

# The Life and Power of Divine Truth in Christ

by John Owen

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*The life and power of divine truth in Christ is the foundation of all spiritual truths, and without a due respect to Christ, we cannot learn or know them.*

**Scripture:** John 1:4, John 7:17, John 15:5, Acts 20:32, Ephesians 4:20, Philippians 3:11

**Topics:** "Christ Centered", "Divine Truth"

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## Description

John Owen emphasizes the essential relation of all spiritual truths to Christ, highlighting that spiritual light and efficacy are derived from this connection. Without acknowledging Christ as the foundation of divine truths, they cannot bring true spiritual enlightenment or power. Furthermore, Owen explains that all divine truths ultimately point to Christ, whether revealing God's grace and love or instructing us in our obedience and gratitude. He stresses that our understanding, ability to obey, and comfort in spiritual truths all depend on our relationship with Christ, who is the source of all grace and power.

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## Transcript

Setting aside what we have discoursed and proved before--concerning the laying of the foundation of all the counsels of God in the person of Christ, and the representation of them in the ineffable constitution thereof--I shall give some few instances of this relation of all spiritual truths unto him--manifesting that we cannot learn them, nor know them, but with a due respect thereunto.

1. There are two things in which the glory of truth doth consist. (1.) Its light. (2.) Its efficacy or power. And both these do all supernatural truths derive from this relation unto Christ.

No truth whatever brings any spiritual light unto the mind, but by virtue thereof. "In him is life, and the life is the light of men:" John 1:4. He is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world:" verse 9. Wherefore, as truth is the only means of illumination, so it cannot communicate any light unto the mind, but only as it is a beam from him, as it is an organ to convey it from that fountain. Separated from him and its relation unto him, it will not retain, it cannot communicate, any real spiritual light or understanding to the souls of men. How should it, if all light be originally in him--as the Scripture testifieth? Then alone is the mind irradiated with heavenly truth, when it is received as proceeding from, and leading unto, the Sun of Righteousness--the blessed spring of all spiritual light--which is Christ himself. Whatever notional knowledge men may have of divine truths, as they are doctrinally proposed in the Scripture, yet--if they know them not in their respect unto the person of Christ as the foundation of the counsels of God--if they discern not how they proceed from him, and centre in him--they will bring no spiritual, saving light

unto their understanding. For all spiritual life and light is in him, and from him alone. An instance hereof we have in the Jews. They have the Scriptures of the Old Testament, wherein the substance of all divine truth is revealed and expressed; and they are diligent in the study of them; howbeit their minds are not at all illuminated nor irradiated by the truths contained in them, but they live and walk in horrible darkness. And the only reason hereof is, because they know not, because they reject, the relation of them unto Christ--without which they are deprived of all enlightening power.

Efficacy or power is the second property of divine truth. And the end of this efficacy is to make us like unto God: Eph. 4:20-24. The mortification of sin, the renovation of our natures, the sanctification of our minds, hearts, and affections, the consolation of our souls, with their edification in all the parts of the life of God, and the like, are the things that God hath designed to effect by his truth; (John 17:17) whence it is able to "build us up, and give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified:" Acts 20:32. But it is from their relation unto the person of Christ that they have anything of this power and efficacy. For they have it no otherwise but as they are conveyances of his grace unto the souls of men. So 1 John 1:1, 2.

Wherefore, as professors of the truth, if separated from Christ as unto real union, are withering branches--so truths professed, if doctrinally separated from him, or their respect unto him, have no living power or efficacy in the souls of men. When Christ is formed in the heart by them, when he dwelleth plentifully in the soul through their operation, then, and not else, do they put forth their proper power and efficacy. Otherwise, they are as waters separated from the fountain--they quickly dry up or become a noisome puddle; or as a beam interrupted from its continuity unto the sun--it is immediately deprived of light.

2. All divine spiritual truths are declarative, either of the grace and love of God unto us, or [of] our duty, obedience, and gratitude unto him. But as unto these things, Christ is all and in all; we can have no due apprehensions of the love and grace of God, no understanding of the divine truths of the Word--wherein they are revealed, and whereby they are exhibited unto them that believe--but in the exercise of faith on Christ himself. For in, by, and from him alone, it is that they are proposed unto us, that we are made partakers of them. It is from his fulness that all grace is received. No truth concerning them can, by any imagination, be separated from him. He is the life and soul of all such truths--without which, they, as they are written in the Word, are but a dead letter, and that of such character as is illegible unto us, as unto any real discovery of the grace and love of God. And as unto those of the other sort, which are instructive unto us in our duty, obedience, and gratitude--we cannot come unto a practical compliance with any one of them, but by the aids of grace received from him. For without him we can do nothing; (John 15:5) and he alone understands divine truth who doeth it: John 7:17. There is not, therefore, any one text of Scripture which presseth our duty unto God, that we can so understand it as to perform that duty in an acceptable manner, without an actual regard unto Christ, from whom alone we receive ability for the performance of it, and in and through whom alone it is accepted with God.

3. All the evidence of divine spiritual truth, and all the foundation of our real interest in the things whereof it is a declaration--as to benefit, advantage, and comfort--depend on their relation unto Christ. We may take an instance in one article of divine truth, which seems to be most disengaged from any such relation, namely, the resurrection of the dead. But there is no man who rightly believes or comprehends this truth, who doth it not upon the evidence given unto it, and example of it, in the person of Christ rising from the dead. Nor can any man have a comfortable expectation or faith of an especial interest in a blessed resurrection, (which is our whole concern in that truth, Phil. 3:11,) but by virtue of a mystical union unto him, as the head of the church that shall be raised unto glory. Both these the apostle insists upon at large,

1 Cor. 15. So is it with all other truths whatever.

Wherefore, all divine supernatural truths revealed in the Scripture, being nothing but the declaration of these counsels of God, whose foundation was laid in the person of Christ; and whereas they are all of them expressive of the love, wisdom, goodness, and grace of God unto us, or instructive in our obedience and duty to him--all the actings of God towards us, and all ours towards him, being in and through him alone; and whereas all the life and power of these truths, all their beauty, symmetry, and harmony in their union and conjunction, which is expressive of divine wisdom, is all from him, who, as a living spirit diffused through the whole system, both acts and animates it--all the treasures of truth, wisdom, and knowledge, may be well said to be hid in him.

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