

SAVING FAITH--by 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." Rom. 10:6-9. 08-01-90, Para. 1, [BECHO].

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. 08-01-90, Para. 2, [BECHO].

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. 08-01-90, Para. 3, [BECHO].

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. 08-01-90, Para. 4, [BECHO].

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 (Isa. 51:6, 7), for which we are commanded to seek (Matt. 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." Phil. 3:9. 08-01-90, Para. 5, [BECHO].

Read the words of Paul in Rom. 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 Num. 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 lawbreaker professes faith, the fact that he is a lawbreaker 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. 08-01-90, Para. 6, [BECHO].

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. Rom. 3:27. Boasting is done only by those who trust wholly in dead works or whose profession of faith is a hollow mockery. 08-01-90, Para. 7, [BECHO].

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. 08-01-90, Para. 8, [BECHO].

CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW--by E. J. Waggoner.--In Rom. 10:4 we read as follows: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Before showing what this text means, it may be well to briefly show what it does not mean. It does not mean that Christ has put an end to the law, because (1) Christ Himself said concerning the law, "I am not come to destroy." Matt. 5:17. (2) The prophet said that instead of destroying it, the Lord would "Magnify the law and make it honorable." Isa. 42:21. (3) The law was in Christ's own heart: "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps. 40:7, 8. And (4) since the law is the righteousness of God, the foundation of His government, it could not by any possibility be abolished. See Luke 16:17. 02-15-92, Para. 1, [BECHO].

The reader must know that the word "end" does not necessarily mean "termination." It is often used in the sense of design, object, or purpose. In 1 Tim. 1:5 the same writer says, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." the word here rendered "charity" is often rendered "love," and is so rendered in this place in the New Version. In 1 John 5:3 we read, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," and Paul himself says that "love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10. In both these texts the same word (agape) is used that occurs in 1 Tim. 1:5. Therefore we say that this text means, Now the design of the commandment (or law) is that it should be kept. Everybody will recognize this as a self-evident fact. 02-15-92, Para. 2, [BECHO].

But this is not the ultimate design of the law. In the verse following the one under consideration, Paul quotes Moses as saying of the law that "the man that doeth those things shall live by them." Christ said to the young man, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. 19:17. Now since the design of the law was that it should be kept, or, in other words, that it should produce righteous characters, and the promise is that those who are obedient shall live, we may say that the ultimate design of the law was to give life. And in harmony with this thought are the words of Paul, that the law "was ordained to life." Rom. 7:10. 02-15-92, Para. 3, [BECHO].

But "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and "the wages of sin is death." Thus it is impossible for the law to accomplish its design in making perfect characters and consequently giving life. When a man has once broken the law, no subsequent obedience can ever make his character perfect. And therefore the law which was ordained unto life is found to be unto death. Rom. 7:10. 02-15-92, Para. 4, [BECHO].

If we were to stop right here with the law unable to accomplish its purpose, we should leave all the world under condemnation and sentence of death. Now we shall see that Christ enables man to secure both righteousness and life. We read that we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. 3:24. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. More than this, He enables us to keep the law. "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." 2 Cor. 5:21. In Christ, therefore, it is possible for us to be made perfect--the righteousness of God--and that is just what we would have been by constant and unvarying obedience to the law. 02-15-92, Para. 5, [BECHO].

Again we read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. . . . 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." Rom. 8:1-4. 02-15-92, Para. 6, [BECHO].

What could not the law do? It could not free a single guilty soul from

condemnation. Why not? Because it was "weak through the flesh." There is no element of weakness in the law; the weakness is in the flesh. It is not the fault of a good tool that it cannot make a sound pillar out of a rotten stick. The law could not cleanse a man's past record and make him sinless; and poor, fallen man had no strength resting in his flesh to enable him to keep the law. And so God imputes to believers the righteousness of Christ, who was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that "the righteousness of the law" might be fulfilled in their lives. And thus Christ is the end of the law. 02-15-92, Para. 7, [BECHO].

To conclude, then, we have found that the design of the law was that it should give life because of obedience. All men have sinned and been sentenced to death. But Christ took upon Himself man's nature and will impart of His own righteousness to those who accept His sacrifice, and finally when they stand, through Him, as doers of the law, He will fulfill to them its ultimate object, by crowning them with eternal life. And so we repeat, what we cannot too fully appreciate, that Christ is made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 02-15-92, Para. 8, [BECHO].

