**“Established by Spiritual Gifts” The Present Truth 7, 19.**

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:9-11.

“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.” {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.1}

Was there ever another man in the world who carried so great a burden for others as the apostle Paul did? To the Ephesians he wrote that he ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers, that God would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Ephesians 1:15-17. To the saints at Philippi he wrote: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Philippians 1:3, 4. Likewise to the Colossians he said: “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” Colossians 1:3. And so he did for the Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3, 11. All these churches were the fruit of his own labour, and it is but natural that he should remember them in his prayers; but he had never seen the brethren of Rome, yet he declares that he prays for them no less than for those among whom he had laboured and suffered. He could say of a truth that there was upon him daily, anxious care and solicitude for all the churches. 2 Corinthians 11:28. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.2}

How much time Paul must have spent in prayer, to mention so many churches and individuals by name in his requests and thanksgivings! Must not this have been one secret of his great success? He had but one thought, one desire, and that was to bring men to Christ, and to strengthen those who had accepted him. He had received abundantly of the grace of God, and he felt himself a debtor to all mankind. That grace was not bestowed upon him in vain, for he says that he laboured more abundantly than all of the other apostles. 1 Corinthians 15:10. It is probably safe to say that no minister ever lived who was more like Christ in carrying a burden for sinners, than the apostle Paul. The reason was, that he had an ever-present, overwhelming sense of what Christ had done for him. The grace of Christ will always manifest itself in this way, just to the extent that it is received and appreciated. It is not something that a man receives merely for his own enjoyment or profit, and that can be corked up in a bottle for private use, but it can be preserved only by dispensing to others. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.3}

So the apostle wrote to the Romans, whom he had never seen: “I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” His earnest desire for these brethren whose faith was spoken of in all the world, was that he might settle them in it so surely that nothing could shake them. This great burden of soul he expressed to the Thessalonians, when he said, “Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.” 1 Thessalonians 3:10. What a lesson there is here for all Christian ministers! {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.4}

But how did he expect to establish these people? By imparting unto them some spiritual gift. The gifts of the Spirit are named by Paul in Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. The first text says of Christ that “he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” In the other he says:- {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.5}

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.... But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.6}

All these gifts come by the Spirit; so it is evident that when Paul said, “I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift,” he did not mean that he would bestow upon them the power to work miracles or to speak with tongues. He could not have done this if he had desired to. Moreover, it is not by the possession of these gifts that a person is established. They are given “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12); but a man may possess these gifts to the edifying of others, and he himself be lost. The apostle Paul had these gifts in greater measure than any other man, yet he had to keep his body under, lest after he had preached to others he himself should be a castaway (1 Corinthians 9:27); and he says that a thorn in the flesh was given him to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations given unto him. 2 Corinthians 12:7. It is evident, therefore, that Paul did not expect to establish the Romans by enabling them to exhibit the gifts of the Spirit, but rather, by the exercise of the gifts which were bestowed upon him, to build them up in the faith so that they might exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. It is the same thing that he wrote to the Corinthians, concerning the grace of giving: “We desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same gift also.” 2 Corinthians 8:6, margin. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.7}

Perhaps there are few who realise how well fitted the apostle was for this task. There is not one of the spiritual gifts that he did not possess. In the book of Acts we learn of his power to work miracles, to heal, and to discern spirits. His own writings give evidence of the spirit of prophecy that he possessed; and he says that he spoke with tongues more than all the rest, and that he would not speak without interpreting. 1 Corinthians 14:18. He was an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, and a teacher. If any wish to know why he should be so highly favored above other men, we can only say that “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,” and Paul had such singleness of purpose, such whole-souled devotion, that he used to the utmost every gift bestowed upon him. God gives to every man all that he can and will use to his glory. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.8}

“To the end ye may be established.” The gifts of the Spirit are for the building up of the body of Christ, and none of them has been used for this purpose more than the gift of prophecy. When Jehoshaphat had received from the prophet of the Lord a message for the people, he said: “Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.” 2 Chronicles 20:20. And to the same effect Isaiah, when he had delivered a prophecy from God to the king of Judah, said to him, “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.” Isaiah 7:9. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.9}

