

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

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Chapter 1

The Miracles of Jesus

A belief in miracles is a necessary consequence of a belief in God. He who does not believe in miracles does not believe in God. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Miracles, therefore, are simply God's natural actions. His smallest acts must be miraculous in the eyes of men, simply because He is God. Since God is infinitely above man, and His ways are as much higher than man's ways as the heavens are higher than the earth, it follows that no one can deny the existence of miracles at the present day without denying that God lives and directs the affairs of the universe.

It is idle to speculate as to whether or not miracles are a setting aside of the laws of nature. What are commonly known as the "laws of nature," are nothing less than God's ways of working in the inanimate world. We cease to wonder at them because they are so common that we do not recognize God in them.

Familiar as the phenomena of the weather are to us, no man can make it rain. The most learned botanist cannot make a single blade of grass. No matter how deeply scientists may explore the

operations of nature, there is still something in every one of them which they cannot explain.

The life of Jesus on earth, from His birth to His ascension was a miracle, because it was the life of God. Thousands of people who never heard of Jesus, had tried to live sinless lives, but not one had been able to do so. Philosophers had set forth lofty moral sentiments, but not one had been able to live out his own teachings. But Christ lived a sinless life, in the face of such temptations as all the world together had never known. It was because He lived the life of the infinite God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

All His acts were the acts of the Father, who dwelt in Him. Said He, "Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works." (John 14:10)

So the miracles that Christ did were the natural working of that life of God, which was His life. These miracles were wrought for a definite purpose. After having told of many miracles that Jesus did, and His resurrection as the crowning one of the whole series, the apostle John said, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:30-31)

Every miracle of Jesus, therefore, was for the purpose of showing us how we may receive His life, and have the same miracle wrought in us. It is truly said that His miracles of healing were the natural outgrowth of His sympathetic loving nature: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Love to man prompted every step in the plan of salvation. Christ did not perform the miracles simply for the purpose of calling attention to himself, but to show the love and the power of God toward man. The healing of the bodies of men was only an object lesson. They were aids to faith, to enable men to grasp unseen realities; to show them the power of Christ to heal the disease of the soul.

Whoever reads the accounts of the miracles of Jesus with this in mind, and not as stories told for our entertainment, will receive of the life which was manifested in the doing of those miracles. Each one illustrates some phase of the work of Christ in supplying man's spiritual needs.

In subsequent chapters we shall study some of these miracles, to the end that we may receive life through His name.--Present Truth, August 25, 1892.

Chapter 2

The Cleansing Touch and Word

"And it came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if You will, you can make me clean. And He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him." (Luke 5:12-13)

This is one of the things that are written that we might know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and it is a forcible illustration of how if we believe we may have life through His name.

Such a wonderful cure had never been performed before since the world began. From that day to this, medical science has been impotent in the presence of the dreaded disease, leprosy. It was a most loathsome disease. The one who had it was shut off from human society, except from those who had the same disease. They were regarded as in the highest degree unclean.

As the disease progressed, the different members of the body dropped off. It was actually a living death. The man could look on and see the death preying upon him, ever advancing, and had the certainty before him of final, complete death. For him there was no hope.

Full of Leprosy

This man was "full of leprosy." He was evidently in the last stages of the disease. It had begun to prey upon his vitals, and in a short time he would drop into the grave. It was then that he saw Jesus; and when we consider his condition, we can appreciate the wonderful faith shown by the words, "Lord, if You will, You can make me clean." (Luke 5:12)

There was not the slightest doubt of Christ's power to save. Jesus immediately responded to the cry of faith, saying, "I will; be clean." (Luke 5:13)

And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

The Leprosy of Sin

Sin is a sore disease that is preying upon the vitals of every man. Like the leper, men are filled with it. "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly; they have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged, and gone backward. Why will you be still stricken, that you revolt more and more? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and festering sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil." (Isaiah 1:4-6,RV)

Sure Death

Like the leprosy, sin is progressive death. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." (1 Corinthians 15:56) "Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." (James 1:15) "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:6-7) "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. ... O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:18,24)

Separated Because of Sin

The leprous person was separated. So the sinful person is separated from God. He is unclean. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." (Isaiah 59:2) "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (Ephesians 4:17-19)

Made Nigh

But although the sinner is by his very uncleanness separated from God, yet God is not afraid to come near and touch him. Jesus was moved with compassion as He saw the poor leper, and He is the same now. "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

Therefore, like the leper, we may come with boldness to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. For, "[There is a] fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zechariah 13:1)

And though the person be full of sin and uncleanness, "[Our High Priest] is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." (Hebrews 7:25)

Cleansed by the Word

Jesus not only has the healing touch, but His words have power to heal. The Psalmist says concerning His dealing with His people of old that "He sent His word, and healed them." (Psalm 107:20)

Mark, recording the healing of the leper, said that Jesus touched him, saying, "And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." (Mark 1:42)

The word of Christ also cleanses from sin, and it was to make us realize this fact that the healing of the leper was recorded. Said the Saviour, "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that bears not fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:1-3)

Do You Believe?

Do we believe that the word and touch of Jesus made the leper clean? Then we may know that the same word and touch will make us clean from sin. He who does not believe that the Lord can cleanse him from sin, no matter how vile he may be, does not believe the Bible record of the miracles of Christ.

But merely saying that we believe does not answer the purpose; we must accept the cleansing. There is another important truth taught in this lesson.

Full Assurance of Faith

Jesus said, "I will; be clean." (Luke 5:13)

Read these words of inspiration: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil

world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Galatians 1:3-4) "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Matthew 18:14)

So we ought to come to the Lord with a great deal more boldness and confidence than the leper did. He knew that the Master had the power to heal him, but he said, "If You will..." (Luke 5:12)

God has given us such abundant evidence of His willingness to save us from our sins that it would be casting discredit on His word if we should say, "Lord, if You will, You can save me." "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Thus has He shown not only His willingness, but His longing desire, to save men. He has left nothing undone, and has kept nothing back. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isaiah 5:4) "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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 8:31-32)

He who doubts the willingness of God to hear and save those who wish salvation, must doubt the very existence of God.

Our Confidence

Well, then, what is the final lesson? Just this: "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us." (1 John 5:14)

Now we have learned that it is the will of God to save people from sin. That is why Christ came to earth to die. There can be no question that it is the will of God to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Therefore we know that whenever we come and ask for cleansing, that moment He hears us. But this is not all. "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 5:15)

So, as soon as we ask in faith, the work is done.

The Word Has Been Spoken

The word of salvation has already gone forth. "To you is the word of this salvation sent." (Acts 13:26)

The word is full of healing power. We come to the Lord, saying, "Lord, I know that You have the power to cleanse me, and I know that You will."

We know then that He hears us. We do not then have to wait for the word to come to us, "I will; be clean," for it has already been spoken. So, when we know that He hears us, we know that we have

the things that we desired of Him. Our faith appropriates the power of the word, and its righteousness is ours.

Who is there that does not need freedom from sin? It is ours, if we will but receive it. Thousands say that they believe, and yet they find no relief. To such the miracles of Christ are not a reality. They are but as idle tales.

When they receive the word as it is indeed, the living word of God, then they will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and, believing, they will have life through His name.--Present Truth, September 22, 1892.

Chapter 3

Righteousness and Life

Although the Gospel is a great mystery, yet it is exceedingly simple. A few principles, easily grasped, cover every possible phase of it. Two things only need to be understood, namely, man's need, in God's ability and willingness to supply that need.

All Are Sinners

In the first place we find that all men are sinners. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:10-12,23)

Sin is part of the very being of man; in fact, it may be said to be the man. Christ, who knew what was in man, said, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:21-23)

These evil things come from the heart, not of a few men, or of a certain class of men, but of all men, of mankind. Now we are told that: "Out of the heart are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:22)

Therefore we know that these evil things are the very life of men. That means that the life of man by nature is sin. But sin means death. "For to be carnally minded is death." (Romans 8:6) "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

Thus we see that sin carries death with it. Death springs from sin, for "The sting of death is sin." (1 Corinthians 15:56) "Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." (James 1:15)

From these texts we learn that in sin death is wrapped up. Through the mercy of God, sin does not immediately work the death of the individual, because the Lord is longsuffering, "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

So He gives men an opportunity to repent. If they do so the sin will be taken away, and of course they will be delivered from death. But if they refuse to repent, and show that they love sin, it works out that which is in it, namely, death.

