowledge of God; as the apostle Paul says that the Gentiles are "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardening of their heart." (Eph. 4:18)

Satan, the ruler of the darkness of this world, had done his utmost to deceive men as to the true character of God. He had made the world believe that God was like men--cruel, vindictive, and passionate. Even the Jews, the people whom God had chosen to be the bearers of His light to the world, had departed from God, and while professedly separate from the heathen, were enveloped in heathen darkness. Then Christ came, and "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." (Matt. 4:16) His name

was Emanuel, God with us. "God was in Christ." God refuted the falsehoods of Satan, not by loud arguments, but simply by living His life among men, so that all might see it. He demonstrated the power of the life of God, and the possibility of its being manifested in men.

The life which Christ lived was untainted by sin. Satan exerted all his powerful arts, yet he could not affect that spotless life. Its light always shone with unwavering brilliancy. Because Satan could not produce the least shadow of sin in the life, he could not bring it within his power, that of the grave. No one could take Christ's life from Him; He voluntarily laid it down. And for the same reason, when He had laid it down, Satan could not prevent Him from taking it up again. Said He: "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." (John 10:17,18) To the same intent are the words of the apostle Peter concerning Christ:--

"Whom God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." (Acts 2:24) Thus was demonstrated the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to be made a high priest "after the power of an endless life." (Heb. 7:16)

This endless, spotless life Christ gives to all who believe on Him. "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus

Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:2,3) Christ dwells in the hearts of all those who believe on Him. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:16,17)

Christ, the light of the world, dwelling in the hearts of His followers, constitutes them the light of the world. Their light comes not from themselves, but comes from Christ, who dwells in them. Their life is not from themselves, but it is the life of Christ manifest in their mortal flesh. (See 2 Cor. 4:11) This is what it is to live "a Christian life."

This living light comes from God in a never-failing stream. The psalmist exclaims: "For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light." (Ps. 36:9) "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 22:1) "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17)

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 4:53,54) This life of Christ we eat and drink by feasting upon His Word, for He added, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the

words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." (Verse 63) Christ dwells in His inspired Word, and through it we get His life. This life is given freely to all who will receive it, as we read above; and again we read that Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." (John 7:37)

This life is the Christian's light, and it is that which makes him a light to others. It is his life; and the blessed comfort to him is that no matter how great the darkness through which he has to pass, no darkness has power to put out that light. That light of life is his as long as he exercises faith, and the darkness cannot affect it. Let all, therefore, who profess the name of the Lord, have the confidence that can say,

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." (Micah 7:8)

Chapter 9

Church Authority

The words of Christ must ever be our guide. They cannot be too often repeated. Again we quote: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28)

It should be understood that the word "minister," in the above text, does not necessarily mean "preacher." A minister is a servant, one who ministers or serves. In the text just quoted, the word "servant" indicates a more complete and humble servitude than the word "minister." The difference is shown in the margin of the Revised Version, where we have "servant" given as the equivalent of "minister," and "bondservant" as the equivalent of "servant." The word rendered "minister" is the ordinary word for servant, while that rendered "servant" is the usual word for slave. Now note the gradation in which they are used by the Lord. He who will be great in the church, must be a servant; but he who will be chief, must be a bondservant. That is, the degree of greatness depends upon the completeness of the service and the giving up of self to Christ.

So we learn from the words of the Saviour, that there is to be no such thing in the church of Christ as the exercise of authority such as is known in civil government. The church is on an entirely different plane from the State. There is no likeness whatever between them. The kingdom of Christ is a thing entirely different from human ideas of government. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) They who think to understand the working of Christ's kingdom by studying earthly models, are proceeding in the wrong way, and are working in the dark.

"Governments" are among the gifts that God has bestowed upon the church (1 Corinthians 12:28); but we shall come more closely to God's idea of government if we note that the Revised Version gives the alternative reading, "wise counsels." One of the titles of Christ, as the one upon whose shoulder the government is laid, is "Counselor"; He is "wonderful in counsel," and so He provides wise counsels for the government of His church, said counsel to be derived solely from Him, who alone is the Source of wisdom. He governs by love. His counsel is "the counsel of peace."

The elders or bishops he exhorts not to be "lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:3) There can therefore be in the true church of Christ no such thing as a "Lord Bishop." That is one of the fruits of the unlawful connection of the church with the world. Christ is the only Lord; but here again we shall grievously err if we think of Him as occupying the "lordly" position of earthly lords. He is "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29), and all men have to learn humility from Him who is "Lord

over all." He calls upon them to humble themselves to walk with Him. (Micah 6:8, margin)

The church of Christ, as directed by the Lord Himself, is the only place on earth where "liberty, equality, and fraternity" can be fully realized. The apostle Peter proceeds, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5) The trouble with earthly associations formed for the purpose of promoting liberty and equality on earth, is that they are only human organizations, directed only by human wisdom and human power, and among men self is bound to predominate. Only the Spirit of Christ is unselfish.

"Rank," as known among men, is unknown to the church of Christ. There is no such thing as one setting himself up above another, or allowing himself to be so placed or considered. That pertains to the princes of this world, but the words of Christ are, "It shall not be so among you." Christ "emptied Himself," and therefore self has no place in His body, the church. To the Jews He said, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God?" (John 5:44) Through the apostle Paul He said, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." (Romans 12:10) Again, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Philippians 2:3) Love "seeketh not her own." (1 Corinthians 13:5)

"Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." (Matthew 23:8)