What, indeed, can establish the people of God like prophecy? Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not; miracles serve the same purpose, showing the power of God; but prophesyings instruct and warn. So the apostle says:- {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.10}

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.” 1 Corinthians 14:1-3. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.11}

The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 19:10. It was the Spirit of Christ that was in the ancient prophets (2 Peter 1:10, 11), and that same Spirit is to be with his people even unto the end. Consequently we find that “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” which is the spirit of prophecy, is to be found in the last state of the church-the remnant. Revelation 12:17. Paul, also, writing to those who should live at the time of the coming of the Lord, says, “Despise not prophesyings.” 1 Thessalonians 5:20. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.12}

The establishing power of the prophetic word is shown by the apostle Peter when, after relating the view which he had of “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” on the mount of transfiguration, he said: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:19. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.13}

By the gift of prophecy we are shown when we are nearing the end of time; we are warned of the dangers incident to the last days. It foretells the widespread apostasy, so that none need be moved. While the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all the truth that is necessary to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, there must be that same spirit of prophecy in the church, to shed light upon those prophecies, for “no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation.” {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.14}

It is because of despising prophecies and prophesyings that so many have apostatized. The word of prophecy is a light, and when men turn away their eyes from it, they go into darkness, and soon stumble and fall. Their minds become blinded to the simplest truths. And since the prophetic word is a light shining in a dark place until the day shall dawn, and the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, it is evident that as we approach the end we shall have more and more of the gift of prophecy to keep us from the darkness that covers the earth, and the gross darkness that covers the people. “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.” May God help us to believe. E. J. W. {PTUK July 2, 1891, p. 206.15}

**“The Power of Christ” The Present Truth 7, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:4.

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.1}

The statement in this verse is a continuation of that in verse three, or, rather, is the complement of that; so this article must be but little more than a continuation of the preceding one. We have learned what is embraced in the statement that Christ was made of the seed of David, “according to the flesh,” and now we have to note what he is to us “according to the Spirit of holiness.” {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.2}

“And declared to be the Son of God, ... by the resurrection from the dead.” This must not be understood as meaning that Jesus was not the Son of God before His resurrection, nor that He was not declared to be the Son of God before that time. We well know that He was the Son of God before the world was, and He was then glorified with the glory of the Father. It was as the dearly-loved, only-begotten Son of God that Christ came to this earth. When He was baptized, at the beginning of his earthly ministry, the voice of God came from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17. Upon the mount of transfiguration that voice again was heard, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” Matthew 17:5. And all through his earthly life, Jesus did not hesitate to declare Himself the Son of God. So we know that the resurrection did not affect His relationship with God. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.3}

It seems evident that the phrase, “according to the Spirit of holiness,” must be the key to unlock the mystery. If we take the closing words of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew, we shall be upon the track of the correct explanation. He said:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.4}

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:18-20. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.5}

The kind of power that was given unto Christ may be known from what the disciples were to do: “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach.” Their going and teaching was based upon the fact that Christ had all power, and promised to be with them always. And this agrees with what Paul says in the verse immediately following the one quoted at the head of this article: “By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name.” Romans 1:5. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.6}

Now we may know how it is that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. He was the Son of God, whatever took place. But by the resurrection from the dead He acquired power to impart holiness to as many as should believe on Him. It is true that thousands lived holy lives before the first advent of Christ, but they did so only by the power which Christ obtained for them by virtue of His promised death and resurrection. It will be seen that the Scriptures sustain this exposition. We first read Hebrews 2:14, 15:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.7}

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.8}

Christ took part of flesh and blood, in order that He might have power to redeem man. This does not in any way limit His power before He came to earth; but it is a simple fact that man could not have been redeemed except by the blood of Christ. The law could not relax its claim, and so the Lawgiver consented to receive in Himself the penalty of His own law, and thus God can be just and the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus. More than this, by His life of suffering and temptation, He learned how to sympathize with poor, weak mortals. And so the resurrection, which was the triumphant close of His earthly work for man, the thing toward which all His previous life tended, is said to be that by which He obtained power to fill His followers with holiness. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.9}

The apostle Peter bears testimony to the same effect. He says:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.10}