Many other texts might be quoted to show that sin means death, but these are sufficient for the present. Let the reader examine, if he wishes, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36) "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command you this day to love the

Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply: and the Lord your God shall bless you in the land whither you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live: That you may love the Lord your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cleave unto Him: for He is your life, and the length of your days: that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

Read the above in connection with: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known." (Deuteronomy 11:26-28) "Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:20-21) "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24)

Sin and death are therefore inseparable. Where one is found, there is the other. To save from sin is to save from death. Salvation does not mean simply deliverance from the consequences of sin, but from sin itself.

The plan of salvation is not, as some have supposed, a scheme by which people are free to sin as much as they please, in the confidence that a profession of faith will save them from the just desert of their wrong-doing. On the contrary, it is a plan for the utter freeing of the man from sin, so there will be no cause of death. As there can be no death without sin, so there can be no life without righteousness.

Righteousness Only in Christ

But where shall man get righteousness? He cannot get it from himself, for he has nothing but sin in himself. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Romans 7:18) "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:7-8)

Since the whole life is sin, as we have already seen, it is evident that the only way to get goodness is to get another life. That is what the Gospel offers. While man is evil, God is good. He is not only good, but He is the only one who is good. Listen to the words of the

Saviour, to the young man who came running to ask Him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." (Mark 10:17-18)

This is absolute. It does not exclude Christ, for Christ is God. (John 1:1) "God was in Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

The life of the Father and of the Son are the same. "As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me." (John 6:57)

There is no goodness apart from God. Goodness is not a sentiment, but a real thing. There can be no goodness apart from actions. It is not floating around in the air like the odor of flowers. As there can be no such thing as sweetness apart from something that is sweet, and as there is no such thing as saltiness apart from salt, so there is no such thing as goodness apart from good deeds.

All of God's ways are good and right. His ways are briefly yet comprehensively described in His law. "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." (Psalm 103:7) "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." (Psalm 119:1)

As the law of God describes His ways, and all His ways are right, His law is called His righteousness. Thus we read: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the

heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings." (Isaiah 51:6-7)

God's law is His righteousness, and His righteousness consists of active deeds; therefore the law of God is the life of God. His life is the standard of righteousness. That which is like His life is right, and everything that differs from His life is wrong.

We are not left in ignorance of what the life of God is, for He has lived it before men, in the person of Jesus Christ. The law of God was in His heart, (Psalm 40:8) and out of the heart are the issues of life; therefore the law of God was His life. As Isaac Watts said,

"My blest Redeemer and my Lord,
I read my duty in your word;
But in your life the law appears
Drawn out in living characters."

The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, (Luke 4:18) and "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17)

Therefore the life of God in Christ is "the perfect law of liberty," continuance in which causes a man to be blessed in his deed. (James

1:25) No other life has ever been seen in this world, that was free from sin.

Men have exhausted themselves and worn out their very life in attempting to live righteous lives, and have invariably failed. Everybody knows himself to be a sinner. There are none who will not acknowledge that they might have done better in some things than they have done; and there are none who have not at some time in their lives said or thought that they were going to do better; and therein they show that they know that they have sinned. Every man's conscience accuses him, even if he has not been instructed in the law of God. (See Romans 2:14-15)

Christ to Live in Us

Since every man's life is sin in itself, and he has but the one life, and righteousness cannot be manufactured out of sin, it is evident that the only way any man can get righteousness is by getting another life. And since the only righteous life ever known is the life of God in Christ, it is plain that the sinner must get the life of Christ. This is nothing more nor less than living the Christian life. The Christian life is the life of Christ.

But let no one think that he can live this life himself. It is evident that we cannot live another life with our old life that we have always lived. In order to live another life, we must have another life. And no one can live the life of another. No man can live the life even of his most intimate friend; for:

1. He cannot successfully imitate the things with which he is acquainted in that friend, and

2. He cannot know that other one's inner life.

How much less, then, can one live the infinite life of Christ! People sometimes do try to pass themselves off as somebody else, but they are invariably detected in the fraud; so must it be with the one who undertakes to live Christ's life. Thousands of people are trying to live the Christian life, but the cause of their failure is that they are trying to live Christ's life with their own.

What, then, can be done? Is there no possibility of living the Christian life? Yes, there is, but Christ must be allowed to live it. Men must be content to give up their sinful and worthless lives, and count themselves dead--merely nothing. Then if they are indeed dead with Christ, they will also live with Him. Then it will be with them as it was with Paul: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives 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." (Galatians 2:19-20)

When Christ is allowed to live His own life in a man, then, and then only, will that man's life be in harmony with the law of God. Then he will have righteousness, because he has the only life in which there is righteousness.

If any are in doubt as to how the life of Christ may be obtained, let them read the account of His miracles, how He healed the sick and raised the dead:

- Read how He gave new life to the poor woman whose life was daily ebbing away. (Luke 8:43-48)

- Read how He gave life to Lazarus and the ruler's daughter. (John 11:1-46; Mark 5:22-43)

- Learn that His word is a living word, with power to give life to all who receive it in faith. (John 5:24)

- Learn that the life of Christ is in His word, so that when the word is heard and believed Christ himself dwells in the heart by faith. (Ephesians 3:17)

Let these things be living realities, and you will surely have life through His name.--Present Truth, October 6, 1892.

Chapter 4

Sight for the Blind (1892)

We have learned that the miracles of Jesus are recorded that we may believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, we may have life through His name.

Among the many that He did, a very common one was that of giving sight to the blind. One of the most striking instances is that recorded in Luke 18:35-43. which we quote, that all the details may be fresh in the mind of every reader: "And it came to pass, that as He was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging; And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passes by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, You Son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, You Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him; and when he was come near, He asked him, Saying, What will you that I shall do unto you? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight; your faith has saved you. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God." (Luke 18:35-43)

This is a marvelous illustration of the power of faith. It was utterly impossible that the man should do anything for himself. But

he most earnestly desired to see. Jesus had the power to make him see, and he believed in Him. This was all. Jesus said unto him, "Your faith has made you whole." (Mark 10:52)

There was an actual work done, and faith did it. The man was not only blind, but he was poor. He was a beggar. His poverty would naturally result from his blindness. The restoration of his sight would be to supply all his wants, for with sight he could earn a living without any difficulty.

Another point to be noted is that the people tried to keep him away from Jesus. They were very careful of the Saviour. They did not want Him to be troubled. Doubtless they did as too many do now, namely, judged Jesus by themselves. They thought that He would not care to be bothered by a poor, blind beggar.

They did not know that He who made the worlds, and who upholds them by the word of His power, attends also to the smallest details, and is not bothered. Not only is He able to attend to the smallest details, but His delight is to help the poor and needy. Jesus came to this earth for the sole purpose of doing good, and in that He was showing forth the character of the Father.

Note also that the blind man made no delay when word was brought to him that Jesus had called him. Mark says: "And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus." (Mark 10:50)

Instead of looking for a better suit of clothes in which to appear before the Saviour, he left even the garment that he had. It was doubtless ragged and worthless, anyway. Jesus was going to give him his sight, and that meant the gift of everything.

There could not be any better assurance than this miracle, of the willingness and the power of Jesus to do that which He promises in the 3rd chapter of Revelation. He first describes the people as saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of the thing;" (Revelation 3:17) and not knowing that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." (Revelation 3:17)

This was exactly the condition of Bartimaeus, except that he was conscious of his condition. Christ calls to people to realize their condition, and when they do they are in the place that the poor blind man was who called for mercy. To such ones, Jesus says: "I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve that you may see." (Revelation 3:18)

With what are we to buy these things? Evidently not with anything that we have, for we are poor. These things are to be sold to us, "without money and without price;" (Isaiah 55:1) we are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,... 19 But with the precious blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Christ came into the world to give sight to the blind. In His first recorded discourse He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind." (Luke 4:18)

The blindness from which Jesus came to set us free is the blindness of sin. The apostle Peter enumerates the Christian graces as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. These make up the complete Christian. "But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Peter 1:9)

It was from the lack of these things, therefore, that Jesus came to deliver us. That is, as He came to give sight to the blind, and those who lack these things are blind, He came to give them to us. Take notice, also, that sight comes with the forgiveness of sins: "He that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Peter 1:9)

This speaks of one who has known the forgiveness of sins, but who has departed from the faith. Such a one is blind, and so is the one who has never known forgiveness of sins. But with the forgiveness of sins, all these things come, and also sight.

