**“The Reasonableness of Faith” The Present Truth 7, 10.**

E. J. Waggoner

The Christian’s faith is something that cannot be seen as a source of wonder to the unbeliever, and is often the object of ridicule and contempt. The worldling regards the simple faith of the Christian as an evidence of weakness of mind, and with a complacent smile at the thought of the superiority of his own intellect, he declares that *he* never believes a thing without evidence; *he* never jumps at conclusions, and doesn’t believe anything that he cannot see and understand. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.1}

The saying that the man who believes nothing that he cannot understand will have a very short creed, is as true as it is trite. There is not a philosopher living who can understand the one-hundredth part of the simple phenomena that he sees every day. Scientists have found out by observation that certain kinds of soil are specially adapted to certain kinds of produce; but nobody can tell why. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.2}

As a matter of fact, faith is one of the commonest things. There is no skeptic who does not have faith to a greater or less degree; and in very many cases they go even farther, and manifest simple credulity. But the element of faith underlies all business transactions, and all the affairs of life. Two men make an appointment to meet at a certain time and place, to transact certain business; each has to trust the other’s word. The merchant has to exercise faith in his employés and his customers. Yea, more, he has to, unconsciously it may be, exercise faith in God; for he will send his ships across the ocean, with confidence that they will return again loaded with merchandise, and yet he must know that their safe return depends on the winds and the waves, which are beyond human control. And even though he never once thinks of the power that controls the elements, he puts confidence in the officers and crew. He will even trust himself on board of one of the ships, whose captain and crew he never saw, and confidently expect that they will bring him to the desired heaven. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.3}

One of these men who thinks that it is foolish to trust in a God “whom no man hath seen, neither can see,” will go to a little window and lay down a twenty-dollar gold-piece, and in return will receive from a man whom he never saw before, and whose name he does not know, only a little strip of paper which says that he is entitled to a ride to a distant city. He perhaps has never seen that city, and knows of its existence only by the reports of others, yet he steps aboard the cars, gives his bit of paper to another total stranger, and settles down in comfort. He has never seen the engineer, and does not know but that he may be incapable or malicious; yet he is perfectly unconcerned, and confidently expects to be carried safely to the place, the existence of which he knows only by hearsay. More than this, he holds in his hand a piece of paper prepared by some men whom he never saw, which states that these strangers, to whose care he has entrusted himself, will land him at his destination at a certain hour; and so implicitly does this skeptic believe this statement, that he sends word ahead to some other person whom he has never seen, making arrangements to meet him at that specified time. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.4}

Still further, his faith is drawn upon in the sending of the message announcing his coming. He steps into a little room, writes a few words on a slip of paper, which he hands to a stranger sitting by a little machine, pays the man half a dollar, and then goes his way believing that in less than half an hour his unknown friend a thousand miles away will be reading the message which he left in the station behind him. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.5}

But to all this the skeptic will reply that he does not blindly trust in others, but that he has *reason* to believe that he will be carried safely, that his message will be sent correctly, and that his letter will reach his wife in good season. His faith in these things is based on the following grounds:- {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.6}

1. Others have been carried in safety, and thousands of letters and telegrams have been correctly sent and promptly delivered. Whenever a letter has been miscarried, it has almost invariably been the fault of the sender. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.7}

2. Those to whom he entrusts himself and his messages, make a business of carrying people and messages; if they should fail to fulfill their agreements, nobody would place any confidence in them, and their business would soon be ruined. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.8}

3. He has had the assurance of the Government by whom the railways and telegraphs are controlled, and which thereby becomes responsible. His confidence in the letter-box was due to the fact that he saw upon it the letters “V. R.,” and he knows that they mean that the Government has promised safely to deliver any letter placed in the box, if it is properly addressed and stamped. He believes that the Government will fulfil its promises, because if it does not, its existence must soon come to an end. Its existence depends on its power to fulfil its promises, and its integrity in performing them. And all these things form a solid ground for his faith. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.9}

