**“A New Way” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 79, 49.**

E. J. Waggoner

With the story of the crossing of the Jordan every reader the Bible is familiar: with the lessons to be learned from it there is far less acquaintance. Yet it was written, not purely to excite our wonder, nor to satisfy our curiosity, but for our learning. If, enough contemplation of the Scripture narratives, we lived far more with the events which they describe, we would experience the power of God in our daily lives to an extent far beyond what we now do. We must understand that the Bible is not the record of an age which is antiquated, and can never be paralleled, but of the acts of the living God, who is our God. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.1}

“When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion. The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back” (Psalm 114:1-3); or as picturesquely put in the Danish, “Jordan turned, and ran back,” as if abashed at the presence of the Lord. The crossing of the Jordan is coupled with the crossing of the Red Sea, and is fully as wonderful an event. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.2}

There was an exhibition of sublime faith on the part of a vast host, and an example of how to meet obstacles that confront us in the way that the Lord has told us to go. It was the time of harvest, when “Jordan overfloweth all his banks,” and the river was not fordable. The Lord could have timed Israel’s arrival so that they would have cross and could have crossed with comparative ease. But God delights in difficulties, that is, in what to us are difficulties; for with Him there is no such thing. He deliberately chooses the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and foolish things to confound the wise; and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are. 1 Corinthians 1:27, 28. This is not for vain boasting, but in order to strengthen the faith of His people, and to induce men to trust in His salvation. If Israel had always gone forward in the power that took them through the sea and through Jordan, no enemy would ever have stood before them; and if we in this day would continually trust in God as the God who always does just such wonderful things, we should be invincible. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.3}

When the officers were preparing the people for the great movement that was to take them into the promised land, they said to them: “When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore.” Joshua 3:3, 4. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.4}

That is the secret of Christian progress: always treading a new way, a path hitherto untrodden. We must never assume that past experience is sufficient to carry us through any work without special, divine guidance, however familiar with the affair we may consider ourselves. “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” no matter how often he has passed over a road. “The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord,” and only the Lord can keep him from falling in the plainest path. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.5}

So each day’s task, though it may be but the repetition of the same thing that we have done hundreds of times, must be met as an entirely new thing. In that way continual improvement may be made in our work; and that is what God would have. God promises to show us “new things;” for the work that we best know how to do, He knows how to do far better; and therefore there is always the possibility for not to do far more and far better work than we ever yet have done. With God all things are possible, and therefore in Him even the impossible is possible for us. With our eyes fixed on God, we have but to step boldly into the raging flood that threatens to stop our progress, and God will make the way. “It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.” {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.6}

Did you ever stop to think that the apparent danger to the Israelites increased every minute that they were crossing the river? The water below them was running away to the sea; but to their right the wall of water was continually piling higher and higher, as that from above came down. We are so accustomed to think of the fact that they crossed over safely, that we never consider the danger that they were in while crossing. “Ah, no;” you say, “they were not in, danger at all; for God was holding the waters back.” True; and so He is always doing for His people. He measures all the waters of the seas in the hollow of His hand; and this is told us as a reason for quiet confidence in Him at all times. The Israelites were really in as much danger in crossing the Jordan as the disciples were on the Sea of Galilee, or as we ever can be when we are in the path in which God is leading. What we need to do is to dwell in the secret place of God, who inhabits eternity, so that in the midst of present difficulties and threatening dangers, we look at them as already past. That is the secret of strength, and of victory. Our very temptations and dangers and difficulties are made the means of our deliverance, just as Noah and his family are said to have been “saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20) which destroyed the earth. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.7}

**A WAY THROUGH THE FLESH**

It is by “a new and living way” that we draw near to God, though the flesh seems to interpose an impassable barrier. Christ took our sinful flesh, which separates us from God, and veils Him from our sight, and consecrated a way through it, so that we are “made nigh by the blood of Christ.” No flesh is so corrupt, no inherited evil is so strong, that the Lord cannot make a way for us through it, straight to His throne. Yea, He has made a way: He has “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.” Romans 8:3, 4. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.8}