How are these graces to be obtained? Solely by the life of Christ. It is separation from His life that constitutes blindness. Thus

we read of the Gentiles: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." (Ephesians 4:18)

This the more evident when we remember that Christ's life is the light of men. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

It is through the reception of the life of Christ that we get forgiveness of sins: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:14)

The blood is the life, and therefore it is that the blood makes atonement for the soul. (Leviticus 17:11) When Christ shed His blood He gave His life. But He gives His life to us if we accept Him, for we are crucified with Him, and raised up together with Him, that we may live in Him and He in us. His life takes the place of the old life of sin, and thus we are purged from our old sins. Thus also we receive all the Christian graces, for they are all in His life.

We have thus briefly traced the natural condition of men as blind, and seen what sight is, and where it is to be found, in order that we may realize the importance of the lesson taught us in the healing of the blind Bartimaeus.

Remember that these miracles are recorded in order that we may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing,

we may have life through His name. So Jesus gave Bartimaeus sight, not alone for His sake, but for all our sakes also.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime [whether in the Old Testament or in the New,] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
(Romans 15:4)

Jesus gave Bartimaeus the sight of his natural eyes, in order that we might know how we may get spiritual sight, namely virtue, patience, temperance, godliness, charity, etc. What gave Bartimaeus his sight? Jesus said unto him, "Your faith has made you whole."
(Mark 10:52)

In the same way are we to obtain all the excellencies of Christ. Not by a mere sentiment, nor by feeling, but by living faith. What that is, we shall see in another chapter.

The one lesson that we wish to learn in this, is that in just the same way that the blind man got his sight, we may have the cleansing from all sin.--Present Truth, October 20, 1892.

Chapter 5

Coming to the Master

When the blind man came to Jesus to receive his sight, Jesus said to him, "Your faith has saved you." (Luke 18:42)

In another article we have seen that this was done to show how we may receive the forgiveness of sins. This will be seen the more clearly if we compare it with the case of the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus. The case is recorded in Luke 7:36-50. Jesus was eating in the house of a Pharisee. A woman in the city, who was a sinner, came behind Jesus as He reclined at the table, and, weeping, washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with precious ointment.

The Pharisee with whom Jesus was dining was indignant at this, and said to himself, "This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him; for she is a sinner." (Luke 7:39)

Jesus rebuked the Pharisee for his unkind thought both of this woman and of Him, and then said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." (Luke 7:48)

Then those who sat at the table began to murmur because Jesus had said that, thinking that He had no right and power to forgive

sins. "And He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:50)

This is the same language that Jesus used to the blind man when He gave him his sight. Just as he received his sight by faith, so she received the forgiveness of sins by faith. The one case was intended as an illustration of the other. We can grasp the fact of a man being blind and receiving his sight, for that is within the range of our senses. So it is given as an object lesson, to help us to comprehend those things that are not within reach of our physical senses.

Notice that in both these cases there was an effort to keep them away from the Saviour. In the case of the blind man, the more they tried to make him keep still, the more he cried out. So with the woman; she would not be driven from the side of the Saviour by the harsh looks of the Pharisee. This also was recorded for our learning.

Whenever any one feels the need of the Saviour, the devil is ready with his discouragements. He will even attempt to use Scripture, to keep people away from the Lord. He will remind the sinner that God is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, (Habakkuk 1:13) and that evil cannot dwell with Him. He whispers, "You are altogether too sinful to come to the Lord; He will not have anything to do with you."

How often the convicted one hears the whisper from the devil, and does not know that it is from him, but thinks that it is only a proper sense of his own unworthiness. He is sure that he ought to get

himself better before he presents himself to the Lord, and as he cannot find any way to do it, it often happens that he is kept away altogether.

Now let us learn a lesson from the blind man and the sinful woman. The more they were discouraged from coming to the Lord, the more they persisted in coming to Him. And in this they both found their salvation.

The Pharisee thought that a sinner ought not to come near Jesus. But it was in coming nearer to the Saviour that the woman found pardon. So when the devil thinks to frighten us away from the Lord, by quoting the Scripture, and telling us that evil cannot dwell with the Lord, we will rejoice thereat, and come the more readily; for if evil cannot dwell with the Lord, and we come to Him, then the evil will be driven away, and that is just what we want.

So then let every sin-sick soul come to the Lord, knowing that He is calling for him, and that He has said, "Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37)--Present Truth, October 20, 1892.

Chapter 6

Christ the Liberator

"And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, you are loosed from the your infirmity. And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." (Luke 13:10-13)

In the verses following we find the statement made by Christ, that the woman had been bound all those years by Satan. Christ loosing her, was therefore a direct evidence of His power over Satan.

In this miracle we have an illustration of the loosing of men from the bondage of sin. Sin binds its victims: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be held with the cords of his sins." (Proverbs 5:22) "Everyone that commits sin is the bondservant of sin." (John 8:34) "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

Therefore the bondage is that of a law-breaker. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7)

So the poor woman with the spirit of infirmity accurately illustrates the condition of the sinner. She was bound down; so is the sinner. She was bowed together so that she could not lift herself up. She was obliged to go looking down toward the earth. So the psalmist, describing his sinful condition, says, "My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up." (Psalm 40:12)

The woman would fain have walked upright, but she could in no wise lift up herself. So the sinner would often gladly do that which is right, but he is not able. "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would." (Galatians 5:17)

Nevertheless the sinner's case is not hopeless. "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

This being the case, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

Christ said that this scripture applies to Him, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Luke 4:18)

To the woman that was bound Christ said, "You are loosed from your infirmity." (Luke 13:12)

So it is with His word that He looses men from the bondage of sin. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which had believed Him, If you abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32)

The Jews boasted that they were not in bondage, but Jesus showed that they were, by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that commits sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abides not in the house forever; the Son abides forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:34-36)

The bondage, therefore, is the bondage of sin, and the freedom which Christ gives is the freedom from sin. Christ said that it was by the Spirit that He gave liberty. So we read that: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17)

The Spirit gives liberty, because it is righteousness; it is the source of the law, for, "The law is spiritual." (Romans 7:14)

The fruit of the Spirit is obedience to the law. For, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Those who have this Spirit, and are led by it, are free, because they keep the law; for the psalmist said, "I will walk at liberty; for I seek your precepts." (Psalm 119:45)

As Christ healed the poor, infirm woman by His word, so He sets sinners free by His word. His word is law; He speaks the words of the Father; and the commandment of God is life everlasting, because it is His own life. "And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (John 12:50)

The words that Christ speaks are Spirit and life: "It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

And since it is the Spirit that makes free, it is evident that the reception of the words of Christ will make the sinner free. As the bondage is the bondage of sin, and the words of Christ are the words of righteousness, the receiving of those words is in itself the freedom from bondage.

Simple faith in the word of Christ is sufficient to give the sinner his liberty; but to every one who has thus been made free, the words of inspiration come, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." (Galatians 5:1)--Present Truth, November 17, 1892.

Chapter 7

Christ the Bread of Life

Jesus had gone over the Sea of Galilee with His disciples, and a great company of people had followed Him, because they had seen His power in the healing of disease. After He had finished His instruction for the day, He looked at the great multitude of people who had assembled, and said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to prove him: for He himself knew what He would do." (John 6:5-6)

After the disciples had shown that they did not know what to do, Jesus had the people sit down on the grass. There was a lad present who had with him five barley loaves and two fishes, an amount of food so utterly inadequate to the needs of the people, that we are not surprised at Andrew's remark, "What are they among so many?" (John 6:9)

If all had been equally divided among the five thousand men present, there would have been scarcely as much as a crumb apiece. But read what followed: "And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments

of five barley loaves which remained over and above unto them that had eaten." (John 6:11-13)

What a wonderful miracle this was! It is certain that the five loaves with which they began would not nearly have filled twelve baskets; therefore we find that there was a good deal more left after feeding the five thousand than there was when they began.

