**“The Christian a Debtor” The Present Truth 7, 20.**

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:14, 15.

“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.1}

The apostle Paul had no sympathy with those who would say, “The world owes me a living.” For such a person he had only the sharpest rebuke. His command was “that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” 2 Thessalonians 3:10. In the language quoted above, we have the sentiment of the true missionary-one who has given his life to the service of others. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.2}

But Paul did not take any credit to himself for his labour for others. He considered that he was simply working out a debt. To the Corinthians he wrote: “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel!” 1 Corinthians 9:16. The question is, How did Paul become a debtor to all men? and, Did any obligation rest upon him that does not rest upon every follower of Christ? The answer to both questions may be found in the Scriptures. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.3}

In the very beginning of his epistle to the Romans, Paul declared himself a servant of Jesus Christ. As we have already learned, this means that he was the life-long bond slave of Christ, yet his service was a willing service of love. He had given himself wholly to Christ, and was so closely identified with Him that he was counted as a son and a brother. This is the position of every Christian. “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.” 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. First of all, then, the Christian owes himself and all that he has to Christ, because Christ has bought him with His own blood. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.4}

But the fact that we owe ourselves to Christ, and that if we acknowledge that obligation we are to identify ourselves so completely with Him that the service will not be ours but His (1 Corinthians 15:10), makes us debtors to all men. For Christ “died for all;” and in carrying out His work for men, he assumed an obligation to all men, although no man had of right any claim upon Him. Paul says that although He was in the form of God, He “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant.” Philippians 2:6, 7. And we are expressly exhorted to have this mind in us. Jesus himself said: “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 20:26-28. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.5}

Christ gave His life “for the life of the world” (John 6:51); therefore everyone who yields himself to Christ, to become identified with Him and His work, becomes, like Him, a servant, not alone of the Lord Jesus, but of all for whom He became a servant. In other words, the Christian is Christ’s servant; but as Christ’s work is for the world, he who becomes a sharer of that work must become the servant of the world. Paul felt this to the utmost. He felt that he owed service to everybody that was in need; and so he did. The servant owes his service to the one who pays for it. Christ had bought the service of Paul by the sacrifice of himself; and when Paul recognised that debt to Christ and gave himself to the discharge of it, the Lord turned his service in the direction in which he himself laboured. The only way to be a servant of Christ is to serve those for whom he died. Wesley had some of the same spirit that Paul had, when he said, “The world is my parish.” {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.6}

The second great commandment in the law is, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Our neighbor is everyone with whom we come in contact who is in need. Says Paul: “As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:10. “As we have opportunity.” That indicates that we are to seek occasion of serving men, and so Paul did. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.7}

To the Romans Paul said in another place: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself.” Romans 15:1-3. Thus again we learn that the work of Christ is to be the example for us; and He “went about doing good.” Acts 10:38. Again Paul says: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.8}

The trouble with too many who profess to be followers of Christ is that they do not feel any great sense of obligation. Sometimes they talk about “getting a burden” for the work, but what is that burden? It is nothing else but a sense of the debt which we owe to Christ, and consequently to the world. If a man owes a great deal of money, and has no means with which to pay it, he will necessarily feel as though he had quite a load upon his shoulders-a burden. So all that is necessary to enable a man to have a burden for souls is for him to realise how much Christ has done for him. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.9}

The one to whom much is forgiven will love much. Paul felt himself to be the chief of sinners, and so when he felt the pardoning love of God, he felt that he owed much service. And he never forgot how much had been forgiven him, nor how great was his dependence upon God, and so he always felt the burden of debt resting upon him. Those who have felt the burden of their sins, and who know that they are removed, will not have to strive to get a burden for souls. They will feel, like Paul, that necessity is laid upon them, and it will be the joy of their lives to discharge that obligation. E. J. W. {PTUK September 10, 1891, p. 312.10}

**“God Manifest in the Flesh” The Present Truth 7, 14.**

E. J. Waggoner

Romans 1:3.