With this knowledge we may give thanks to God who “always causeth us to triumph in Christ; and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.” 2 Corinthians 2:14. The greater the sin in the flesh, with which we have to contend, the more can the sweet fragrance of the knowledge of God be spread in the world, to the praise of the glory of His grace. {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.9}

The strength which God displayed in making even the depths which obstructed their passage “a way for the ransomed to pass over,” is the measure of the strength which He gives to us day by day in our march to the promised land; “therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be on their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” {ARSH December 9, 1902, p. 11.10}

**“Who Can Serve God?” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 79, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

The question is not, Who will serve God? but, Who can serve God? That is a very important question. A failure to understand who can serve God, is the reason why many people continue in useless attempts to serve him. {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.1}

Joshua had recounted to all Israel the goodness of God to them and to their fathers, and concluded with these words: “Now fear the Lord, and served him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seemed evil to you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.2}

Then all the people answered, and said: “God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way and wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed; and the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites, which dwelt in the land; therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God.” {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.3}

That was a good resolution. How shocked they must have been, therefore, when Joshua turned on them with the assertion: “Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God.” {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.4}

Only such as are holy can serve a holy God. That is plain enough if we but stop to think for a moment. To serve him is to do his will; his will is holy; therefore whoever does his will must be holy. An unholy person certainly does not serve the Lord, and cannot as long as he remains unholy; for his unholiness is most displeasing to God. {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.5}

Are there then only a select few who can serve God?-Yes; for all of God’s people are “the elect,” or the selected ones:-Christ says to his disciples, “I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should bring forth much fruit, and that your fruit should remain”-and the number of them is very small compared with the number of wicked. But this does not mean that only a few have the privilege of serving God if they will. “Whosoever will” may take of the water of life freely; and the assurance is, “To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are.” Whoever fully yields himself, soul, body, and spirit, to God, is accepted by him as his, and is made holy, so that he can serve him. {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.6}

Christ has chosen us, that we should bear much fruit to the glory of God. But he says that the tree must be made good, before it can bring forth good fruit. Matthew 12:33. “A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” “A good man out of the good treasure of this heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil.” Luke 6:43, 45. So when we are cleansed by the Lord we become “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.” {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.7}

The law of God is the transcript of his character. Wherefore “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good.” Romans 7:12. To keep the law of God is to serve him; but not everybody can keep the law. The latter part of the seventh chapter of Romans pictures the unsuccessful efforts of an unregenerate man to keep the law of God. Then comes the comforting assurance: “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.” {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.8}

So it is not a difficult matter to serve the Lord, after all. Then what about the statement that a good many people try to serve God, and fail? The answer is found in the form of the question: they simply *try* to serve God, which is something that God has never asked anybody to do; He asks us actually to serve Him. We must *do* His will, not *try* to do it; and to the end that we may really serve Him, He puts His laws into our mind, and writes them in our heart. Hebrews 8:10. This is done for all who accept Him as their God, and who fully yield to Him. “His commandment is life everlasting;” therefore when His law is in our heart, it follows that it is our life; it controls our actions, instead of our attempting to put it into action. When we yield to righteousness as completely as we have to sin, we shall find that there is a greater power in righteousness than there is in sin; for “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 12.9}

But in order that we may experience the perfect working of this power we must not be partial in the law, choosing one portion and rejecting another. We must receive it all, and be willing for it all to have its effect in our lives. Thus, with God working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, we shall come to know the blessedness of the assurance, “His servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face.” {ARSH December 23, 1902, p. 13.1}

**“The Model Religious Life” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 79, 52.**

E. J. Waggoner

Every reader naturally exclaims at once, “That is the life of Christ, of course,” and then as naturally begins, consciously or unconsciously, to put a wide gulf between himself and Christ, assuring himself that nobody can live such a life on this earth as Christ lived. The life of Christ is indeed regarded by most people as a model to be set up on a pedestal, and looked at and admired from a distance, rather than to be lived every day. This is part of the legacy that we have received from the Church of Rome, which has represented Christ as so far removed from human sympathies that no human mortal can presume to come directly to him, or expect to receive anything from Him except through the intercession of Mary or the glorified saints. This sentiment, so deeply imbedded in the mind, is one of the last Papal fetters to be thrown off. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.1}