So that in reality the original amount of bread was not drawn upon at all. There was an act of creation performed by Christ, who is the Creator of all things. "In Him were all things created." (Colossians 1:16)

Creative power resides in Christ. As He took the bread in His hands, it multiplied. Therefore the bread which the people ate that day, came from Christ.

All the miracles of Christ were done that we might believe that He is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, we might have life through His name. (John 20:31) And no miracle that was ever performed shows more clearly than this how we may feed upon Him, and receive life thereby. We shall see that this was the lesson that Jesus intended to have us learn from it.

The next day the people followed Jesus to Capernaum, and there He exhorted them, "Labor not for the meat that perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for Him has God the Father sealed." (John 6:27)

They rightly understood that this meat that would endure forever consisted of acts of righteousness, and so they asked Him what they should do that they might work the works of God. "Jesus answered, and said unto them, This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent." (John 6:29)

Believing on Christ means appropriating Him. Therefore as the meat that endures unto everlasting life is righteousness, and that is obtained by believing or appropriating Christ, Jesus virtually said to them that He himself was that food.

With strange forgetfulness of the miracle that Jesus had wrought the day before, the people said, "What sign show You then, that we may see, and believe Thee? what dost You work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." (John 6:30-31)

Jesus then proceeded to show them that the bread which their fathers ate in the desert was bread that God himself gave to them, and that He himself was the bread. See verses 32-35. So that the miracle by which they had been fed the day before, was but a repetition of the miracle of giving the manna. "For the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven and gives life unto the world." (John 6:33)

And then to leave no possible doubt as to what He meant, Jesus added, "I am the bread of life; he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

Again, "He that believes on me has everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world." (John 6:47-51)

Here was a plain statement that just as their fathers had eaten manna in the desert, and they had eaten bread in the desert the day before, by which physical life had been preserved, so they were to eat of Christ the living bread, which would give them spiritual life forever. But this was too much for them to believe. "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh?" (John 6:52)

The same question is asked at this day. How is it possible that we can get righteousness and life, even the righteousness of God, and eternal life, just by believing on Christ? Jesus said that it is by eating Him. But that only makes it seem more absurd to unbelief.

If the Jews had not been so blinded by unbelief, they would have thought how they had eaten bread from Christ the day before, and that would have answered their questions. And today he who doubts

that one may eat of Jesus, and thereby get His life of everlasting righteousness, shows that he does not believe the record of the feeding of the five thousand.

Jesus did not in any degree modify what He had said, to accommodate their unbelief. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eats me, even he shall live by me. This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eats of this bread shall live forever." (John 6:53-58)

The Jews ate the manna in the wilderness, and if they had seen things by faith, they would at the same time have eaten Christ, who was signified by that manna. Thus they would have received eternal life. But because they had not faith, they were dead.

Now the Bread of life was there in person before them. He had come down from heaven to give himself for the life of the world. Whosoever will eat of Him shall have eternal life. But although men might eat of the manna, and of the natural bread that God gives them, without having any faith, no man can eat of the Bread of life without faith; for it is by faith that Christ is eaten.

In this there is a lesson for all who come to the table of the Lord. The apostle Paul says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Man may eat of the bread of the Lord's Supper without any faith, but in that case they do not eat of Christ. He can be received only by faith. And He may be eaten at any time, and all the time, for the eating of the bread of the communion is only to symbolize the continual eating of Christ.

But Jesus did not leave this matter in doubt. He himself explained the figure which He used. He said, "It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are Spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

"The flesh profits nothing." Suppose that it were possible for the priest to change the bread of the mass into the actual body of Christ, as it is claimed that he does; that would not amount to anything. Suppose that all men should eat of that bread; nay, more, suppose that Christ's physical body, as He was on the earth, had been divided up, and a piece given to every man, and that all had eaten it; that would have been to no profit.

It is not physical meat that endures to everlasting life. That life is spiritual, and only spiritual food can supply it. So it is not worth while to dispute as to whether or not the priest can transform the

wafer into the body of Christ, since if he could, he would be doing nothing towards supplying the needs of man.

Christ is the Word. The Scriptures are from Him, and they are life. Their life is the life of God in Christ. Whosoever, therefore, eats them eats Christ. We eat them, by believing them, and allowing them to work their own righteousness in our life. "Your words were found, and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord God of hosts." (Jeremiah 15:16)

Now the question will rise, "How is it possible that we can by believing the words of Christ, receive righteousness and life?"

That is the very question that the Jews asked. No man can tell. We can only know the fact. We cannot so much as tell how the bread that we eat at our tables can become a part of our life. We know that it does so, and that satisfies us. No man was ever yet so foolish as to refuse to eat his breakfast because he could not tell how it was going to give him renewed life.

He has proved that it does, and that is enough. That daily food comes direct from Christ. It is He that gives us all things to enjoy. And as men eat the bread that comes from Him, and are refreshed, so He wants them to eat of His own body, by means of His word, the bread of everlasting life, that so their souls may be refreshed. This is the word that comes to us all: "O taste and see that the Lord

is good; blessed is the man that trusts in Him." (Psalm 34:8)--
Present Truth, December 1, 1892.

Chapter 8

The Power of Forgiveness

One of the most common expressions to be heard among professed Christians when speaking of religious things, is this, "I can understand and believe that God will forgive sin, but it is hard for me to believe that He can keep me from sin."

Such a person has yet to learn very much of what is meant by God's forgiving sins. It is true that persons who talk that way do often have a measure of peace in believing that God has forgiven or does forgive their sins, but through failure to grasp the power of forgiveness, they deprive themselves of much blessing that they might enjoy.

Healing and Forgiveness Consider the following miracle: "And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; your sins be forgiven you. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? For what is easier, to say, Your sins be forgiven you; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (then He said to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it,

they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." (Matthew 9:2-8)

Bear in mind that the miracle was written for us: "These are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name," (John 20:31)

The scribes did not believe that Jesus could forgive sin. In order to show that He had power to forgive sins, He healed the palsied man. This miracle was wrought for the express purpose of illustrating the work of forgiving sin, and demonstrating its power. Jesus said to the palsied man, "Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house," (Matthew 9:6) that they and we might know His power to forgive sin. Therefore the power exhibited in the healing of that man is the power bestowed in the forgiveness of sin.

A Permanent Change

Note particularly that the effect of the words of Jesus continued after they were spoken. They made a change in the man, and that change was permanent. Even so it must be in the forgiveness of sin.

The common idea is that when God forgives sin the change is in himself, and not in the man. It is thought that God finally ceases to hold anything against the one who has sinned. But this is to imply that God had a hardness against the man, which is not the case. God

is not a man; He does not cherish enmity, nor harbor a feeling of revenge.

It is not because He has a hard feeling in His heart against a sinner that He forgives him, but because the sinner has something in his heart. God is all right, the man is all wrong. Therefore God forgives the man, that he also may be all right.

When Jesus, illustrating the forgiveness of sin, said to the man, "Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house," (Matthew 9:6) the man arose obedient to His voice. The power that was in the words of Jesus, raised him up, and made him well. That power remained in him, and it was in the strength that was given him on removing the palsy that he walked in all the time to come, provided, of course, that he kept the faith. This is illustrated by the Psalmist, when he says: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." (Psalm 40:1-2)

Life in the Word

There is life in the words of God. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

The word received in faith brings the Spirit and the life of God to the soul. So when the penitent soul hears the words, "Son, be of good cheer, your sins be forgiven you," (Matthew 9:2) and receives

those words as the living words of the living God, he is a different man, because a new life has begun in him. It is the power of God's forgiveness, and that alone, that keeps him from sin. If he continues in sin after receiving pardon, it is because he has not grasped the fullness of the blessing that was given him in the forgiveness of his sins.

