**“The Gift of Life in Christ” The Present Truth 16, 45, pp. 709, 710.**

“BY one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Romans 5:12. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.1}

Whosoever believes that, and grasps the fast there stated, is prepared to understand the fulness of the salvation that the Lord Jesus brought to the world. And whosoever does not so grasp that which is stated in this verse as to recognise it constantly, cannot grasp, in its truth, in its sincerity, the salvation that Christ has brought. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.2}

All have sinned: and death came by sin. But all of us have sinned as the consequence of that which was brought to the world,—because of our being in that vortex into which the world was plunged by the sin of that “one man” to whom God gave the world in the beginning. “By one man sin entered into the world.” When sin had so entered by that one man, it was impossible for any of his, of themselves, to rise above that—which he had entailed. It was impossible for any of us to receive from him more than he had. And after he had sinned, sin only was that which he had. Consequently, he sunk the human race under the power of sin—in the sea of sin; and because of that sin we all have sinned; and so death has passed upon all. When that one man sinned, death passed upon him; and he never could draw any of us, any of his posterity, higher than he was. Consequently, when he became subject to death, by sin, we all became subject to death, because, being thus crippled, we all have sinned. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.3}

The deception of thinking that they have life in themselves has been for ages, and is still, the bane of mankind. This deception is couched in the conception of the immortality of the soul. Vast multitudes of the human race, and indeed the whole human race, naturally, as it is, have come under the power of that deception—of thinking that they have life themselves so certainly that even the Lord Himself cannot deprive them of it. Through the deception in which they are involved, they have come to believe that a part of themselves is “immortal,” and, logically enough, that therefore it is “a part of God”—and then the conclusion, “How can God destroy a part of Himself?” By that argument they convince themselves that the Lord Himself could not destroy them, if He wished to. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.4}

The whole human race is naturally under that deception. And the way in which they came under this deception is precisely the way in which they came under the deception of sin. It is a part of the original deception; yea, rather, it is the very kernel of the original deception. For what was it that the deceiver said to the woman, to get her to depart from God into sin?—“Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be like God.” You will be like the Divine, and not subject to death. That was the original proposition in the original deception into which the race went by that “one man,” by whom came sin and death; and it is not strange that this deception of men’s thinking that they have life in themselves should be as widely disseminated as is sin. The two things came in together; and they belong together for ever. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.5}

But the Lord spoke otherwise. Before this deceiver spoke, the Lord had said: “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Genesis 2:17. And this was the truth. It was the truth when He spoke it; it was the truth the day they ate of the tree; and it is the truth for ever. And the only reason that Adam and Eve did not die in the very hour that they ate, is that Jesus Christ stepped in between, and took upon Himself the curse of sin, and its penalty of death. And this He did in order that mankind might be delivered from the death into which they had been plunged by that “one man.” Therefore, since the Lord Jesus stepped in between, and Himself received the stroke of death that must come upon the man the day he sinned; and since the Lord Jesus did this solely in order that the man might have the opportunity to receive life instead of death, it became essential, and in the gift of Christ that day it was given, that the man and all mankind should have sufficient space in which to breathe to allow them to live long enough to fix, each his choice of life or death. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.6}

That is the origin, that is the source, and that is the philosophy, of the life which now we have in the breath that we draw moment by moment. It all lies solely in the gift of Christ: it is indeed Christ, and only Christ. Each person to-day and ever is directly indebted to Christ for the life which he has in the breath that he draws moment by moment. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.7}

Surely, if it were not that this life, even though it be truly a vapour, were given us, mankind would never have had any opportunity to breathe at all after Adam sinned. And let it be repeated, for it cannot possibly be repeated too often, this breath itself is given us by the gift of the Lord Jesus; and for the breath drawn moment by moment, every soul in the world to-day, and ever, is dependent upon the gift of Christ, which He made when man had sinned. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 709.8}

