**“The Peace of God” The Present Truth 8, 1.**

E. J. Waggoner

[Abstract of a talk on Romans 5 at the late General Conference at Battle Creek.] {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.1}

“Therefore being justified by faith,” that is, being made conformable to the law by faith, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The only way that man can be made conformable to the law, and live free from condemnation, is by having faith in the promises of God. In Christ there is no unrighteousness, therefore there is nothing but righteousness. By believing on Christ, the Christian has the righteousness of Christ. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.2}

But does not James say that there must be works, or the faith is of no avail? It is true that faith is made perfect by works. James 2:22. But it is by faith and faith alone that men are justified. The very text which speaks of Abraham’s being justified by faith, states that the works were only the outgrowth of underlying faith, and that by this work the scripture was fulfilled which says: “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” Works are the outgrowth of faith. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good-pleasure.” We give ourselves into the hands of Christ. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.3}

He comes and *takes up His abode* with us. We are as clay in the hands of the potter; but it is Christ who does all the good works, and to Him belongs all the glory. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.4}

“We have peace with God.” What is peace? It is not a feeling, but a fact. Many think that they must experience a “certain feeling” which they will know is the “peace of God.” But they have never had the peace of God, and therefore cannot know what kind of feeling it ought to be. Satan might give a certain happy feeling, and if the Christian had only the feeling to go by, he would be deceived. The Lord does not deal in feelings, but in facts. Peace is the opposite of war, strife, emulation. We are either at peace with God or else at war. If at war, it is because we are carrying on rebellion. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.5}

How do we fight God?-By following sinful practices. Anyone knowingly indulging in one sinful practice is warring against God. God is a God of peace. Christ left His peace with His followers. “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Between God and his dear Son in heaven there is a “counsel of peace.” They counsel for the peace of man. There is only one condition on which man can have that peace-unconditional surrender, surrender all to God, and then there is peace in the heart, no matter what the feeling may be. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.6}

“Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them.” “O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” What rich comfort in these words! Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.” So His peace is likened to the continual flowing of the river, and the never-ceasing roll of the ocean wave; therefore it matters not what the feeling is, for if all sins have been confessed, God is faithful and just to forgive them; and we are at peace with Him. The condition of peace is the condition of being justified by faith. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.7}

“By whom [Christ] also we have access by faith into this grace [unmerited forgiveness and favor] wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Righteousness can be wrought in men day by day by the same power by which Isaac was born of parents who were practically dead. When people once gain this experience, the next thing they will be constrained to rejoice in the hope of the coming of the Lord. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.8}

We live in the present, not in the future. Read 1 Peter 1:5-9. Salvation belongs to us to-day just as much as it will when in the kingdom of God. No one but ourselves can deprive us of it. Says Peter, “Receiving [present time] the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” Our present salvation is our only hope of a future salvation. “Kept by the power of God” is the expression used by Peter, and it denotes precisely the same condition-“being justified by faith”-in the fifth chapter of Romans. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.9}

The same power that will make men immortal in the life to come justifies them-makes them conformable to the law-by being in harmony with it every day. Says Paul in the letter to the Philippians, chapter three, verse twenty-one: “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, *according to the working* whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.10}

In Ephesians 3:16 Paul, in an inspired prayer, prays that they might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, “according to the riches of His glory.” The grace of God is equal to the glory of God. God’s throne is a throne of glory, and the grace wherein we stand is backed by the glory of God. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.11}

“We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” Some say that tribulation worketh *impatience*. This is not true. If a man is not justified by faith, tribulation will develop the impatience that is in him. How is it, then, that tribulation worketh patience? Let these texts answer: “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:7. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.” Psalm 55:22. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.12}

He takes the heavy loads away. What is that burden?-Anything that worries or vexes us. It matters not whether it be a small thing-a little trial-or a great one. Cast it on the Lord. We rejoice in tribulation because we have Christ with us, and we cast all the burdens on him. He is able to bear them. He has already borne them for all the world, so we cannot add to His burden. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.13}

How do we get rid of the burdens?-Give them to Christ, and then say, “He has them.” And He has them whether you feel any different or not. Then you will experience the truth of the words, “I will give you rest.” It is rest even though the physical pain still racks the body, for Christ bears that tribulation, and you are lifted up above all pain. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.14}

