

The Present Truth, Vol. 20 (1904)

May 12, 1904

"Praise the Name of the Lord" *The Present Truth* 20, 19.

E. J. Waggoner

"I will praise the name of the Lord with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs." Ps. lxxix. 30, 31.

In Heb. xiii.15 we read: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."

This thought is taken from Hosea xiv. 2, where we are instructed to say, "Take away iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips." A better rendering is, "So will we render *as calves* our lips." The lexicons show us that the Hebrew words "bullock" and "fruit" are almost identical, having a common origin, and with one underlying idea.

So when we offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the fruit of our lips, which is not mere lip-service, but which comes from the heart, we are offering bullocks that are, and have been, more acceptable to God than bullocks with horns and hoofs. The heathen rightly conceived that a human sacrifice was the highest and best that could be offered; but they were wholly mistaken as to the mode of offering. It is a "living sacrifice," not a dead one, that is acceptable unto God. E. J. W.

July 7, 1904

"The Lord Is My Strength" *The Present Truth* 20, 27.

E. J. Waggoner

"The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Ps. xxvii. 1. The song for God's people in the time of trouble is, "Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid." (Isa. xii. 2.) The only remedy against fear is the knowledge that God is our strength and our salvation. Whoever trusts to the strength which he imagines that he has in and of himself, is sure sooner or later to fail through fear; but he who knows and acknowledges God as his sole strength cannot fail nor be frightened, because he knows that God cannot fail. The Rock of Ages stands firm. But this means the constant recognition of the fact that we have no strength of brain or muscle apart from God; that it is in Him that we live and move. How gladly we should make this acknowledgement, since it means so much for us.

July 28, 1904

"Songs of Deliverance" *The Present Truth* 20, 30.

E. J. Waggoner

"And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy. I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord." Ps. xxvii. 6. It is with "songs of deliverance" that the Lord compasses us about. Ps. xxxii. 7. That is to say, our safety is in singing the praises of God,-not in merely singing songs that somebody else has written, and which may mean nothing to us, but in singing and making melody in the heart; sometimes even without words, but always with the spirit and with the understanding. It is not enough to praise the Lord for what He has done for us; true faith gives Him thanks for deliverance yet to come, with the enemies all round us. It was when Israel sang and gave thanks to God for His ever enduring mercy that God set ambushments against their enemies. Read 2 Chron. xx. E. J. W.

August 4, 1904

"God Takes Hold of Your Hand" *The Present Truth* 20, 31.

E. J. Waggoner

"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Ps. xvi. 8. Who has power to "set the Lord" always before him? Can anybody move the Lord about at will? Can one bring the Lord down from above, and set Him at His right hand? Certainly not; but one can recognise the abiding presence, and be established by it, as no one can who does not know that the Lord is in the place. Be sure that if God is at your right hand, He will take hold of it; that is the reason why you will not fall. No matter where we are, even though it be "in the uttermost parts of the sea," even there shall His right hand hold us.

"Unshaken as the sacred hills.

And fixed as mountains stand,
Firm as a rock the soul shall rest,
That trusts th' Almighty hand."

E. J. W.

August 18, 1904

"Seek Ye My Face" *The Present Truth* 20, 33.

E. J. Waggoner

"When Thou saidst, *Seek ye My face, my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" Ps. xxvii. 8.

Yes, we may make that response, but where shall we look for Him, that we may see His face? Have no anxiety on that score; the Lord is looking for you; and all you have to do to see Him is to look up. He says, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." Isa. xl. 26. God has placed men

where they are "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us." Acts xvii. 27. There is danger that we may not feel after Him; but if we do reach out our hand, we are sure straightway to find Him. E. J. W.

August 25, 1904

"The Lord is My Shepherd" *The Present Truth* 20, 33.

E. J. Waggoner

It is a great help to know and remember, in repeating these familiar words, that the word here rendered "Lord" is Jehovah-the Living One-the One who *is*-the I AM. Jehovah is my Shepherd. Place the emphasis on both "Jehovah" and "my:" the One who inhabits eternity, whose word creates, has devoted His life to caring for me. The word "Shepherd" is rendered from a word meaning *to feed*. A sheep, above all other domestic animals, requires gentle treatment; brusque, harsh usage disconcerts it. It cannot be driven, but must be led; and only the one who feeds and cares for it can lead it. From the fact that the two greatest rulers in Israel-Moses and David-were shepherds, and that the King of the universe is the "Great Shepherd," we may know God's idea of royal authority, of fitness to rule. In God's mind, to rule is not to domineer, but to use power in service. Our Shepherd combines infinite power and infinite tenderness. He feeds His flock with His own body, and thus demonstrates His right to rule. E. J. W.

