

**CHRIST AND THE CHURCH:
THOUGHTS ON THE
APOSTOLIC COMMISSION
(MATTHEW XXVIII. 18-20)**

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Christ and the Church: Thoughts on the Apostolic Commission (Matthew xxviii. 18-20) by
Adolph Saphir

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THOUGHTS

ON

THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION

(*MATTHEW* xxviii. 18-20)

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PREFACE.

THE last words of our Lord, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, are invested with a special interest. They are most memorable, when we consider the occasion on which they were uttered, and the calm majesty with which the Saviour, rejected of men, declares Himself the Light of the world and the Lord of all ages; when we think of the commentary which is written on these words in the Book of Acts and in the history of the last eighteen centuries; of the solemn and touching manner in which they are brought before us as a living reality in every baptism; of the power which they have exerted in constraining the Church to go forth with the Gospel message, and when we remember the precious and all-comprehensive promise they contain of the Lord's presence with His Church, until the Church shall be "for ever with the Lord."

These words of our Saviour contain also a brief summary of Christian doctrine, a concise epitome of

Church truth. The *centre* is the Person of Christ; the *foundation* is the revelation of God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Here we see the spiritual character of the Church, as the Light and Teacher of the Nations. Here we are reminded of the new obedience of the Gospel, as distinguished from the dispensation of the Law. The Apostolic Commission points out the relation of the Church to the world,—her character and her mission; while it contains all needful encouragement and consolation, both in the declaration of Christ's omnipotence, on which it rests, and in the promise of His Presence with His people throughout the dispensation.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to view the words of the ascending Saviour in the light of the other Scriptures,—the preparatory light of the Old Testament and the Pentecostal light of the Gospels and Epistles.

A. SAPHIR.

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"And 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, 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 xxviii. 18-20.

CHAPTER I.

The Omnipotence of the Risen Saviour.

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

MATT. xxviii. 18.

NONE but Jesus could have uttered these words, and Jesus only after His death and resurrection. It is true that in the days of His humiliation He had said, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father,"¹ and again, that "the Father had given Him power over all flesh."² It is true, that during the years of His obedience on earth He lived in the full consciousness of the glory which He had before the world was, and knew that the Father had given all things into His hands.³ But it was only after He had accomplished His decease at Jerusalem that by His resurrection He was declared to be the Son of God with power.⁴ It was after His death on the cross that the Father highly exalted Him, and that, as the Son of man, He was invested with the omnipotent government of the whole world.

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Thus spake our risen Lord, the man Christ Jesus, the only Mediator between God and man, our

¹ Matt. xi. 27.

² John xvii. 2.

³ John xiii. 3.

⁴ Rom. i. 4.