But Christ himself, who calls us to learn of him, always identifies himself with us, by the term Son of man, which he so much loved, and says, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” He is the living representative of God the Father, who says: “I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” Isaiah 57:15. And He has also made the way very simple and plain for us, by setting specially before us as the model, not the man skilled in meeting the sophistries of the scribes and doctors of the law, but the little child subject to its parents. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.2}

“And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set Him in the midst of them, and said, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:2-4. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.3}

What do we know of the life of Jesus? Only this: “And he went down with them [Joseph and Mary], and was subject unto them.” Luke 2:51. That is the whole, and it is enough. It shows the little child always ready to run errands or to render such household service as tender hands could perform; the child whose ear was quick to catch the first sound of the call to duty, and whose highest pleasure was found in being useful. That is the religion of childhood, and it is the religion for the mature man as well. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.4}

This was the religion of the child Samuel. “Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child.” “And the child Samuel ministered unto [served] the Lord before Eli.” What did he do?-Just what a little child could do, and nothing more. He was not a priest, he could not enter into the holy place and offer incense. But he could wait on the priest. We read that after God had called him and spoken to him by night he “lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord.” There we get a glimpse of him at his daily service. His work was to make himself generally useful, no matter how lowly the task; and in the faithful discharge of those humble duties he was ministering unto the Lord. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.5}

It is not what is done, but how it is done, that determines whether or not one is ministering unto the Lord. The person who slights his task, or performs it unwillingly, wishing that his work were something “more honorable,”-something that would attract more attention, or command greater pecuniary reward,-is not serving the Lord, no matter what nor where his work may be, even though it be in the temple itself. For that person is not a free man, but a slave; and God has no slaves in His employ. All God’s servants are free; they are kings. God is King of kings, and he has no one in His service or in His kingdom of lower rank than king. Therefore every one who is the servant of the Lord is master of his work, and never allows it or circumstances to master him. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.6}

Servants, no matter how menial their service, are to obey orders “in singleness of heart,” as under Christ; “not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.” Ephesians 6:5-7. “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Colossians 3:23. This was the characteristic of Jesus, who said, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God” (Psalm 40:8), and He was doing God’s will just as much when He was assisting Mary in her household tasks, or Joseph in the carpenter’s shop, as when he was preaching to the multitudes, and healing the sick. The first was the preparation for the last. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.7}

Elisha was a prophet of the Lord, performing many wonderful miracles, yet for years he was but a servant, and “poured water on the hands of Elijah.” 2 Kings 3:11. That was his “training for the ministry;” for how can one train for any calling better than in the exercise of that calling? and that lowly service, done willingly from the heart, was the true ministry. Elijah never served the Lord better than when he waited on Elijah. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.8}

So it was when Samuel was doing his childish tasks with a faithful, willing spirit, that he was called to the highest service that could be given to a man-that of bearing a message from God to the high priest of God. Yet the service was in reality no higher than the other. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.9}

What sweet simplicity is seen in the child Samuel! Prompt to answer every call, he rose from his bed without hesitation, time after time, to wait upon the aged Eli, who he supposed was needing assistance. Then, with the artlessness and graceful trust of childhood, he followed Eli’s instructions, and said, when he heard the voice “Speak, for Thy servant heareth.” Yes, he heard, because he was alert to hear, like the angels that excel in strength, that “do his commandments, harkening unto the voice of his word.” In that is summed up the perfect Christian life. How many there are who missed “the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” simply because they despise the day of small things. “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not;” for “with all lowliness wisdom.” {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.10}

“Oh, give me Samuel’s ear-  
The open ear, O Lord!  
Alive and quick to hear  
Each whisper of Thy word;  
Like him to answer at Thy call,  
And to obey Thee first of all. {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.11}

“Oh, give me Samuel’s heart!-  
A lowly heart that waits  
When in Thy house Thou art;  
Or watches at Thy gates.  
By day and night a heart that still  
Moves at the breathing of Thy will.” {ARSH December 30, 1902, p. 11.12}