In the case before us, the man received new life. His palsied condition was simply the wasting away of the natural life. He was partially dead. The words of Christ gave him fresh life. But this new life that was given to his body, and which enabled him to walk was but an illustration, both to him and to the scribes, of the unseen life of God which he had received in the words, "Your sins be forgiven you," (Matthew 9:2) and which had made him a new creature in Christ.

Life in the Blood

With this simple and clear illustration before us, we may understand some of the words of the apostle Paul, which otherwise are "hard to be understood." (2 Peter 3:16)

First read: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:12-14)

See the same statement concerning redemption through Christ's blood, in: "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18-19) "And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Revelation 5:9)

Mark two points:

1. We have redemption through Christ's blood, and
2. This redemption is the forgiveness of sins.

But the blood is the life: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, you shall not eat." (Genesis 9:4) "And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunts and catches any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life there of: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, You shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eats it shall be cut off." (Leviticus 17:13-14)

Therefore Colossians 1:14 really tells us that we have redemption through Christ's life. But does not the Scripture say that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son? It does, and that is just what is here taught. "[Christ] gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." (Titus 2:14) "[He] gave himself for our sins." (Galatians 1:4)

In giving himself, He gives His life. In shedding His blood, He pours out His life. But in giving up His life, He gives it to us. That life is righteousness, even the perfect righteousness of God, so that when we receive it we are "made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

It is the receiving of Christ's life, as we are baptized into His death, that reconciles us to God. It is thus that we "put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," (Ephesians 4:24) "after the image of Him that created him." (Colossians 3:10)

Righteousness is Spoken

Now we may read the following and find that it is not so very difficult: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified [that is, made righteous, or doers of the law] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission [sending away] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:23-25)

All have sinned. The whole life has been sin. Even the thoughts have been evil. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evileye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:21-23)

And, "To be carnally minded is death." (Romans 8:6)

Therefore the life of sin is a living death. If the soul is not freed from this, it will end in eternal death. There is no power in man to get righteousness out of the holy law of God, therefore God in His mercy puts His own righteousness upon all that believe. He makes us righteous as a free gift out of the riches of His grace. He does this by His words, for He declares-speaks-His righteousness into and upon all who have faith in the blood of Christ. In Him is God's righteousness, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9)

And this declaring or speaking the righteousness of God upon us, is the remission or taking away of sin. Thus God takes away the sinful life by putting His own righteous life in its place. And this is the power of the forgiveness of sin. It is "the power of an endless life." (Hebrews 7:16)

Walking in the New Life

This is the beginning of the Christian life. It is receiving the life of God by faith. How is it continued? Just as it is begun. "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." (Colossians 2:6)

For, "the just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

The secret of living the Christian life is simply that of holding fast the life which, received at the beginning, forgives the sin. God forgives sin by taking it away. He justifies the ungodly by making him godly. He reconciles the rebel sinner to himself by taking away his rebellion, and making him a loyal and law-abiding subject. It is sometimes said, "But it is difficult to understand how we can have the life of God as an actual fact; it can't be real, for it is by faith that we have it."

So it was by faith that the poor palsied man received new life and strength; but was this strength any the less real? Was it not an actual fact that he received strength? "Cannot understand it"?

Of course not, for it is a manifestation of "the love of Christ, which passes knowledge." (Ephesians 3:19)

But we may believe it, and realize the fact, and then we shall have an eternal life in which to study the wonder of it. Read again and again the story of the healing of the palsied man, and meditate

upon it until it is a living reality to you, and then remember that:
"These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the
Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His
name." (John 20:31)--Signs of the Times, April 10, 1893--Apples of
Gold Library No. 12, May 1894--Matthew 9:2-8

Chapter 9

He Calls You

By the wayside, near Jericho, as Jesus passed along, sat blind Bartimaeus, begging. "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, You son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, You son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you." (Mark 10:47-49)

The result is well known. As soon as Bartimaeus said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight," (Mark 10:51)

Jesus replied, "Your faith has made you whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." (Mark 10:52)

All men are blinded by nature, "For all have sinned," (Romans 3:23) and sin is blindness. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." (Titus 3:11)

With a word Jesus gave to blind Bartimaeus his sight. That was written for our sakes, that we might know His power to open our

sin-blinded eyes. Said He, "I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

His word is light and life, and the same word that gave sight to Bartimaeus, can remove the blindness of sin. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1)

In another article we have seen that Jesus as our Advocate, is our Comforter. It would have been better if the translators had put "Comforter" in the text, instead of "Advocate," since the latter word is associated in so many minds with the idea of a lawyer before a judge; but if we take the word "advocate" according to its derivation, we shall find the same comfort.

If we consult a dictionary we shall find that the word "advocate" is made up from two Latin words, meaning to call to. Thus an advocate is one who calls to another. In law it has come to mean one who speaks for another; but we will adhere to its original use.

Now let us read the first with this definition of "advocate." If any man sin we have with the Father One who calls to us. God does not turn away from us, but calls to us in Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father. So we read, "God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:9) "I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called

you in the grace of Christ." (Galatians 1:6,RV) "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Jesus said, "The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 14:24)

Therefore it is God who calls to us, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

If any man sin, we have One with the Father who calls to us. And what does He say? "I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace unto His people." (Psalm 85:8)

He says, "Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near." (Isaiah 57:19)

Also He speaks righteousness. "I the Lord speak righteousness." (Isaiah 45:19)

God has set Christ forth "to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed." (Romans 3:25)

When Christ speaks righteousness to a sinful soul, then there is righteousness there, just the same as there was light when He said, "Let there be light." (Genesis 1:3)

And so again we find that Christ as Advocate is a Comforter. The voice that calls out to us, "Peace," comes from God himself, for our Advocate is "with the Father." (1 John 2:1) "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

The righteousness which it speaks is the righteousness of God. And He is calling to all; all may have the comfort, if they will hear His voice. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." (Isaiah 55:3)

What greater comfort could there be than to know that a voice from God is calling to us to come to Him? Whosoever reads this, "To you is the word of this salvation sent." (Acts 13:26)

Are you weary with groping in the darkness of sin? "Be of good comfort, rise; He calls you." (Mark 10:49)--Present Truth, November 2, 1893.

Chapter 10

Better Than Miracles

Jesus said to His disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12)

It is not to be wondered at that the question is often asked, "What are these greater works? Why do we not see them performed by the followers of Christ?" It is not possible for man to tell what the greater works are, for nobody can conceive of any greater works than Jesus did: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." (Matthew 11:5)

The statement that is sometimes made, that the promise of Jesus is fulfilled in the great numbers that have accepted the Gospel through the preaching of His followers, does not meet the case. While conversions are included in the promise, miracles of healing, and even of raising the dead, cannot be excluded; for they were all among the works which Christ did.

That promise has not yet been fulfilled, except for a brief period in the days of the apostles. But a fulfillment of it at one time does not exhaust it, because it is unlimited. "He that believes on me, the

works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." (John 14:12)

Perhaps we shall find the complete answer to the question why miracles are not now wrought, by considering a case of failure, in contrast with the spirit which Jesus manifested in performing His mighty works. When Philip was preaching in Samaria, he performed some wonderful miracles, and among those who believed in consequence was one Simon, who had bewitched the people with his sorcery, "giving out that himself was some great one. ... [He] continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." (Acts 8:9,13)

Finally Peter and John came, and laid their hands on the people, who received the Holy Ghost. This caused Simon to wonder the more, and he offered the apostles money, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Your money perish with you, because you have thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter; for your heart is not right in the sight of God." (Acts 8:19,21)

What was the trouble with Simon? It was self. The fact that he was willing to give money, in order to get power to bestow the Holy Spirit, shows that he wanted to make money out of it. Pecuniary gain, and self-glorification were the motives that prompted his desire for the Holy Spirit's power. He doubtless was not fully conscious of all this, but persuaded himself that his object was to do

good; "For the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it." (Jeremiah 17:9)

And Simon's heart was not right with God. We see from this that the power of the Holy Spirit cannot be used for selfish ends, and therefore it cannot be given where there is a possibility that the one to whom it is given will become exalted because of it, and take honor to himself. It is the Spirit and power of God, and if men take any of the glory of the power to themselves, they would be putting themselves in the place of God; and then people would be led astray, because they would follow a sinful man, instead of God.