September 1, 1904

"But for a Night" *The Present Truth* 20, 34.

E. J. Waggoner

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Ps. xxx. 5. Endure is too strong a word to apply to weeping, and the Hebrew text does not warrant it in this place. The Norwegian version has it, "In the evening weeping comes as a guest;" and this agrees with the margin of our Revised Version, which gives the following literal rendering of the Hebrews: "Weeping may come in to lodge at even." Why does it come at evening?-Because in the dark, and especially when we are weary, we are likely to be cast down by that which, in the freshness of the morning light, is seen to be of no consequence. Weeping does not come to stay; and if we would only look ahead and see things in the light of day, as becomes children of the day, we should not even give it a night's lodging. We need not, for we are told to "rejoice in the Lord always." E. J. W.

September 8, 1904

"What Shall We Do?" *The Present Truth* 20, 35.

E. J. Waggoner

"I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Ps. cxvi. 13. Here is the answer to the question asked in verse 12, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" What shall we do? Take what He gives, and ask for more. What a wonderful way of doing business; it is truly not after the manner of men. And when we have paid for what God has given us, by taking more, then what? Why, the new gift has laid us under double obligations, and so we must now take twice as much as before, and so on in geometrical progression. And to eternity there will be no diminution in the supply, because life and love multiply by giving.

"Immortal Love, for ever gull,
For ever flowing free,
For ever shared, for ever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!"

E. J. W.

"Who Can Be Against Us?" *The Present Truth* 20, 35.

E. J. Waggoner

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. i. 28.

There are very many who cannot say this with the Apostle Paul. They have not yet learned that all things work together for their good. Consequently trouble always unmans them, and casts them down.

There are others who know the words of the text well, and who give loyal assent to them, and in times of trouble always endeavour to comfort themselves by repeating them. They know that the statement must be true, and so they fortify themselves to endure the hardships, albeit often with a wry face. These certainly receive a measure of good from the text.

Still others know the truth stated in the text so well that they rejoice in tribulation. They do not try to explain how the ills that befall them can work out good, nor do they trouble because they cannot see the good; but they know that God is for them, and that if He is for them, nothing can be against them; therefore they give thanks for good and bad alike. Such sing from the heart:

"Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me.
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee;"

and aware of how foolishly wicked it is to find fault with good things, or with that which brings good, they never complain about anything. These draw rich treasure from the Scriptures, and "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But even these do not use the text before us for all the comfort there is in it. Let all who are accustomed to quote this text stop and think, and they will see that their use of it is practically negative. That is, they take it only as a means of enabling them to endure afflictions joyfully. Few ever think of the "all things" that work together for our good as meaning anything other than the ills of life. No doubt the apostle had this feature foremost in his mind at this particular moment;

but that does not prevent us from taking the words in their widest possible scope. The text is unlimited, and therefore we should comfort ourselves with the thought that all things in heaven and earth are constantly working together for our good.

We know that God is working for us, and that He lives but for His children, for He gave Himself for them. The angels are working for us, for "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for them who shall inherit salvation?" There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, because they see fruit of their labour; and in the resurrection Jesus Christ will see of the travail of His soul,-those for whom He is working;-and will be satisfied.

But this does not tell it all, although it embraces all that may be said. All created things, all the elements, whether singly or in combination, are working together for us. The Bible tells us that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," because he was fighting against God's people, and we may know that in like manner all the host of heaven, as well as all things in earth, work for our good. Storm or sunshine, wind, summer breeze, or gentle showers, and all the powers of all the elements, are working day and night without ceasing for our good. What an innumerable army of helpers! How can it be otherwise, since God is for us, and "in Him all things consist"? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and who or what can keep us from our Father's house? E. J. W.

September 15, 1904

"Righteousness as Light" *The Present Truth* 20, 36.

E. J. Waggoner

"He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Ps. xxxvii. 6. It makes no difference if the blackness of sin has blotted out all our righteousness; even then if we trust in God He will make our righteousness appear, even covering us with it, because it is God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that shines in our hearts. Nothing hinders the Lord; out of the most faulty material He can produce a perfect structure. E. J. W.

"Unlimited Room" *The Present Truth* 20, 36.