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.11}

As this text will come in again in our comment on Romans 1:16, we pass it without remark for the present. In his second epistle Peter says:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.12}

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” 2 Peter 1:2, 3. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.13}

Here is comfort, indeed. All things that pertain unto life and godliness are given to us by this divine power of Christ. Surely there is no manner of excuse for anybody’s failing of righteousness and eternal life. Read now what the apostle Paul says:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.14}

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.” Colossians 1:9-11. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.15}

The “glorious power” of God is shown in the heavens, which “declare the glory of God,” and in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This glorious power may be ours, so that we may be “strengthened with all might,” to be able to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” This power Christ can bestow on us, because He has experienced the very lowest ebb of human weakness, so that He knows just what help is needed. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.16}

It is a soul-cheering thought that human weakness, instead of being a bar to our overcoming, may be the very stepping-stone to victory. The apostle Paul had a weakness, which it seemed to Him was an insuperable obstacle to his fulfilling his divine commission, and so he besought the Lord to take it from him; but the Lord said:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.17}

“My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.18}

With this assurance the apostle said:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.19}

“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.20}

But we are persuaded that it is not in physical weakness alone that Christ’s strength is made perfect. The infirmities of the flesh, those tendencies which make us an easy prey to the temptations of Satan, call for the manifestation of divine power in an especial manner. In his list of the wonderful things accomplished by faith, the apostle tells of some who “out of weakness were made strong.” Hebrews 11:34. That is, the very weakness of their moral nature called for more of the divine power, and the greater the weakness, the more divine power was called for; and so it appears that the weakest point in our nature may, through the divine power of Christ, become our strongest point. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 232.21}

From this standpoint, then, we may even glory because of the weakness of our moral natures. Not that we should glory because we are or have been weak, but having been “strengthened with all might according to His glorious power,” being “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might,” we can glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world, with its lusts, is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 233.1}

“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth,” says Jesus. Let us not, then, tremble at the power of the enemy. Let us not talk about the power of the devil, for that will give him an advantage over us. By our very fear of him we give him power over us. He is a strong man armed, but Christ is the stronger than he, who has entered into his house, and bound him, and taken away his armour wherein he trusted. See Luke 11:21, 22; Revelation 1:18. His power is nothing in comparison with that of Christ. Let us, then, exalt the power of Christ, and joyfully trust it. No matter what the inherited or acquired weakness of character, nor how sorely the enemy may press, we may rest confident in the promise:- {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 233.2}

“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Deuteronomy 33:25-27. And in all these things we may be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” E. J. W. {PTUK July 16, 1891, p. 233.3}

**“The Obedience of Faith” The Present Truth 7, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:5.

“By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name.” {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.1}

This verse is of course dependent on that which has preceded, and the antecedent of the pronouns “whom,” and “His,” is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.” The apostle’s statement is, that by Jesus Christ he has received the grace to be an apostle, for obedience to the faith among all nations. The grace which he says he has received, is more than the ordinary grace which is invoked upon all the saints, in the apostolic benediction. It is special grace for special work. In Ephesians 1:7, 8, he expresses it thus:- {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.2}

“Whereof [that is, the gospel] I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.3}

Grace was given to Paul in large measure, simply because he was called to a great work. God gives to every man strength according to his day. So far as grace to overcome sin is concerned, Paul had no more of it than any man may have. Heaven has no special favorites; “God is no respecter of persons.” The patriarchs, prophets, and apostles were men of like passions with us, and had no more aid in overcoming any habit than we may have in overcoming the same. Enoch “walked with God;” but that is nothing more than God requires of every man. “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:8. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.4}

But the special point of the verse under consideration is the expression, “obedience to the faith.” Notice that the margin has it, “the obedience of faith;” and this is the exact rendering of the original. The same expression occurs in Romans 16:26, where Paul says that the mystery of God, namely, the gospel, “is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.5}

