**“The Measure of Mercy” The Present Truth 6, 15.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Psalmist prayed, “Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, but according as we hope in Thee.” Psalm 33:22. This is an inspired prayer. It was prompted by the Holy Spirit, which helps our infirmities, and teaches what we ought to pray for. Therefore it is certain that the prayer is a proper one. It is just as certain that the standard of giving, which it calls for, is a just one. Since God directed the prayer to be uttered, that is evidence that He will grant the request. {PTUK July 17, 1890, p. 235.1}

And what is the request? That the mercy of God should be bestowed upon us to the degree that we hope for it. What a wonderful range that is, within which we are permitted to draw upon the heavenly treasury! It is as though God has given us cheques on the bank of heaven, with His name assigned to them, with the privilege of filling in any amount we wish. The prayer of the Psalmist is equivalent to a promise on the part of God that He will give us as much as we hope for. {PTUK July 17, 1890, p. 235.2}

But we remember that the mercy that we *hope* for is to be given us, and not what we would simply like to have. “For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” Romans 8:24. That is, we hope only for that thing which we do not see with our natural eyes. Hope means expectation as well as desire. Therefore we find that hope is inseparably connected with faith, and very closely allied to it. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” And our hope in God is the measure of the mercy that we receive from Him. So it is pretty hard to distinguish between faith and hope. {PTUK July 17, 1890, p. 235.3}

Perhaps the process by which the blessings of God are obtained, may briefly be noted thus: First, overpowered by a sense of need, we deserve something better than we have-something substantial. Then the rich promises of God are open before us, and faith in God’s word creates a whole that they may be ours; and then faith appropriates just to the amount of our hope. But the way in which it is done matters not, so long as we know that the grace bestowed will be according to the measure of our faith and hope. Since we may have whatever our faith in God’s Word prompts us to hope for, it is evident that our destiny is really in our own hands. {PTUK July 17, 1890, p. 235.4}

Nor need we fear that we shall exhaust the treasury of mercy. The word of truth says: “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.” Psalm 36:5. And, “as the heaven is high above the earth, so is His mercy toward them that fear Him.” Psalm 103:11. So when we make perhaps according to our largest hopes, we may know that there is still enough left and to spare; for He “is able to do it exceedingly abundantly, above all that we ask or think.” {PTUK July 17, 1890, p. 235.5}

E. J. W.

**“Saving Faith” The Present Truth 6, 16.**

E. J. Waggoner

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:6-9. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.1}

May we accept these words, especially the statement in the last verse, as literally true? Shall we not be in danger if we do? Is not something more than faith in Christ necessary to salvation? To the first of these questions we say, Yes, and to the last two we say, No, and refer to the Scriptures for corroboration. So plain a statement cannot be other than literally true and one that can be depended on by the trembling sinner. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.2}

As an instance in proof, take the case of the jailer at Philippi.Paul and Silas, after having been inhumanly beaten, were placed in his care. Notwithstanding their lacerated backs and their manacled feet, they prayed and sang praises to God at midnight and suddenly an earthquake shook the prison, and all the doors were opened. It was not alone the natural fear produced by feeling the earth rock beneath him nor yet the dread of Roman justice if the prisoners in his charge should escape, that caused the jailer to tremble. But he felt in that earthquake shock a premonition of the great judgment, concerning which the apostles had preached; and, trembling under his load of guilt, he fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Mark well the answer; for here was a soul in sorest extremity and what was sufficient for him must be the message to all lost ones. To the jailer’s anguished appeal, Paul replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:30, 31. This agrees exactly with the words which we quoted from Paul to the Romans. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.3}

But some one will say, “Faith is good, and necessary, but it is not enough.” If that be true, then Paul kept back something that was profitable to the jailer, and this we cannot admit. “But isn’t there some work that must be done? Are we not to obey the commandments of God”-Most certainly; the same apostle declares that we should “be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:8), and the works that God requires are works of obedience to His law; yet we still affirm that faith is all-sufficient for salvation. How is this? Let the Saviour’s own words answer. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.4}

On one occasion the Jews said unto Jesus, “What shall we do that we might work the works of God?” Just the thing that we want to know. Mark the reply: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” John 6:28, 29. Would that these words might be written in letters of gold and kept continually before the eyes of every struggling Christian. The seeming paradox is cleared up. Works are necessary, yet faith is all-sufficient, because faith does the work. Faith comprehends everything and without faith there is nothing. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.5}

The trouble is that people in general have a faulty conception of faith. They imagine that it is mere assent and that it is only a passive thing to which active works must be added. But faith is active and it is not only the most substantial thing but the only real foundation. The law is the righteousness of God (Isaiah 51:6, 7), for which we are commanded to seek (Matthew 6:33), but it cannot be kept except by faith, for the only righteousness which will stand in the Judgment is “that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Philippians 3:9. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.6}

Read the words of Paul in Romans 3:31. “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” Making void the law of God by man is not abolishing it; for that is an impossibility. It is as fixed as the throne of God. No matter what men say of the law, nor how much they trample upon it and despise it, it remains the same. The only way that men can make void the law of God is to make it of none effect in their hearts by their disobedience. Thus in Numbers 30:15, a vow that has been broken is said to have been made void. So when the apostle says that we do not make void the law through faith, he means that faith and disobedience are incompatible. No matter how much the law-breaker professes faith, the fact that he is a law-breaker shows that he has no faith. But the possession of faith is shown by the establishment of the law in the heart, so that the man does not sin against God. Let no one decry faith as of little moment. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.7}

But does not the apostle James say that faith alone cannot save a man and that faith without works is dead? Let us look at his words a moment. Too many have with honest intent perverted them to a dead legalism. He does say that faith without works is dead and this agrees most fully with what we have just quoted and written. For if faith without works is dead, the absence of works shows the absence of faith; for that which is dead has no existence. If a man has faith, works will necessarily appear and the man will not boast of either one, for by faith boasting is excluded. Romans 3:27. Boasting is done only by those who trust wholly in dead works or whose profession of faith is a hollow mockery. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.8}

Then how about James 2:14, which says: “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him?” The answer necessarily implied is, of course, that it cannot. Why not? Because he hasn’t it. What doth it profit, if a man *say* he has faith, if by his wicked course he shows that he has none? Must we decry the power of faith simply because it does nothing for the man who makes a false profession of it? Paul speaks of some who profess that they know God but who deny Him by their works. Titus 1:16. The man to whom James refers is one of this class. The fact that he has no good works-no fruit of the Spirit-shows that he has no faith, despite his loud profession, and so of course faith cannot save him; for faith has no power to save a man who does not possess it. {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.9}

This is but a brief presentation of this subject. Much more ought to be said, and many difficulties that arise in honest people’s minds ought to be met, and this will be done in due time. But the scripture cited should be sufficient to cause us to heed the exhortation to hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering, “knowing that He is faithful that promised.” {PTUK July 31, 1890, p. 248.10}

E. J. W.