**“How to Obey” The Signs of the Times, 21, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

In the record of the call of the apostles, we have a lesson on how the Lord wishes men to obey his call, “Follow me.” Simon and Andrew were fishers. Jesus said, “Come, and follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” Not a moment did they hesitate, but “straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.” Mark 1:17, 18. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 369.1}

Peter and John were also fishers. They were in their boat mending their nets, which had been broken by the great number of fish that they had just taken. See Mark and Luke 5:6. Jesus called them, “and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.” {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 369.2}

“And after these things he went forth, and a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt custom, and he said unto him, Follow me. And left all, rose up and followed him.” Luke 5:27. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 369.3}

There are two great difficulties that confront people when they are asked to follow Christ. That is, most people are confronted by one or the other of them. One of them is the poverty of the one called, and the other is the wealth. One man hesitates because he has hard work to make a living, and he doesn’t know how his family will be provided for if he obeys the Lord. Another man has so extensive a business on his hands that it is impossible to leave it, at least until he had time to arrange his affairs. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 369.4}

Both these classes of people are represented in the above calls, but they took no account of the difficulties. We know that Peter had a family, and, being a humble fisherman, could not have been wealthy. Yet he did not stop to consider how he should supply his family if he obeyed the voice of Jesus, but left his nets, and went with him. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 369.5}

Levi was wealthy, for the office of publican was a very lucrative one; yet he left his business at a moment’s notice, when Jesus called to him, “Follow me.” {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 369.6}

So it was with Paul. He says, “when it pleased God, who separated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Galatians 1:15, 16. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 369.7}

That is the way the Lord wishes men to obey his voice. He reveals himself in the Sabbath of the fourth commandment-the seventh day, see Exodus 20:8-11-and says to them, “Follow me.” Many hesitate. With some it is their poverty that stands in the way. They don’t see how they can live if they keep the Sabbath, forgetting that people who do not keep the Sabbath also die, and forgetting that it is the Creator of the heaven and the earth who calls them, forgetting that he who calls them to obey him, says, “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine” (Haggai 2:8), and also, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1). Of his power to provide for his followers, we have a striking proof in the wonderful draught of fishes that the disciples took at his word. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 370.1}

The more wealthy are still more inclined to hesitate to obey the call which Jesus sends them in the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is the best day for business. They do not reflect that it is he who gives them power to get wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18), and that he is just as able to give wealth to those who obey him as he is to give it to those who disobey him; and that, after all, “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 370.2}

Men cannot be too slow to follow strange and doubtful voices; they cannot be too cautious about moving when God has not spoken; but they cannot be too quick to obey the voice of the Lord. David said, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.” Psalm 119:60. And then he declared that he would run in the way of the commandments of God. God’s will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven; and in heaven the angels “do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” E. J. W. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 370.3}

**“Willing and Able” The Signs of the Times, 21, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

The teachings of the epistles of the New Testament are all illustrated by the life of Christ. For instance, we read in Galatians 1:4 that Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” The will of the Father was manifest in the Son, and that will is that we might be delivered from this present evil world. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 270.1}

This is practically illustrated by the miracle of cleansing the leper, which is recorded in Luke 5:12-15. The leper said to Christ, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, “I will; be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.” {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 270.2}

Here we see the effect of the will of God in Christ Jesus, upon one who submitted to it. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3. How easily that will is accomplished is seen in the case with which the leper was cleansed. From that we are to learn how to be cleansed from the leprosy of sin. Knowing that it is the will of God that we should be cleansed from sin, and that he has given Christ power over all flesh (John 17:2), we may approach him with confidence. The apostle says:— {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 270.3}

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” 1 John 5:14, 15. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 270.4}

So we may come to the Lord, not as the leper did, saying, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,” but saying, “Lord, I am unclean; thou canst cleanse me, and it is thy will to do so; therefore I know that thou dost hear and answer, and I have cleansing from thee.” For the promise is, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” E. J. W. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 270.5}

**“Working With Him” The Signs of the Times, 21, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

Behold in the miraculous draught of fishes, recorded in the fifth of Luke, the difference between working without the Lord and working with him. Jesus said, “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.” Peter answered,” Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.” The result was that “they inclosed a great multitude of fishes.” {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.1}

This miracle, which immediately preceded the calling of four of the apostles, was designed as a lesson for them, and for us as well. We may learn that work under the direction of the Lord, and with his presence, will bring great results, even after much more serious toil in the same place, without him, has accomplished nothing. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.2}

We hear a great deal in these days about working *for* the Lord, but very little about working *with* him. Now this latter is what the Bible speaks of, while it says nothing about the former. There is a vast difference. Many people, in their zeal to work for the Lord, set tasks for themselves which he has not required. This is not always the case; but if one is content to work only *with* the Lord, such a mistake can never be made. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.3}

He who works *for* the Lord often labors with all his might, but with only his own might, and then asks the Lord to bless his efforts. He who labors *with* the Lord asks the Lord to work in him “both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” He who speaks only the words of the Lord, needs not to ask the Lord to “give power to the word,” because he knows that “no word from God shall be void of power.” His word will accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.4}