Now note a peculiarity of Jesus. "And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed and them all, and charged them that they should not make Him known." (Matthew 12:16)

So when He raised the ruler's daughter from the dead, "He charged them straitly that no man should know it." (Mark 5:43)

Also when He healed the man full of leprosy, "He charged him to tell no man." (Luke 4:14)

And so we find that He did on other occasions. In no case do we find Him telling anybody to advertise Him through His miracles, except in the case of the demoniac of Gadara, and then He was about to leave the country because the people would not allow Him to stay.

How many religious teachers are there in these days, who would pursue a similar course under the same circumstances? In these days any event of importance is heralded far and wide. Sometimes minor matters are magnified into vast proportions, so as to have a good report. If by any means a miracle healing should be performed, the probability is that the papers would fairly groan with accounts of it.

Of course in all this there would not be any conscious egotism, or desire to make self prominent. No doubt it would be expressly stated that the glory was all due to the Lord. The object would be to win converts to the faith. Nevertheless it would not be the way Jesus did; and as long as there is a spirit in man, different from the Spirit of Christ, they will not be able to do the things that He did.

We may say that times have changed, but the fact remains that the truth of God has not changed, and the conditions under which the Spirit and power of God are given, have not changed.

Let it be remembered that Jesus never performed any miracles merely for show. Every one was for the purpose of relieving pressing need. He did them because with His sympathizing nature, and the power that He had, they were the most natural things in the world for Him to do. In doing them His whole thought was for others, and not for himself. Said He, "I seek, not my own glory." (John 8:50)

Neither were Christ's miracles wrought for the purpose of winning converts, because there had to be belief before miracles

could be performed. We read of His own country, that: "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matthew 13:58)

His words and His very presence were what won His disciples. Remember that His most intimate disciples, those who followed Him the most steadfastly, and who continued His disciples after His ascension,--followed Him before they saw any miracles.

When many professed believers on Him left Him the very next day after one of His most wonderful miracles, and He said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?" (John 6:67)

Peter answered for the twelve, making no reference to His miracles, by saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:68-69)

It was His words that held them to Him. It was His words that charmed the soldiers who were sent to take Him. "Never man spoke like this Man." (John 7:46)

This is why Jesus did not want to have His miracles advertised. He did not want people to follow Him from selfish motives, nor out of mere curiosity. Of course they could not be concealed, yet they were wrought because of pure love for the needy, and not for the purpose of making converts. He wished, as He does still, people who follow Him because they love Him.

In this we see that there is something far better than the power to work miracles. It is the meek and quiet spirit of Jesus. The ability to work miracles is inferior in importance to the power to bring to people the words of God. (See 1 Corinthians 12:28)

Jesus had "emptied himself," (Philippians 2:7,RV) and God worked through Him, so that when miracles were performed, the people "glorified God." (Matthew 9:8; Mark 2:12; Luke 5:26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 23:47) So God can work now only through those who are wholly emptied of self, having the mind of Christ in them. Now, as in the days of Simon the sorcerer, those who desire the power to work miracles, will be the very ones who will not receive it.

We see in Samson a specimen of the spirit that will be manifested in those for whom the Lord works mightily. "A young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father or his mother what he had done." (Judges 14:6)

So we have in the 25th chapter of Matthew the difference between the false and the true followers of Jesus. The one tell of the wonderful things that they have done, while the true followers are unconscious of the fact that they have done anything of value. And so we may conclude that when the disciples of Jesus do the "greater works" of which He spoke, they will not be conscious of the fact that they are doing anything extraordinary.

Therefore instead of wondering why miracles are not done, and faintly longing for the power to do them, the right thing to do is to hunger and thirst after righteousness; to seek to know the will of God, and to study His word until its Spirit permeates the soul.

To have the power to speak a word in due season to him that is weary, just as Jesus did, is the thing most to be desired. And that can be done only by those who speak the words of God as He did. Then, when:

- self is wholly gone;
- the individual is completely surrendered to the Lord;
- he is living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord;
- he is seeking not his own, but only the glory of God;
- he is willing that God shall do whatsoever He wishes with him, no matter how humble the task; then will the lowliest services of love be transformed by the power of God into the most wonderful works, and men will praise the Lord for His goodness.--Present Truth, November 23, 1893.

Chapter 11

Willing and Able

The teachings of the epistles of the New Testament are all illustrated by the life of Christ. For instance, we read: "[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." (Galatians 1:4)

The will of the Father was manifest in the Son, and that will is that we might be delivered from this present evil world. 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 You will, You can make me clean." (Luke 5:12)

Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him." (Luke 5:13)

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: "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears 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)

So we may come to the Lord, not as the leper did, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean," (Luke 5:12) but saying, "Lord, I am unclean; you can cleanse me, and it is your will to do so; therefore I know that you do hear and answer, and I have cleansing from you."

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." (1 John 1:9)--Present Truth, March 22, 1894.

Chapter 12

The Healing Touch

One of the most striking of the miracles of Jesus is told in the following few words: "And it came to pass when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy; who seen Jesus, fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean. And He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him." (Luke 5:12-13)

Leprosy was one of the most loathsome diseases known to the ancients, and the one the most dreaded. The leper was an outcast, compelled to keep away from even his own family. The disease was a slow, progressive death, the victim's members dropping off one after another until death ended his misery.

An Illustration of Sin

No other disease more aptly illustrates the defilement of sin; and this man, who was full of leprosy, very closely resembled the description given of the people, by the prophet Isaiah: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (Isaiah 1:5-6)

So as we study the miracle of the cleansing of the leper, we may know that we are to learn how we can obey the direction, "Wash you, make you clean." (Isaiah 1:16)

In the first place, the leper had confidence in the power of the Lord to heal him. He said, "You can make me clean." (Luke 5:12)

That is a great point. Very few really believe that Jesus Christ can cleanse them from sin. They will admit that He can save from sin in general,--that He can save others,--but they are not convinced that He can save them.

The Power of God

Let such learn a lesson from the power of the Lord. Hear what the prophet Jeremiah said by inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Ah Lord God! behold You have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for You." (Jeremiah 32:17)

He who brought the heavens and the earth into existence by the power of His word, can do all things. "Our God is in the heavens; He has done whatsoever He has pleased." (Psalm 115:3) "His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Peter 1:3) "He is able also to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." (Hebrews 7:25)

Christ has been given "power over all flesh." (John 17:2)

The Will of God

So much for His power. Of that the leper was assured; but he was not sure that the Lord was willing to cleanse him. He said, "Lord, if You will, You can make me clean." (Luke 5:12)

We need not have so much hesitancy as that. We know that He can, and He has given us ample assurance of His willingness. Thus we read 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." (Galatians 1:4)

It is the will of God that we should be sanctified: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

Christ comprises everything. "[He is] the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:24)

All things in heaven and in earth are in Him. Therefore the Apostle Paul says, "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)

The willingness of God to cleanse us from sin, is shown in the gift of His only begotten Son for that purpose. "These things have I written unto you, that you may know that you have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the

boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him." (1 John 5:13-15,RV)

So we may "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," (Hebrews 4:16) knowing that "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)

The Touch of Jesus

But the most striking feature of this miracle is the fact that Jesus touched the leper. There was not another person in all the land, who would have come within a yard of him. But Jesus "put forth His hand, and touched him." (Luke 5:13)

With that touch the hateful disease vanished. It is worth noting that in very many cases Jesus touched those whom He healed. When Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, "[Jesus] touched her hand, and the fever left her." (Matthew 8:15)

That same evening, "All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them." (Luke 4:40)

In His own country the people were so unbelieving that "He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands on a few sick folk, and healed them." (Mark 6:5)

In Matthew we are assured that this healing of the sick was "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities, and bore our diseases." (Matthew 8:17,RV)