The word that Jesus spoke, therefore, is literally true,—true in every sense,—when He spoke of Himself as “the living Bread which came down from heaven,” and “giveth life unto the world.” For all the life that the world has to-day, is because the Lord Jesus gave Himself to receive the stroke of death that otherwise must have some upon the man at the beginning, because of the sin that he had sinned. And, in another place, Christ Himself said “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 710.1}

Oh, that tells the whole story again! When did Jesus Dome, in the meaning of that text? When was His coming? When was He offered? At what time was the offering of Christ made? He is the Lamb “slain from the foundation of the world.” The offering of Christ, in its very substance, was when, in the beginning, the man had sinned, and had become subject to death because of the sin. Then and there Christ gave Himself: there He set Himself forth as the offering. The gift was as certainly made then as it is now. Consequently, when He came thus *at the beginning*, He came that mankind might have life; because just then mankind needed life. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 710.2}

Adam and Eve needed life from that day in the garden; for if Jesus had not then offered Himself, if He had not than thus “come,” death would have come to them the day that they sinned. But the Lord Jesus came and gave Himself, and thus took upon Himself all that was to fall upon them, or upon us, that Adam and Eve might receive what was better. And in the nature of things, they meat have breath to enable them to live long enough to give them time to choose that which God had brought,—the gift of Himself, which is life. Consequently, *at that point* He *came*, that mankind might have *life*, even life enough to allow us to breathe, in order that we might make use of this breathing spell of life in such a way that we should have life more abundantly, even the life which is eternal substance, even as the fulness of the life of God. {PTUK November 8, 1900, p. 710.3}

1. T. JONES.

**“Freed from the Power of Death” The Present Truth 16, 46, pp. 725-727.**

CONSIDER for a little while what sin really is; what it is in essence. You know the Divine definition: “Sin is the transgression of the law.” Now I wish you to consider what it is to transgress the law. Is it only the positive doing of something that is evil?—No; it is the coming snort of positively doing that rich is good. Is it not written that “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all”? {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 725.1}

In another word, sin is the coming short of the righteousness of God. To come short of the righteousness of God is to transgress the law. Then, whatever righteousness I may present, whatever deeds I may do, as obedience to the law of God as it stands in His word, which, in any sense at all, or to any degree at all, comes short of the righteousness of God, that is sin: it is indeed transgression of the law. This is emphasised by the fact that both in the Hebrew and in the Greek the word that God selected by which to convey to the minds of met, the root thought of what is sin, of what is transgression of the law, is the word that means to “miss the mark;” and to miss the mark by coming short. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 725.2}

It was in the time when they used bows and arrows that the word was selected. A man with his bow and arrow, shooting at a mark, would aim most carefully, and do his very best, to hit the mark: all his intentions were good; his purpose and his endeavour were of the best; but yet be could not reach the mark. He missed the mark by coming short. He was not strong enough to give to the arrow that impetus which would carry it so that it would hit the mark. Remember he did not miss the mark by overshooting, but by coming short of it. That is the root-thought in the word which God chose, both in the Hebrew and in the Greek, to convey to mankind the idea of what sin is. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.1}

Now no man in the world is strong enough, doing his very best, to hit the mark of the law of God, which is only the righteousness of God; for “all have sinned, and come short.” That mark is too high as well as too far away for us to hit it. But, bless the Lord, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” And in Christ alone we find the hitting of the mark. Therefore, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13, 14. In Christ it is, only in Christ, that we find the righteousness of God, which is the keeping of the law of God. Only in Christ do we find the keeping of the law of God. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.2}

**THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW**

COME then, look with me at that law. By it is the knowledge of sin. That covers everything. All there is in sin is covered by that. Suppose you and I look into the law of God, and get the brightest, clearest possible view that a man can get of that law. Suppose we see its demands, in the greatest breadth that a man can: and that we actually fulfil to perfection all the breadth of it that we see—have we really fulfilled it? Think of that. Have you? Have you then fulfilled the law as God fulfils it? as God would if He were in your place?—Oh, no. We have fulfilled only what we could see. But have we seen it all, in its intensity of righteousness?—We have not. No one but God can, for it is only the law of God. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.3}