A somewhat similar expression comes in Acts 6:7, where it is said that “a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” By some, these expressions are supposed to refer to a system of faith; but we cannot so generalize. Faith is a personal matter. Obedience to a system, would be simply a performance of the rites of that system; but that would amount to nothing without the exercise of personal faith. When Paul said, “I have kept the faith,” he meant that he had kept in his heart that faith which enabled him to fight the good fight, even the good fight of faith. With this view in mind, we shall see that it matters little whether we say “obedience to the faith,” or “the obedience of faith.” {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.6}

The great characteristic of faith is, that it works. We do not mean that works are attached to it, but works come from it. “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” James 2:26. Faith “worketh by love,” says Paul. There may be that which is called faith, but if no works proceed from it, it is not faith. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.7}

Obedience implies action; it is well-doing when it is rendered to God. But what we wish to emphasise is, that there is no well-doing except that which springs, *not* from the individual himself, but from his faith. A few texts of Scripture will serve to show this. Read first, Habakkuk 2:4. “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.” {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.8}

A just man is one who acts in harmony with the law of God. Therefore a just man is an obedient man. So we may understand the text as saying that an obedient man shall live (a life of obedience) by his faith. The obedience springs from his faith, and therefore there is no chance for him to be lifted up, since the act of obedience is not his personal action, but is the action of his faith, and credited to him as his own. The man whose soul is lifted up in him, is the man who thinks that he can of himself do all that is required, and who as a consequence does nothing. Thus, “pride goeth before destruction.” {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.9}

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul said that his great desire was to win Christ, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Philippians 3:9. Faith itself brings righteousness, even the imputed righteousness of God through Christ, in the remission of sins. It is that righteousness which is “without the law, unto all and upon all them that believe.” Romans 3:21, 22. It is that righteousness which Abraham received, when he “believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Romans 4:3. This righteousness is “imputed without works” (Romans 4:6); it is bestowed as an act of God’s free grace. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.10}

This imputed righteousness is simply “the remission of sins that are past,” and may be called passive righteousness. The man is counted as though he had always been obedient, although he has never been obedient. The justice of this will be considered at another time. But following this there must be active righteousness through the remainder of life; for it is only to those who patiently continue in well-doing (righteousness) that God will render eternal life. Now this active righteousness is just as much the work of faith as is the other. This is shown by Philippians 3:9, already quoted, in which Paul says that he wants to be found not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by faith of Jesus Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.11}

The same is shown also by Paul’s prayer, that the Philippians might be “filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:11. This is the righteousness, or the obedience, of faith. From these texts we are justified in saying that a man does good works, not in order that he may be righteous, but because he is righteous. His works will never bring righteousness, for the righteousness of God is only by the faith of Jesus Christ; and when he has once experienced that blessedness, he works because he cannot help it, unless he renounces his faith and his past experience. He works because the love of Christ constrains him. From this stand-point we can harmonize the obedience to the faith, with the obedience of faith. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.12}

This is not a mere theory; it is a practical truth. Because of a failure to comprehend it, thousands of professed Christians live most unsatisfactory lives. Like the ancient Jews, they follow after righteousness, yet they do not attain to it, because they work it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. Not realizing that no righteousness whatever can come except through faith, they seek to get themselves “into a place where the Lord can bless” them. But God’s blessing is manifested, through Christ, in turning men away from their iniquities. Acts 3:26. “By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.” Proverbs 16:6. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.13}

Paul was not commissioned to preach a gospel of self-righteousness, but the obedience of faith. Such righteousness does not commend itself to the mass of mankind, because it involves pain, and shame, and humiliation. It involves a rating of self at the true value, which is nothing; an acknowledgment that we are so altogether sinful that we cannot even think that which is right; that if any good shall appear in us, it will be just as much the work of the Lord as were the steps taken by the impotent man, who was healed through the instrumentality of Peter. If men could buy righteousness and eternal life, or could earn it by hard labour, or even by undergoing torture, few would be without it; but because they can get it only by complete dependence on another, to whom all the honour must be given, their pride will not let them accept it. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 248.14}

Yet this obedience of faith, which is by Jesus Christ, is the only obedience which will gain for us an entrance through the gates into the eternal city of God. For in that day when a King, even the King of righteousness, shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth, in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, the name whereby He shall be called is, “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Jeremiah 23:5, 6. E. J. W. {PTUK July 30, 1891, p. 249.1}