How did the martyrs go to the rack and the stake with songs of joy on their lips? Was that mere bravado?-No; Christ bore their burden, and in Him they had peace. Out of a full heart they sang their praise to Him. Thus they were happy and joyous, and scarcely noticed the pain while the flames crept around them. We will have to “pass through great tribulation.” It may be the lash on the naked flesh, or it may be the thumbscrew. Human nature shrinks from such torture. In Christ we can bear it. Gain an experience in Him now, and in the trying time He will not forsake you. He can bear that great burden as well as a small one. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.15}

Christ will be ours then as well as now, and the life we live will be in Him. No man in this world will be able to stand in that time unless he has previously learned the lesson of faith. Now is the time, while the lesson may be learned under easy circumstances. Great as will be the tribulation of that time, we will pass through it with rejoicing. That rejoicing must be learned now. E. J. W. {PTUK January 14, 1892, p. 9.16}

**“What Is the Gospel?” The Present Truth 8, 2.**

E. J. Waggoner

This question is answered in a few words by the apostle Paul, in Romans 1:16, 17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; ... for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” But, although the question is answered in so few words, the answer comprehends so much that it will take all eternity to unfold the depth of its meaning. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 24.1}

The above text sets forth two points for our consideration: 1. Salvation from sin; and 2. The power of God exerted to accomplish that salvation. We will briefly consider them in order. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 24.2}

The apostle says that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, because therein the righteousness of God is revealed. This shows that it is the revelation of the righteousness of God, that brings salvation. That salvation has reference solely to sin, is shown in the fact that it is the revelation of the righteousness of God that saves. Now, since unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17), and sin is the transgression of a law (1 John 3:14), it is evident that righteousness is obedience to the law of God. The following texts also show it: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Timothy 1:15. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 24.3}

Since sin is the transgression of a law, it is evident that to save one from sin, or from the transgression of a law, is the same thing as making and keeping him obedient to law. Therefore the gospel is the revelation of the power of God to work righteousness in man-to manifest righteousness in their lives. The gospel, therefore, proclaims God’s perfect law, and contemplates nothing less than perfect obedience to it. Let it not be overlooked that it requires no less a power than the power of God, to exhibit righteous acts in the lives of men. Man’s power is wholly inadequate. This is easily seen when we recognise what the righteousness is, that is to be revealed in the life. The text says that it is “the righteousness of God.” The righteousness of God is set forth in His law. Isaiah 51:6, 7. Now who can do the righteousness of God? That is, who can do acts that are righteous as those that God does?-Evidently only God Himself. The law of God sets forth God’s way. Psalm 119:1, 2. But the Lord says, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:9. Therefore man’s effort to keep the commandments of God must fall as far short as the earth is lower than the heavens. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 24.4}

Man is fallen; the work of the gospel is to raise him to a place at the right hand of God. But can man lift himself from earth to heaven? A man can as easily raise himself from the ground to the sun, by placing his hands under the soles of his feet and lifting, as he can raise himself by his own actions to the height of the requirement of God’s commandments. Everyone knows that when a man tries to lift himself by placing his hands under his feet, he is only holding himself down, and that the harder he lifts, the more he presses downward. So with all of a man’s efforts to make himself what God’s law demands. He is only adding to his guilt, for “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6. That which man does himself is from self; that is, it is selfishness; and selfishness has no place in the plan of salvation. That which is of self is of Satan; it is wholly evil. See Mark 7:21-23. The gospel proposes to save man from himself; therefore the man who proposes to do either wholly or in part by himself the work that God requires, proposes to do the best he can to thwart God’s plan. Many do this ignorantly, but the result is the same. It was because the Jews were ignorant of God’s righteousness that they went about to establish their own righteousness. Romans 10:1-3. Whoever realises the infinite depth and height and breadth of the character of God, which is summed up in His law, will readily see that nothing short of the power of God can produce that character in man. Only God Himself can do the works of God. For a man to assume that he himself is able to do God’s righteous works, is to make himself equal with God; and that is the very “mystery of iniquity” itself. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 24.5}

The work of the gospel, then, is to put God’s righteous works in the place of man’s unrighteousness. It is to work in man the works of God, and to cause him to think the thoughts of God. It is to save him from all unrighteousness, to deliver him from “this present evil world,” to redeem him from all iniquity; that is the result; by what means is it to be accomplished?-By the power of God. We must know, then, what that power is, and how it is applied. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.1}