THE UNCONQUERABLE LIFE--by E. J. Waggoner.--"In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness apprehended it not." John 1:4, 5 R.V. The marginal rendering, "overcame," gives us the exact meaning of the text and conveys a message of great comfort to the believer. Let us see what it is. 10-15-92, Para. 1, [BECHO].

Christ is the light of the world. See John 8:12. But His light is His life, as the text quoted states. He says, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." The whole world was in the darkness of sin. This darkness was due to lack of knowledge of God as the apostle Paul says that the Gentiles are "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardening of their heart." Eph. 4:18, R.V. 10-15-92, Para. 2, [BECHO].

Satan, the ruler of the darkness of this world, had done his utmost to deceive men as to the true character of God. He had made the world believe that God was like men--cruel, vindictive and passionate. Even the Jews, the people whom God had chosen to be the bearers of His light to the world, had departed from God and while professedly separate from the heathen, were enveloped in heathen darkness. Then Christ came, and "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." Matt. 4:16, R.V. His name was Emanuel, God with us. "God was in Christ." God refuted the falsehoods of Satan, not by loud arguments, but simply by living His life among men so that all might see it. He demonstrated the power of the life of God and the possibility of its being manifested in men. 10-15-92, Para. 3, [BECHO].

The life which Christ lived was untainted by sin. Satan exerted all his powerful arts, yet he could not affect that spotless life. Its light always shone with unwavering brilliancy. Because Satan could not produce the least shadow of sin in the life, he could not bring it within his power, that of the grave. No one could take Christ's life from Him; He voluntarily laid it down. And for the same reason, when He

had laid it down, Satan could not prevent Him from taking it up again. Said He, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John 10:17, 18. To the same intent are the words of the apostle Peter concerning CHRIST: "Whom God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." Acts 2:24. Thus was demonstrated the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to be made a high priest "after the power of an endless life." Heb. 7:16. 10-15-92, Para. 4, [BECHO].

This endless, spotless life Christ gives to all who believe on Him. "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John 17:2, 3. Christ dwells in the hearts of all those who believe on Him. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. See also Eph. 3:16, 17. 10-15-92, Para. 5, [BECHO].

Christ, the Light of the world, dwelling in the hearts of His followers, constitutes them the light of the world. Their light comes not from themselves but from Christ, who dwells in them. Their life is not from themselves, but it is the life of Christ manifest in their mortal flesh. See 2 Cor. 4:11. This is what it is to live "a Christian life." 10-15-92, Para. 6, [BECHO].

The living light comes from God in a never-failing stream. The psalmist exclaims: "For with thee is the foundation of life; in thy light shall we see light." Ps. 36:9. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Rev. 22:1. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. 10-15-92, Para. 7, [BECHO].

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:53, 54. This life of Christ we eat and drink by feasting upon his word, for He added, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Verse 63. Christ dwells in His inspired word, and through it we get His life. This life is given freely to all who will receive it, as we read above; and again we read that Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." John 7:37. 10-15-92, Para. 8, [BECHO].

This life is the Christian's light, and it is that which makes him a light to others. It is his life; and the blessed comfort to him is that no matter how great the darkness through which he has to pass, no darkness has power to put out that light. That light of life is his as long as he exercises faith, and the darkness cannot affect it. Let all, therefore, who profess the name of the Lord have the confidence that can say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me."

Micah 7:8. 10-15-92, Para. 9, [BECHO].

FAITH--by E. J. Waggoner.--"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14:23. Therefore it is that "being justified"--made righteous--"by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. 08-17-96, Para. 1, [BECHO].

Faith, not works, is that through which men are saved. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9. 08-17-96, Para. 2, [BECHO].

"Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. 3:27, 28. 08-17-96, Para. 3, [BECHO].

The gospel excludes boasting, and boasting is a natural consequence of all attempts at justification by works; yet the gospel does not exclude works. On the contrary, works--good works--are the one grand object of the gospel. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10, with margin. 08-17-96, Para. 4, [BECHO].

There is not the slightest contradiction here. The difference is between our works and God's works. Our works are always faulty; God's works are always perfect. Therefore, it is God's works that we need in order to be perfect. But we are not able to do God's works, for He is infinite, and we are nothing. For a man to think himself able to do God's works is the highest presumption. We laugh when a five-year-old boy imagines that he can do his father's work. How much more foolish for puny man to image that he can do the works of the Almighty. 08-17-96, Para. 5, [BECHO].