E. J. Waggoner

"Thou hast not shut me up into the hands of the enemy; Thou hast set my feet in a large room." Ps. xxxi. 8. The Lord delights in liberty, and never deprives anybody of it. It is Satan that keeps a prison; the Lord has none. Moreover, it is absolutely impossible for the enemy to shut up anybody against his will; for nothing can succeed except what the Lord does, and He instead of shutting people up, opens the prison doors. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17); and His Spirit is everywhere (Ps. cxxxxi. 7-10). God fills all things (Jer. xxiii. 24); therefore the soul that dwells in God has unlimited room. E. J. W.

September 29, 1904

"The House of the Lord" *The Present Truth* 20, 38.

E. J. Waggoner

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Ps. xxiii. 6. In whatever desert place we are, and however stony our bed, the Lord is in that place, whether we know it or not, and therefore it is His house. His presence makes "the dry land springs of water," and so even in the barren land we walk beside the still waters, and lie down in green pastures. For "ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God." Heb. xii. 22. It is a good place to dwell in; for "those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." E. J. W.

October 20, 1904

"Let the Word of Christ Dwell" *The Present Truth* 20, 41.

E. J. Waggoner

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Col. iii. 16. Mark the words: *Let* the word of Christ dwell in you. God puts it there; we are to allow it to remain there. "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Deut. xxx. 11-14. "And I know that Hid commandment is life eternal." John xii. 50. E. J. W.

"The People Is Grass" *The Present Truth* 20, 41.

E. J. Waggoner

"Surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever." Isa. xl. 7, 8. Jesus who spoke not His own words, but the Word of God, said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away." It cannot pass away, because God is the Word. The Word was before all things, and by it and from it all things were created; so when all visible things wither and vanish away, the Word will still remain; and he who has built upon it will be able to stand for ever. We are to be so firmly rooted and grounded in the Word that it will grow up into us, and permeate our being, creating us anew; and thus, the foundation and the superstructure being all one, we can no more be swept away than can the Rock of Ages. E. J. W.

October 27, 1904

"Born of God" *The Present Truth* 20, 42.

E. J. Waggoner

The child does nothing in order to be born; but does many things because it has been born. Even so we can do nothing that will cause us to be born of God; but, having been born of God, we necessarily show forth the works of God. "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." E. J. W.

November 11, 1904

"Love Is Giving" *The Present Truth* 20, 44.

E. J. Waggoner

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John iv. 10. The gift of God's Son, which was the gift of Himself, for the world, is the one perfect expression of love. Herein we see that love consists in giving. Love exists not for the benefit of the possessor of it, but for the benefit of the one loved. Christ "loved me, and gave Himself for me." And this perfect love does not inquire about the character of the object of love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This was that we might learn how to love. E. J. W.

"And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have no love, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "None of us liveth to himself." Nothing in the universe was created merely for its own sake. The sun shines, and the grass grows, solely for the benefit of others. So man was made to serve others, and this service is by love (Gal. v. 13). The man who has not love, lives for himself alone; for love means giving of one's self; and he who lives only for himself, even though he have all wisdom and all might, is nothing-at best but a caricature of a man. E. J. W.

November 18, 1904

"A Noble Passion" *The Present Truth* 20, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

"Love envieth not." 1 Cor. xiii. 4. It is a great thing when one has learned, with Paul, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content. The Greek word here used is not the classic word for envy, but a word signifying "eager rivalry, zealous imitation, emulation," and the thing meant by it was considered among the Greeks, as it commonly is now, as a "noble passion." It is opposed, however, to love. In the perfect state, whatever one desires and strives after is for its own sake, because its possession is necessary to fit one for service, wholly regardless of whether others possess it or not. The perfect Christian attitude

toward every other one is that expressed by John the Baptist toward Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease." E. J. W.

"Laying Down His Life" *The Present Truth* 20, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

"Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John iii. 16. All true love has in it some trace of this original gift of love-some drops from the fountain. The one great object-lesson of love is Christ laying down His life for us. We ought in like manner to lay down our lives for the brethren. We may do this many times, day after day; for Jesus was laying down His life when, without sparing himself, He went about healing the sick, as truly as when He was nailed to the cross. His life was laid down for others from the beginning, and was never taken up for His own benefit. And who are "the brethren" for whom we ought to lay down our lives?-The answer is found in those for whom Christ laid down His life. It was while we were enemies that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. E. J. W.

"Progress in the Christian Life" *The Present Truth* 20, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; not that I am become a man, I have put away childish things." 1 Cor. xiii. 11. This shows that progress is the law of Christian life, just as growth is the law of physical life. The weight, size, and habits of a child may be just what they ought to be for a child, but they are not at all adapted to a man. The man, however, in becoming a man, does not repudiate his childhood, but develops it. the Christian must not only learn more of the Word of God, but must see farther and deeper into that with which he has been familiar from childhood. God's Word is infinite and inexhaustible; when we seem to have mastered any portion of it, we are only at the beginning. "Much more" is the motto for the Christian. E. J. W.