Well, the Christian has a thousand-fold more ground for his faith in the promises of God. Faith is not blind credulity. Says the apostle: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [ground, or confidence] of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. This is an inspired definition, and therefore we may conclude that the Lord does not expect us to exercise faith except on evidence. Now it can readily be shown that the Christian has the same ground for exercising faith in God, that the skeptic has for his confidence in the railroad and telegraph companies, or in the Government; and a great deal more. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.10}

1. Others have trusted the promises of God, and have found them to be sure. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews contains a long list of those who have verified the promises of God; who “through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.” {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.11}

2. The God whom we trust makes a business of answering prayers, and of protecting and caring for his subjects. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” Lamentations 3:22. And “He delighteth in mercy.” Micah 7:18. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jeremiah 29:11. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.12}

3. The existence of God’s government depends on the fulfillment of his promises. The Christian has the assurance of the Government of the universe, that every lawful request that he makes will be granted. Government is especially for the protection of the weak. Suppose now that God should fail to fulfill one of his promises to the very weakest and most insignificant persons in the world; that single failure would destroy the entire government of God. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.13}

Moreover, those who put their trust in human government, or in any institution of men, are liable to be disappointed. With the best of intentions, mistakes will be made, because men are but fallible. But to the Christian the firm assurance is given: “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Deuteronomy 33:26, 27. His power is shown in creation. The things that He has made attest His eternal power and Godhead. The more powerful the Government, the greater the confidence in it. Then what more reasonable than that we should have implicit confidence in the God whom nature and revelation combined declare to be omnipotent, eternal, and unchangeable? {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 152.14}

If I should express to an infidel my doubts as to the integrity of one of his friends, he would say: “That’s because you don’t know him; just try him, and you will find him as true as steel.” This would be a fair reply; and so we say to the infidel who doubts the promises of God. “O taste and see that the Lord is good; ... there is no want to them that fear him.” Psalm 34:8, 9. What right has anybody to doubt the promises or the power of God before he has given them a fair trial? And in that case, what right has anybody to doubt God, since everybody is testing his power and goodness every moment of his life? E. J. W. {PTUK May 7, 1891, p. 153.1}

**“Patience, Its Development and Its Fruit” The Present Truth 7, 11.**

E. J. Waggoner

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:1-5. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.1}

Here we have set forth the practical side of justification by faith. Not that justification by faith is not practical in every aspect, for nothing can be more practical than the forgiveness of sins. But this sets forth the practical every-day results of justification by faith. First there is peace that cannot be ruffled by any outside disturbance. It was such peace that, in Stephen and Paul, was superior to the howling mob that demanded their lives. Next there is joy, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Faith gives access to the grace of God. The grace of God is according to the riches of His glory. The glory of God will be according to the riches of His grace. The possession of grace makes sure the glory to be revealed; therefore whoever through faith tastes the riches of God’s grace, may rejoice in full assurance of glory to be revealed in Him. The faith that appropriates the grace of God reaches forward and grasps the eternal glory. As the apostle Peter says:- {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.2}

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:7-9. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.3}

But our rejoicing in hope of the glory of God is not because we have so easy a time, with no trials. Notice in the text just quoted that the “joy unspeakable and full of glory” is coupled with such trials as can be likened only to the fierce flame that heats the crucible in which the gold is placed. So in the passage before us. “We glory in tribulations also.” Why?-Because “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.” Let us note these points. We know something of what tribulation means; shall we study how it works patience, what the experience is which results, and what the hope? {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.4}

Most people think that tribulation works impatience. That is a great mistake. It is true that even petty trials that are not worthy to be listed in the same catalogue with tribulations are often followed by impatience; but they never beget impatience. They simply reveal the impatience that already exists. Many people think to excuse their irritability by pleading strong provocation. If other people were not so exasperating, they would not become impatient. Wrong. If other people did not cross them, they doubtless would not manifest impatience. A dog or a bear may say the same; they will not show their teeth, and growl, unless provoked. But their nature is none the less fierce. Circumstances and associations do not make us impatient and wicked. They may tend to draw it out; but they cannot make us manifest that which we do not have. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.5}