A Sympathizing Saviour

We know that healing went from Him to the suffering ones who thronged round Him to touch Him; (Luke 6:19) and this Scripture assures us that He received into His own person their diseases, in exchange for His healing power. Now we have the blessed assurance that although He is "passed into the heavens," (Hebrews 4:14)

He has not lost His sympathy with us, but is still "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Hebrews 4:15)

He comes close to us in pity, because: "He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14)

In all our sin and degradation, we may have the inspiring thought that Jesus does not despise us, and is not ashamed to come into the closest companionship with us, in order that He may help

us. The prophet, speaking of God's dealing with ancient Israel, said, "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." (Isaiah 63:9)

Even so it is now. As an eagle bears her young on her wings, so the Lord puts himself under His people, bearing all our sin and sorrow. He takes it upon himself, and in Him it is lost, by the same process by which at the last: "He will swallow up death in victory." (Isaiah 25:8)

Christ took upon himself the curse, in order that the blessing might come upon us. (Galatians 3:13-14) Although He knew no sin, He was made to be sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

He suffered the death to which we were doomed, that we might share His life. And this exchange is made when we come into touch with Him, by confessing that: "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." (1 John 4:2)

How much we lose by holding Jesus off as a stranger, or by regarding faith in Him as a theory. When we know that He identifies himself with us in our fallen condition, taking upon himself, and from us, our infirmities, how precious becomes the assurance, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;

We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

--John Greenleaf Whittier, Hymn: Immortal Love, Forever Full.

--Present Truth, March 29, 1894.

Chapter 13

The Ten Lepers

In the record of the healing of the ten lepers we have, as in the record of all miracles, proof of the divinity of Christ, and an aid to that faith which will give us eternal life. "These [miracles] are recorded that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

In this miracle we see in an especial manner the depth of the love of God, for we see it bestowed on those who had no appreciation of it. From a study of this miracle we shall receive additional proof in the Scripture that: "[God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Leprosy a Type of Sin

Leprosy is one of the most loathsome of diseases. It is constitutional, involving the whole system. It may be said to be a living, progressive death, in that, one after another, the different members of the body lose all sensibility, and finally drop off, the disease inevitably ending in death. It is a disease incurable by any means known to man. So loathsome is it that it forever shuts away its victim from the society of the uninfected.

In all these things it is a fitting type of sin. Sin is a constitutional disease--a disease affecting the whole system. The Lord says to those who have departed from Him, and loaded themselves with sin, "Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (Isaiah 1:5-6)

It is incurable by any means known to man. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Proverbs 20:9) "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." (Job 9:20) "For though you wash yourself with niter, and take much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before me, says the Lord God." (Jeremiah 2:22)

If a person is diseased in only one member, that member may be cut off, and the spread of the disease be checked in that way, if it is incurable. But when the vital organs are diseased, and the whole body is affected, there is no hope. As the leprosy separates its victims from the society of the pure, so with sin. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you." (Isaiah 59:2)

"It is possible," says one who has seen much of leprosy, "for lepers who have means to secure such medical treatment as removes most of the external signs of the disease."

So sinners may by their works outwardly appear unto men to be righteous, but within they are full of hypocrisy and iniquity, and all uncleanness.

The Cleansing Touch

But although the leprosy is so loathsome and so dangerous, Jesus did not fear it, nor did He shrink from contact with it. "And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Matthew 8:2-3)

It was not because leprosy was pleasant to Jesus that He touched the leper; we cannot suppose that it was any more attractive to Him than to other people. But His love for men was so great that he would touch the leper, in spite of his loathsomeness, that He might cleanse him from it.

So sin is not pleasant to the eyes of God; it is most loathsome. Even to our eyes it often appears hideous; how much more so must it seem to the pure and holy God. Nevertheless He so loved men that. "He was made in all things like unto His brethren," (Hebrews 2:17) that He might purify them. "For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

In this we may "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John 3:1)

He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me, not withstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate;
His loving-kindness, oh, how great!

--Samuel Medley, Hymn: Awake, my soul, in joyful lays, 1782.

The readiness of Jesus to touch the poor leper, and the speedy cure which followed, are designed to show to us His willingness to receive sinners, and His power to cleanse from all unrighteousness.

It was not necessary, however, that Jesus should actually put forth His hand and touch the diseased person, in order to heal him. The centurion whose servant was sick of the palsy, and who begged Jesus to heal him, understood this. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, And saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no,

not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go your way; and as you have believed, so be it done unto you. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." (Matthew 8:5-13)

So in the case under consideration, Jesus did not touch the lepers, but healed them with a word. From the case already cited, we know that this was not because He shrank from the contact. It must be to teach us the lesson that the centurion had already learned, that Jesus can speak the word, and heal at any distance.

We cannot see Him; we cannot feel His physical presence; yet all power is given unto Him in heaven and earth, and from the height of His sanctuary, from heaven, His dwelling-place, He can heal as well as when He was present in person.

Acting in Faith

"And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." (Luke 17:13-14)

The command to go show themselves unto the priests was in accordance with the Mosaic law. (See Leviticus 14:1-20) They were

full of leprosy, yet they were commanded to go show themselves to the priests, as though they were cleansed. "And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." (Luke 17:14)

Their faith was shown in their acting as though they were cleansed before they had any outward evidence of it. Thus they demonstrated the two scriptures, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," (Hebrews 11:1) and, "What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." (Mark 11:24)

Faith makes its own way.

The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The Rock beneath.

-John Greenleaf Whittier, Poem: My Soul and I, 1847.

Fullness of Blessing

One of the ten turned back to glorify God and gave thanks.

"Whoso offers praise, [says the Lord,] glorifies me." (Psalm 50:23)

Ten lepers were cleansed, but only one returned to give thanks. Very many blessings are lost to men through unthankfulness. The men who once knew God, yet glorified Him not as God, neither

were thankful, lost their knowledge of God, and their foolish heart was darkened.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:21)

The nine lepers who returned not to give glory to God were cleansed, and God did not withdraw the healing because they did not appreciate it. "If we believe not, yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny himself." (2 Timothy 2:13) "He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45)

Yet they could not have failed to lose much that the thankful one received. Jesus said to him, "Arise, go your way; your faith has made you whole." (Luke 17:19)

This seems to imply wholeness in a special sense. It can mean nothing less than healing both of body and soul.

It is easy to see why there was this difference between him and the others. By their failure to give thanks, they showed that they were prompted only by a selfish desire for health. Having received health, they cared nothing for the beautiful Giver. Of course those who thought no more of the Lord than that, could not have received the fullness of divine blessing. And so we see right here what they

lost by their failure to glorify God; they shut themselves away from His choicest blessing.

Doing Good to All

Another practical lesson may be learned from this affair. It is this, that Christ did not confine His good offices to those who had living, saving faith in Him, or who would be His disciples. "[He] went about doing good," (Acts 10:38) because that was His nature. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Corinthians 5:12) It is "the goodness of God that leads men to repentance." (Romans 2:4)

And so Christ, in the fullness of His love and goodness, went about a blessing to all. How often we read that: "He was moved with compassion." (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 18:27; Mark 1:41; 6:34)

He could not see suffering without wishing to alleviate it; and so He healed all who would allow Him to do anything for them. Some were drawn by His goodness to believe in Him to the saving of their souls, while others forgot Him. Thus it is now.

But if we consider Jesus in this light, as doing good to all, and not simply to those who were or would be His disciples, and then remember that this was but a manifestation of the love of God, we shall have a higher appreciation of that love, and will the more readily incline to yield to such unselfish goodness.--Signs of the

Times, August 11, 1890--International Lesson Notes, August 17,
1890--Luke 17:11-19.

Chapter 14

The Vine and Its Fruit

Shortly after Jesus began His public ministry, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, to which He and His disciples were invited. In the course of the wedding feast the wine failed, and the mother of Jesus notified Him of the fact, and then said to the servants, "Whatsoever He says unto you, do it." (John 2:5)

The result is thus told: "And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus said unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He said unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew); the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And said unto Him, Every man at the beginning sets forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but you have kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." (John 2:6-11)

Christ the True Vine

The Saviour and said, "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that bears not fruit He takes away

and every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the Vine, you are the branches; He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." (John 15:1-5)

The miracle of turning water into wine is an object lesson reality of this statement that He is the true Vine, and that we can bear fruit through being connected with Him, as branches.