When the apostle, in his introduction to the epistle to the Romans, speaks of the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, he says of Christ that He “was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” In this expression, besides the statement of the genealogy of Christ, there lies not only a great theological truth, but also a most comforting thought for poor, frail, erring mortals. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.1}

When Christ was here on earth, “God was manifest in the flesh.” 1 Timothy 3:16. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. Christ was God; it was by Him that the worlds were made, and it was the word of his power that preserved all things. Hebrews 1:3. He had equal glory with the Father before the world was (John 17:5); “for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” Colossians 1:19. In Him dwelt “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Colossians 2:9. Yet He was man at the same time. John puts the matter very forcibly and plainly when he says: “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. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.2}

No words could more plainly show that Christ was both God and man. Originally only divine, He took upon Himself human nature, and passed among men as only a common mortal, except at those times when His divinity flashed through, as on the occasion of the cleansing of the temple, or when His burning words of simple truth forced even His enemies to confess that “never man spake like this man.” {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.3}

The humiliation which Christ voluntarily took upon Himself is best expressed by Paul to the Philippians: “Have the mind in you which also was in Christ Jesus; who being originally in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped [that is, to be clung to] to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, becoming in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:5-8, Revised Version, marginal reading. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.4}

The above rendering makes this text much more plain than it is in the common version. The idea is that although Christ was in the form of God, being “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3), having all the attributes of God, being the ruler of the universe, and the one whom all Heaven delighted to honour, He did not think that any of these things were to be desired so long as men were lost and without strength. He could not enjoy His glory while man was an outcast, without hope. So He emptied Himself, divested Himself of all His riches and His glory, and took upon Himself the nature of man in order that He might redeem him. It was necessary that He should assume the nature of man, in order that He might suffer death, as the apostle says to the Hebrews that He “was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” Hebrews 2:9. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.5}

It is impossible for us to understand how this could be, and it is worse than useless for us to speculate about it. All we can do is to accept the facts as they are presented in the Bible. Other scriptures that we will quote bring closer to us the fact of the humanity of Christ, and what it means for us. We have already read that “the Word was made flesh,” and now we will read what Paul says as to the nature of that flesh. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:3, 4. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.6}

A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might suffer death, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is only sin that causes death. Death could have no power over a sinless man, as Adam was in Eden; and it could not have had any power over Christ if the Lord had not laid on him the iniquity of us all. Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of sinful man, that is, that the flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the very words upon which this article is based. He was “made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” David had all the passions of human nature. He says of himself, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Psalm 51:5. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.7}

A brief glance at the ancestry and posterity of David will show that the line from which Christ sprung, as to his human nature, was such as would tend to concentrate in Him all the weaknesses of humanity. To go back to Jacob, we find that before he was converted he had a most unlovely disposition, selfish, crafty, deceitful. His sons partook of the same nature, and Pharez, one of the ancestors of Christ (Matthew 1:3; Genesis 38), was born of a harlot. Rahab, an unenlightened heathen, became an ancestor of Christ. The weakness and idolatry of Solomon are proverbial. Of Rehoboam, Ahijah, Jehoram, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, and other kings of Judah, the record is about the same. They sinned and made the people sin. Some of them had not one redeeming trait in their characters, being worse than the heathen around them. It was from such an ancestry that Christ came. Although his mother was a pure and godly woman, as could but be expected, no one can doubt that the human nature of Christ must have been more subject to the infirmities of the flesh than it would have been if He had been born before the race had so greatly deteriorated physically and morally. This was not accidental, but was a necessary part of the great plan of human redemption, as the following will show:- {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.8}

“For verily he took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. [The Syriac version has it, “For He did not assume a nature from angels, but He assumed a nature from the seed of Abraham.”] Wherefore in all things it behooved Him 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. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:16-18. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.9}

If He was made in all things like unto His brethren, then He must have suffered all the infirmities and passions of His brethren. Only so could He be able to help them. So He had to become man, not only that He might die, but that He might be able to sympathize with and succour those who suffer the fierce temptations which Satan brings through the weakness of the flesh. Two more texts that put this matter very forcibly will be sufficient evidence on this point. We quote first 2 Corinthians 5:21:- {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.10}