Tribulation works patience only in those who, being justified by faith, have peace with God. Nothing but tribulation can work patience; there is no other way that patience can be developed, except by trials; the fiercer the trials, the more the patience, the greater the experience, and the brighter the hope. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.6}

What is patience? It is simply endurance. The ox is a symbol of patience, because it quietly bears the yoke, and endures heavy loads and even blows. Now how can a man bear and suffer, and show a disposition of quiet perseverance, unless he has trials. There is no call for patience when there is no burden to bear. As the muscle that is never exerted in carrying burdens can never develop strength, so the soul that never has trials can never develop patience. Patience is necessary, for only he in whom patience has its perfect work, is perfect and entire, lacking nothing. James 1:4. Therefore tribulations are necessary. Surely we may rejoice in that which works perfection, and brings to us every possible good. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.7}

How does tribulation work patience? The fact that it does so only in those who are justified by faith in Christ, suggests the answer. It is only when the relation between us and Christ is very close. Let us put it in the form of a paradox, that it may be the more strongly impressed on the mind. Tribulation works endurance only when we learn how not to endure it. We endure the burden which tribulation imposes upon us only by throwing it off. Let the following texts serve as proof:- {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.8}

“Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on.... For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” Matthew 6:25-32, Revised Version. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.9}

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:6, 7. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.10}

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Psalm 55:22. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.11}

The apostle Paul was called upon to bear heavy burdens, and to endure great suffering, and he says this of the amount of his burdens, and how he bore them:- {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.12}

“But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” 1 Corinthians 15:10. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.13}

He who has been justified by faith has laid upon Christ the greatest burden that can be borne-the burden of sin. Christ died for the purpose of assuming this burden, which men could not bear. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” 1 Peter 2:24. Now the justified person finds trials pressing upon him; but he has already learned of Christ’s power, and has proved the truth of His gracious promise, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. He knows that he himself has not the strength to endure these trials without being irritated; the load will prove too galling for him. So he bears it by casting it upon Christ, which he has the fullest warrant to do. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.14}

Thus not the mere doctrine, but the actual fact of justification by faith, becomes the soother of all pains, the supporter in every trial, the strength in every duty. We do not know how we are going to be fed and clothed, if we follow some clearly indicated line of duty. What of that? “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” The greater includes the less, and if God has given His Son, that carries every needful thing with it. What shall we say of the faith of one who professes to know Christ, and yet is continually worrying and fretting for fear of some calamity, or murmuring at little ills that befall him? Surely if his faith does not enable him to trust under these smaller trials, how can he know anything about God? If faith in Christ is good for anything, it is good for everything. And that is just what it is good for. “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” 1 Timothy 4:8. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.15}

And patience works experience. Of course. Experience in what?-Why, experience, or proving of the power of God to keep us even in the little vexations and trials of life, as well as in the tribulation that comes in time of great persecution. Only trials can give us this experience, for only trials and afflictions drive us to test the power of God. And remember that this “experience” is simply experience in the willingness of God to bear all our burdens, so that the peace of God, and not impatience, may rule in our hearts. And yet men and women who never in their lives cast a single burden on the Lord, who never took the every-day trials of life to the Lord for him to bear for them, and who consequently were developing impatience and fretfulness, often talk about their “Christian experience.” Such should learn that experience is something more than a mere profession. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 168.16}

The limits of this article forbid a consideration of the hope that maketh not ashamed, which this practical experience begets. Another article must be devoted to that. But if the reader will only make the experiment of laying hold by faith upon the power and love of God, he will know by experience what the hope is. E. J. W. {PTUK May 21, 1891, p. 169.1}