Goodness is not an abstract thing. It is action, and action is found only in living beings. And since God alone is good, only His works are of any account. Only the man who has God's works is righteous. But since no man can do God's works, it necessarily follows that God must give them to us, if we are saved. This is just what He does for all who believe. 08-17-96, Para. 6, [BECHO].

When the Jews in their self-sufficiency asked, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. John 6:28, 29. Faith works. Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3. It brings God's works into the believing one, since it beings Christ into the heart (Eph. 3:17), and in Him is all the fullness of God. Col. 2:9. Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8), and therefore God not only was but is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. So if Christ dwells in the heart by faith, the works of God will be manifest in the life, "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2:13. 08-17-96, Para. 7, [BECHO].

How this is done is not within the range of our comprehension. We do not need to know how it is done, since we do not have it to do. The fact is enough for us. We can no more understand how God does His works, than we can do those works. So the Christian life is always a

mystery, even to the Christian himself. It is a life hidden with Christ in God. Col. 3:3. It is hidden even from the Christian's own sight. Christ in man, the hope of glory, is the mystery of the gospel. Col. 1:27. 08-17-96, Para. 8, [BECHO].

In Christ we are created unto good works which God has already prepared for us. We have only to accept them by faith. The acceptance of those good works is the acceptance of Christ. How long "before" did God prepare those good works for us? "The works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall"--i.e., they, the unbelieving, shall not--"enter into my rest." Heb. 4:3-5. But "we which have believed do enter into rest." 08-17-96, Para. 9, [BECHO].

The Sabbath, therefore--the seventh day of the week--is God's rest. God gave the Sabbath as a sign by which men might know that He is God and that He sanctifies. Eze. 20:12. Sabbath-keeping has nothing whatever to do with justification by works, but is, on the contrary, the sign and seal of justification by faith. It is a sign that man gives up his own sinful works and accepts God's perfect works. Since the Sabbath is not a work but a rest, it is the mark of rest in God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 08-17-96, Para. 10, [BECHO].

No other day than the seventh day of the week can stand as the mark of perfect rest in God, because on that day alone did God rest from all His works. It is the rest of the seventh day, into which He says the unbelieving cannot enter. It alone of all the days of the week is the rest day, and it is inseparably connected with God's perfect work. 08-17-96, Para. 11, [BECHO].

On the other six days, including the first day of the week, God worked. On those days we also may and ought to work. Yet on every one of them we also may and ought to rest in God. This will be the case if our works are "wrought in God." John 3:21. So men should rest in God every day in the week, but the seventh day alone can be the sign of that rest. 08-17-96, Para. 12, [BECHO].

Two things may be noted as self-evident conclusions of the truths already set forth. One is that the setting apart of another day than the seventh, as the sign of acceptance of Christ and of rest in God through Him is in reality a sign of rejection of Him. Since it is the substitution of man's way for God's way, it is in reality the sign of man's assumption of superiority above God and of the idea that man can save himself by his own works. Not everyone who observes another day has that assumption, by any means. There are many who love the Lord in sincerity and who accept Him in humility, who observe another day than that which God has given as the sign of rest in Him. They simply have not learned the full and proper expression of faith. But their sincerity and the fact that God accepts their unfeigned faith does not alter the fact that the day which they observe is the sign of exaltation above God. When such hear God's gracious warning they will forsake the sign of apostasy as they would a plague-stricken house. 08-17-96, Para. 13, [BECHO].

The other point is that people cannot be forced to keep the Sabbath, inasmuch as it is a sign of faith and no man can be forced to believe.

Faith comes spontaneously as the result of hearing God's word. No man can even force himself to believe, much less can he compel somebody else. By force a man's fears may be so wrought upon that he may say he believes and he may act as though he believed. That is to say, a man who fears man rather than God may be forced to lie. But "no lie is of the truth." Therefore since the Sabbath is the sign of perfect faith, it is the sign of perfect liberty--"the glorious liberty of the children of God"--the liberty which the Spirit gives, for the Sabbath, as a part of God's law, is spiritual. And so, finally, let no one deceive himself with the thought that an outward observance of even God's appointed rest day--the seventh day--without faith and trust in God's word alone, is the keeping of God's Sabbath. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." 08-17-96, Para. 14, [BECHO].