“We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” E. J. W. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.5}

**“Grass and Trees” The Signs of the Times, 21, 24.**

E. J. Waggoner

The message which God send to prepare a people for his coming is briefly summed up in these words: “All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; ... but the word of our God shall stand forever.” Isaiah 41:6-8. “For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.” James 1:11. Such is man-as frail and as helpless as the grass. His breath is in his nostrils, and he is nothing to be accounted of (Isaiah 2:22), for his life is but “a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). Yet God does not despise the grass, but clothes it with wondrous beauty, surpassing the glory of Solomon. See Matthew 6:28-30. And so we are to learn that God does not despise our low estate, but cares for us, even to the extent of clothing us with his own beauty. He who does not forget the grass will surely remember man. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.6}

Even in the grass the mighty power of God is shown,—power to push aside all obstacles. As long as it is rooted in the soil in which God has placed it, his power works through it, till it has accomplished his purposes. So the power of God may be manifested in the feeblest of men, until they have been brought to the standard that he has designed for them,—even to “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.7}

But when God thus accomplishes his purpose in them—as he did it in all who are as passive in his hand as is the grass—they cease to be considered as grass, and are called trees. The message which tells us that we are grass is a message of comfort, in that it reveals to us the word of power. Now to all those who receive that comforting message from the Lord, comes this further message of comfort, that he has come:— {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.8}

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.9}

“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.” Psalm 92:12, 13. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.10}

And so we have this wonderful growth of grace, that, whereas we start as grass, we develop into tress, which cannot be withered nor wrenched from their place, nor even bent by the mightiest blasts that may blow. What wondrous possibilities there are for those who are rooted in Christ! E. J. W. {SITI June 20, 1895, p. 271.11}

**“How Do You Hear?” The Signs of the Times, 21, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

How Do You Hear? —“Take heed what ye hear.” Mark 4:24. These are the words of the Saviour, and they are as important now as when first uttered. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.1}

But what shall we hear? This is answered by the directions as to what we are not to hear. “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.” Proverbs 19:27. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.2}

Thus we are to hear the words of knowledge. And what words are they? Again we read: “For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” Proverbs 2:6. The words of the Lord, therefore, are the words of knowledge. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.3}

In Christ are hid “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:3. He speaks the words of knowledge, because he speaks only the words of God. “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.” John 3:34. Therefore the word of God concerning Christ is, “Hear him.” Luke 9:35. His words are God’s words, and we are to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. All other words are worse than useless. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.4}

But there is still another exhortation as important as the other. It is this: “Take heed therefore how ye hear.” Luke 8:18. A man may hear the right thing, and yet not be profited, because he does not hear in the right way. How then shall we hear? {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.5}

In the first place, we should hear with gladness. The angels in heaven hearken to the voice of God’s word. Psalm 103:20. They listen attentively, lest any word should escape them. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.6}

In the second place, they listen for the purpose of obeying. They “do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” Whoever listens in this way will have no difficulty in understanding what he hears, for “if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.7}

Lastly, it is important that we hear so attentively that we do not forget. There are some from whom the word is snatched away as soon as it is heard. Then it does them no good. “But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.” 1 John 2:5. We are to hold the word. Where?—In our hearts. Let it remain there, so that its life will permeate every portion of the being, and it will make you “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” E. J. W. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 285.8}

**“‘Thou God Seest Me’” The Signs of the Times, 21, 25.**

E. J. Waggoner

“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” Luke 22:61, 62. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 386.1}

Consider what was wrought by that look of Jesus. It reminded Peter of his sin. It awoke in him a consciousness of guilt. With that consciousness of sin came contrition. He went out, and wept bitterly. That was also wrought by the look. But “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:17. Therefore that look which carried conviction and contrition, also brought forgiveness. For “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 386.2}

There is healing power in the look of the Lord. Even the beasts are troubled when the Lord hides his face from them. Psalm 104:29. How much more then must men be troubled when they do not walk in the light of his countenance. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 386.3}

There is also salvation from sin in the Lord’s look. When Daniel prayed for his people, he said, “Open thine eyes, and behold our desolations.” Daniel 9:18. And also, “Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate.” Verse 17. So the psalmist says, “Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” Psalm 80:3, 7, 19. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 387.1}

Sin cannot endure the presence of the Lord. “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.” Habakkuk 1:13. So, as the bright sunlight destroys disease germs, the light of God’s countenance destroys the seeds of sin. What a comfort, then, to be able to say, “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins, in the light of thy countenance.” Psalm 90:8. When the light of his countenance shines upon them, they vanish. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 387.2}

We need not be afraid to have the Lord see us. Rather should we rejoice that he condescends to look upon us. One of the most blessed promises in the Bible is this: “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” Isaiah 66:2. {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 387.3}

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” {SITI June 27, 1895, p. 387.4}