December 1, 1904

"Be in Health" *The Present Truth* 20, 47.

E. J. Waggoner

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." 3 John 2. Whoever believes that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," must accept these words as from God; and since "God is no respecter of persons," it follows that they express God's desire for everybody. It is not a light matter for one to lose his health. While it may not bring condemnation from God, it certainly grieves the Lord. The words of the text are full of hope; for since God sets so great value on our health, we may be sure that He has provided abundant means whereby we may retain it, or regain it if it is lost. When God's will is done on earth as it is done in heaven, there will be no

sickness. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." E. J. W.

"Forgiving Mercy" *The Present Truth* 20, 47.

E. J. Waggoner

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Ps. ciii. 2, 3. The Lord is the only healer. He is our life, and there is no life but from Him. Only He can heal disease. But this text says more than this; it says not only that God is the healer, but that He heals all diseases. His healing power is co-equal and co-extensive with His forgiving mercy. Then why are not all healed? For the same reason that all are not saved; they do not recognise and accept the gift. God says to rebellious sinners: "Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee;" but all do not come. Forgiveness is free for all, however, if they will take it. Ever so many who accept forgiveness, and rejoice in it, do not grasp the fact that the life which cleanses from sin is the life that raises the dead; and not believing for health, they do not receive it. "According to your faith be it unto you." E. J. W.

"Love Abideth" *The Present Truth* 20, 47.

E. J. Waggoner

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love." 1 Cor. xiii. 13. We have all read of the time when faith shall be lost in sight, and hope in fruition; but the Scriptures know nothing of a time when faith and hope will be extinct. Faith, hope, and love *abideth*. Indeed, faith and hope must abide as long as love does; for love believeth and hopeth all things. All God's gifts are eternal, and He does not call us to anything in this life that we are to leave behind in the fuller life. This world is but a preparation for the world to come; and here we are to learn lessons of faith, hope, and love that will make us faithful and hopeful and loving throughout eternity. The future life will be one of constant trust in God, and fresh revelations will awaken ever fresh hope of more to be revealed. But love will ever be the greatest, because it includes all. E. J. W.

December 15, 1904

"Renew Their Strength" *The Present Truth* 20, 49.

E. J. Waggoner

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency upon the sky. The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. xxxiii. 25-27. Read the context, and see how exactly it coincides with the text, "as thy days, so shall thy strength be." This is commonly quoted. "As thy day so shall thy strength be," and is taken to mean that whatever any day may bring, strength will be given to bear it. This it does mean, and more, too. What it says, and what the Hebrew expresses still more plainly, is that as many as our days

may be, while they last, strength will last. Strength is to increase with our days, when we continually rest in the everlasting Arms. This is in harmony with the assurance that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." E. J. W.

"Yokes and Bands" *The Present Truth* 20, 49.

E. J. Waggoner

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily." Isa. lviii. 8. When will this be?—When thou dealest thy bread to the hungry, and bringest the poor that are cast out to thy house, and "when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him." Here is a promise of speedy health, and therefore health is possible. It must not be forgotten, however, that one of the conditions is "that ye break every yoke," loosing the bands of wickedness, and undoing the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free. This includes the yokes and bands that we have placed upon ourselves, as well as those with which we have oppressed others. Many of our chains we cling to; but surely such a result as is promised in our text is worth all self-denial, especially when that which we part with is a chain. E. J. W.

December 22, 1904

"The Christ of the Ages" *The Present Truth* 20, 51-52.

E. J. Waggoner

"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord."

And who is this whom we preach? What claims has He upon the world, that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord?"

He is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. . . . which was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty"; and it is as the One possessing this three-fold fulness that we worship Him and proclaim Him as "worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honour, and blessing." To preach the perfect Christ is to present Him as the One who was, and is, and is to come; and we fail to take all that we should from Him, if we think of Him as any less than this.

And who was He? He was the Word that was in the beginning with God, and who was God. He was glorified with the Father before the world was; for His "goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." He was the "eternal life that was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "In 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;" and apart from Him was not one thing made.

He is the One "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God." He was "slain from the foundation of the world," and so however far back in the past we discern Him, we recognize Him only as the crucified One.

As the Crucified One He was with "the church in the wilderness;" for they drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them, and that Rock was Christ." But since He was from the beginning, and was the beginning, time would fail to tell all that He was, and so we pass to consider Him for a moment as...