“For He [God] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.11}

This is much stronger than the statement that He was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” He was *made to be sin*. Here is a greater mystery than that the Son of God should die. The spotless Lamb of God, who knew no sin, was made to be sin. Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon Himself sinful nature. He was made to be sin in order that we might be made righteousness. So Paul to the Galatians says that “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 216.12}

That Christ should be born under the law was a necessary consequence of His being born of a woman, taking on Him the nature of Abraham, being made of the seed of David, in the likeness of sinful flesh. Human nature is sinful, and the law of God condemns all sin. Not that men are born into the world directly condemned by the law, for in infancy they have no knowledge of right and wrong, and are incapable of doing either, but they are born with sinful tendencies, owing to the sins of their ancestors. And when Christ came into the world, He came subject to all the conditions to which other children are subject. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.1}

From these texts we are enabled to read with a better understanding Hebrews 5:7, 8, where the apostle says of Christ:- {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.2}

“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered.” Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to the Father. Why should this be, if He had not been oppressed by the enemy, through the inherited weakness of the flesh? He “learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” Not that He was ever disobedient, for He “knew no sin;” but by the things which He suffered in the flesh, He learned what men have to contend against in their efforts to be obedient. And so, “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” “For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.” Hebrews 4:15, 16. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.3}

One more point, and then we can learn the entire lesson that we should learn from the fact the “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” How was it that Christ could be thus “compassed with infirmity” (Hebrews 5:2), and still know no sin? Some may though, while reading this article thus far, that we were depreciating the character of Jesus, by bringing Him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary, we are simply exalting the “divine power” of our blessed Saviour, who Himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man, in order that He might exalt man to His own spotless purity, which He retained under the most adverse circumstances. “God was in Christ,” and hence He could not sin. His humanity only veiled His divine nature, which was more than able to successfully resist the sinful passions of the flesh. There was in His whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all unrighteousness, would tend to sin, yet His divine nature never for a moment harboured an evil desire, nor did His divine power for a moment waver. Having suffered in the flesh all that men can possibly suffer, He returned to the throne of the Father, as spotless as when He left the courts of glory. When He laid in the tomb, under the power of death, “it was impossible that he should be holden of it,” because it had been impossible for the divine nature which dwelt in Him to sin. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.4}

“Well,” some will say, “I don’t see any comfort in this for me; it wasn’t possible that the Son of God should sin, but I haven’t any such power.” Why not? You can have it if you want it. The same power which enabled Him to resist every temptation presented through the flesh, while He was “compassed with infirmity,” can enable us to do the same. Christ could not sin, because He was the manifestation of God. Well, then, listen to the apostle Paul, and learn what it is our privilege to have:- {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.5}

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that *ye might be filled with all the fulness of God*.” Ephesians 3:14-19. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.6}

Who could ask for more? Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, may dwell in our hearts, so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. What a wonderful promises. He is “touched with the feelings of our infirmity.” That is, having suffered all that sinful flesh is heir to, He knows all about it, and so closely does He identify Himself with his children, that whatever presses upon them makes like impression upon Him, and He knows how much divine power is necessary to resist it; and if we but sincerely desire to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts,” He is able and anxious to give to us strength “exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think.” All the power which Christ had dwelling in Him by nature, we may have dwelling in us by grace, for He freely bestows it upon us. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.7}

Then let the weary, feeble, sin-oppressed souls take courage. Let them “come boldly to the throne of grace,” where they are sure to find grace to help in the time of need, because that need is felt by our {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.8}

Saviour, in the very time of need. He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmity.” If it were simply that he suffered eighteen hundred years ago, we might fear that He has forgotten some of the infirmity; but no, that temptation that presses you touches Him. His wounds are ever fresh, and He ever lives to make intercession for you. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.9}

What wonderful possibilities there are for the Christian! To what heights of holiness he may attain! No matter how much Satan may war against him, assaulting him where the flesh is weakest, he may abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and be filled with the fullness of God’s strength. The One stronger than Satan may dwell in his heart continually; and so, looking at Satan’s assaults as from a strong fortress, he may say, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” E. J. W. {PTUK September 24, 1891, p. 217.10}