That law being the law of God, only God’s righteousness is truly manifest in it; so it is the reflection of what God is, in character. And that being so, nobody but God can see the true measure of the righteousness that is in the ten commandments. And there is the fallacy of our thinking that we can do true righteousness by keeping the ten commandments. We cannot grasp the righteousness of the ten commandments. If we were able to grasp it, we might do it. But that would require that we be infinite in understanding. But there is none infinite but God. Therefore none but God can grasp the infinity of the law of God. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.4}

There is another phase of this: I look into that law, and I see to the greatest height and breadth that I can; and I do to perfection all that I see—whose is the doing?—It is only mine. I have done it to perfection, according to my understanding. I have done all that I can see. But the seeing is only mine, not God’s; and the doing is only mine, not God’s; therefore all the righteousness of such doing is but mine, not God’s. Now put this with that. The only righteousness that any man can ever see in the law of God is his own righteousness. And God can see in that law His own righteousness. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.5}

Therefore, I state the principle in a broader way: The only righteousness that anybody, God or man, can see in the law of God is his own righteousness. But when God sees in the law of God His own righteousness, it is all right; for it is the righteousness of God; it is holiness; it is the genuine. But when we see in the law of God our own righteousness, it is only “filthy rags;” it is only self-righteousness; it is only sin. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.6}

Therefore it is written, “If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21. To nobody in the wide universe does righteousness come by the law. Righteousness comes, to angels as to men, as the gift of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the universe, with God. Consequently, there is no righteousness that comes to anybody but by the faith of Jesus Christ. And when the cross was set up on Calvary, it became the centre of the universe. The cross of Christ contains the whole philosophy of the plan of salvation: it is the seal of salvation to the angels who never sinned; it is the sign and seal of salvation to men who have sinned. To the angels who never sinned, the cross of Christ is the seal of certainty that their righteousness will abide for ever, that they will never sin; to sinful men, it is the sign and seal that they will be saved to the uttermost from all sin, and held in righteousness for evermore. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.7}

So, then, righteousness cometh to the world only as the gift of the Lord Jesus. “Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, ... even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.” He is the One through whom it comes; He is the One who paid the price of it, who took upon Him the nurse; the One who bore the penalty and paid all the claims of sin and death, upon every soul. And to Him belong the glory, the honour, and the majesty for all the righteousness of men who have sinned; and for the security in righteousness of angels who never sinned {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.8}

**DEATH CONQUERED**

THIS is the Gospel, and this is the salvation, which the Lord Jesus brought. And this gives a glimpse of the mighty thing that sin is, and of what a fearful depth it is to which sin has plunged us, in plunging us into death—when it took such a gift and such a price to deliver us. But, thank the Lord, the deliverance in righteousness and life is as high on that side as the loss in sin and death is deep on that side. And so it is written: “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.9}

And note the power that is in Him to conquer death, and the power that was displayed in Him in the conquering of death. He gave Himself up, bodily and wholly, to the power of death. He went into the enemy’s prison-house; He allowed Himself to be looked up there, in the bonds of death, and a great stone was rolled unto the mouth of the sepulchre, and the sepulchre was sealed with the seal of the Roman Empire. So, both by the chief of the spiritual powers and by the chief of the temporal power of the world, the Lord Jesus was locked in the power of death. But, being dead, He broke the power of death! {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.10}

It is a little enough thing that one who is alive should break the power of death. But, oh, the majesty, the divinity, the infinity of the power of Him who, being dead, could break the power of death! That is the majesty of our Saviour, of the Lord who has bought you and me, and who is able to, and who does, set us free from the power of death. {PTUK November 15, 1900, p. 726.11}

A. T. JONES.