Immediately following the statement that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, the apostle tells us how we may know the power. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.” Romans 1:20. That is, God’s power is seen in the things that He has made. Creation reveals the power of God, for His power is creative power. The fact that God creates is that which distinguishes Him as the one true God. The psalmist says: “For the Lord Jehovah is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols [nothing]: but the Lord made the heavens.” Psalm 96:4, 5. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.2}

Again we read: “But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king; at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion. When He uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of His treasures.” Jeremiah 10:10-13. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.3}

Psalm 33:6, 9, tells us how the Lord made the heavens and the earth: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” “For He spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.” It was made *by His word*. When God speaks, the very thing itself exists in the words which describe or name the thing. Thus it is that He “calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Romans 4:17. If man should call a thing that is not as though it were, it would be a lie; but not so when God so speaks, for His very word causes it to be. When He speaks the word, there the thing is. “He spake, and it was.” {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.4}

The same word that creates also upholds. In Hebrews 1:3 we read that Christ, who created all things, upholds all things “by the word of His power.” Also the apostle Peter tells us that “there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted of water and amidst [*through*, margin,] water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens that now are, and the earth, *by the same word* have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” 2 Peter 3:5-7, Revised Version. The creative power of the word of God is seen in the preservation of the earth and the heavenly bodies, and in the growth of all plants. To the same effect are the words of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah: “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth.” Isaiah 40:25, 26. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.5}

The reason why this is so is found in the fact that the word of God is living; being the breath of God, it has the incorruptible nature of God, so that its power never diminishes. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is wholly devoted to showing the power of God, a sample of which we have just quoted. The word by which all these things are upheld is those spoken of in verses 7, 8: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but *the word of our God shall stand for ever*.” The apostle Peter quotes these words, and adds: “*This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*.” 1 Peter 1:25. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.6}

Thus we are brought around again to the statement that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. But the power of God is shown in creating and upholding the earth; therefore the gospel is the creative power of God exercise for the salvation of man from sin. So the apostle says: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus under good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10. The work of redemption is the work of producing a new creation-new men, new heavens, and new earth-by the same word that created all things in the beginning. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.7}

What greater encouragement can God give us than this, namely, that the power that works in us that which is well-pleasing in the sight of the Lord, is the power that made the heavens and the earth, and which upholds them! Need there be any discouragement? To carry out this thought, as set forth in the Scriptures, would require a volume; but we will read a few texts that will set us on the track of contemplating God’s power in creation, and rejoicing in it. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.8}

The psalmist says: “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.” Psalm 62:11, 12. Here we see the mercy of God coupled with His power. Now read through the whole of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, and as you read the description of God’s wonderful power, bear in mind the first verse: “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.” And then at the close read: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” By what power?-By the power that created the earth from nothing, and which preserves it. What is the comfort of God’s people?-It is the knowledge that their God is mighty in power, even to creating and upholding the universe. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.9}

Read also Colossians 1:9-18, and note how redemption and the creation of all the universe are linked together. We have redemption through the blood of Christ, because “by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church.” Surely the church ought to be strong, when it is connected with so powerful a head. It is only as men through unbelief become disconnected with the head, that they are weak. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 25.10}

Verse 11, of the passage referred to, reads thus: “Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.” In the revision this is more literally rendered thus: “Strengthened [margin, *made powerful*] with all power, according to the might of His glory.” Now read Psalm 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” That is, the heavens declare the power of the glory of God, by which we are strengthened in the conflict with sin and Satan. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 26.1}

Now turn to Psalm 111:2-4, and read: “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious; and His righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.” Yes, the Lord is gracious and compassionate according to the power exhibited in the works of His hands. “He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.” And that mercy is equal to the power that made the heavens and the earth. Yea, it *is* that power; for God Himself, the mighty God, is love. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 26.2}

But what shall we say more? Time would fail us to recount the power and the mercy of God. When we meditate on the law of God, as we are exhorted to do day and night, and find therein such wondrous things that aour soul faints at the thought that all that righteousness must be exhibited in our lives, let us also lift up our eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath, and then with rejoicing say: “Our help is in the name of Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Psalm 124:8. Yea, let all who suffer according to the will of God, “commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” 1 Peter 4:19. Remember that He who upholds all things by the word of His power, is “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy.” Jude 24. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 26.3}

*“Beneath His watchful eye
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard His children well.” {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 26.4}*

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20, 21. Surely, happy is that people, whose God is Jehovah.” E. J. W. {PTUK January 28, 1892, p. 26.5}