All life springs from God through Christ. He is the Creator of all things, and in Him all things are supported. (Colossians 1:16-17) It was by virtue of this power that He turned the water into wine. In that miracle He simply hastened the process.

Let us trace it. In the instance before us, Christ transformed the water instantly into wine. In the ordinary case, the moisture is absorbed by the rootlets, and is drawn up through the stock, and dispersed to the various branches, where it is stored up in the little sacs which we call grapes. The sunshine has a large part to act in the process of transformation.

No one can know how the change is effected; we only know that water, with the element which it holds in solution, is changed in the course of a few months into delicious fruit.

Men call this the working of nature and because the thing is so common they forget that it is a miracle. In the miracle which Jesus wrought at the wedding in Cana, He showed that in the ordinary process the water is not changed into wine through any inherent power in the vine, but by His own power, which works in every living thing.

This shows that it is not as a mere figure of speech that He calls himself the Vine, but that it is an actual fact. Because He is the true Vine, He could in a minute change the water into wine. He did in a minute what He ordinarily does in several months through the grape vine.

Now by the same power by which Christ changed the water into wine, and by which He makes all the fruit of earth grow, He is able to make the fruits of righteousness come to perfection in human beings. We cannot know how it is done in any case; we can only know the facts.

The Scriptures make use of the mysteries taking place all around us in "nature," to teach us to grasp the mystery of the Gospel of grace. Just as the branch bears rich clusters of grapes, through its connection with the vine, all by the power of Christ the true Vine, so we, being directly connected with Him by faith, may bear the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Righteousness and Temperance

In the case of the water turned to wine we have the most striking lesson not only in righteousness but also in temperance. The two are combined. The question is often asked, "What kind of wine was it that Jesus made at Cana?"

Many assume that it was as a matter of course fermented, intoxicating wine, and urge that miracle as an evidence that Christ sanctioned the use of intoxicating liquor. If we study the miracle as we ought, we shall have no difficulty over this matter.

Whoever does not allow his appetite to becloud his judgment, will readily see that the miracle which Jesus wrought was the exact counterpart of the miracle which is wrought in the storing up of the sap in the grape clusters. He made just such wine as you would get if you should press the juice of the clusters of grapes into a vessel and drink it. This process is described in the dream of Pharaoh's butler: "A vine was before me; And in the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes; And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand." (Genesis 40:9-11)

But there is another point, which gives us a most practical lesson in both righteousness and temperance. The wine which Jesus made on that occasion, like the clusters of grapes on the vine, was the

direct product of His own life. It is not too much to say that the guests who drank that wine were drinking directly of Christ's life.

Of the Israelites who drank of the water which flowed from the rock on which Christ stood in the wilderness, it is said that they drank from Christ. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:4)

Those who did not by faith recognize His life, did not in either instance receive any spiritual life; but the turning of water into wine did become spiritual life to Christ's disciples, for they believed on Him.

There is this difference between fermented and unfermented wine:

The unfermented wine is pure food. It is the life of the vine in the most condensed form, and is all nourishing. It tends to build up the system, and is therefore one of the best ways in which to supply nourishment to those who are ill, and who cannot receive a great quantity of food. The unfermented wine,--the juice of the grape, the true fruit of the vine,--supplies a great amount of the nourishment in a small space, and is easily assimilated.

But in fermented wine the food elements are so changed that there is scarcely any real nourishment. It is now a stimulant and an intoxicant, instead of a food. Instead of building up the system, and

supplying new life and power, it simply excites the power already possessed, spurring it to action. It adds nothing to the one who takes it, but simply stimulates him to use that which he already has.

Now Christ's life is food, and not a stimulant. He did not come to earth to incite men to put into operation power that they already had, but which lay dormant, but to give them power, of which they were destitute. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6)

There is in men no power whatever to do right. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:7-8)

Anyone would say that it is an act of cruelty to beat a poor, lame horse that is almost ready to die, in order to make him work. He has no work in him, and neither whip nor spur can put it into him. The whip or spur may incite a strong animal to use its strength, but they cannot put strength into one that has none. So it would be wicked to try to force a palsied man to work. He has no power to work. There are men who are wicked enough to do such things, but they are moved by the spirit of Satan.

For the work of the devil is to make men think that they can manufacture strength out of nothing. So he induces them to drink alcoholic liquors, and tea, etc., in order to get strength for work, when there is nothing in those substances to supply strength. Taken

in certain quantities they only stimulate a man, and cause him to put forth and use up the physical strength that he has. In larger quantities they stupefy and intoxicate.

Thus he literally induces them to spend money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which would satisfy not. (Isaiah 55:2) By the use of those substances people use up the strength they have, and become prematurely old.

In the same line of work the devil causes people to think that they have in themselves all the power that is necessary for doing right. So he stimulates them with false hopes and promises. He gets them to punish themselves in various ways, for their failures, and to spur themselves up to bring forth the good which they are persuaded is latent in them.

And when the individual effort fails, he induces the nation to pass laws with the object of compelling people to be religious. The idea is that they have goodness in them, but that they have to be spurred by the law, and by fear of punishment, in order to bring it out. That is the devil's way. The end, of course, is increased sin, and death.

Christ's way is different. He knows that in man "dwells no good thing," (Romans 7:18) and therefore He does not give him a stimulant, which would do no good, but which would tend only to excite and wear him out. On the contrary, He feeds man with His own life, which contains all the elements necessary to perfect

growth. In Him "all fullness" dwells, (Colossians 1:19) and we are made complete in Him. (Colossians 2:10) "[We are] saved by His life." (Romans 5:10)

And so from the miracle of changing water into wine we learn an important lesson in righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come, because it is the life of Christ that is to be the standard in the judgment.

That which Christ gives to us, is His life, which is real nourishment. His life in the heart produces righteous acts. And so for our physical sustenance He gives us that which is wholesome and nourishing, and not that which adds no real strength, but which dissipates the energy we already have. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Slain, Yet Living

Jesus says, "I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." (Revelation 1:18) "[He is] the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8) "[He is] the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

For this cause all who believed in Christ as the Saviour of sinners were taught from the beginning to offer a lamb as a sacrifice, in token of their faith. The blood was shed, and the flesh was consumed. Cain, who had no faith, brought the fruit of the ground,

while Abel brought from the best of the flock. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." (Hebrews 11:4)

The Passover lamb also represented Christ. Its blood sprinkled upon the door posts caused the destroying angel to pass over the house. Those who offered it, especially the first time, in Egypt, did so in direct recognition of Christ, whose blood cleanses from sin, and who was delivering them from bondage. "Christ our Passover, is sacrificed for us." (1 Corinthians 5:7)

But at the Passover immediately preceding His crucifixion, Christ gave His disciples another memorial of himself. "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28)

It was directly after this, that same evening, that Jesus said to His disciples, "I am the true Vine." (John 15:1)

Hitherto men had shown their faith in the power of His blood to cleanse from sin, by shedding the blood of a lamb. But now the real Lamb was about to shed His own blood. Those lambs that had been slain had utterly ceased to live; but as surely as the Lamb of God was slain He was to live again.

It would manifestly be out of place to go on taking the life of beasts in remembrance of Christ after He had died and risen again. And therefore henceforth His disciples were to commemorate the fact that life is obtained through His blood, by taking the fruit of the vine, which sheds its blood for the life of men, and still continue to live.

Manifesting the Glory

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory." (John 2:11)

Yet the person of Jesus did not shine with any such splendor as when He was on the mount of transfiguration. There was no more beauty in Him, that men should desire Him on that occasion, than on any other; yet He at that time manifested forth His glory. This shows that His glory is in His works. It is by His life that all things on earth exist, and therefore it is that "the whole earth is full of His glory." (Isaiah 6:3) "And the glory which You gave me, I have given them," (John 17:22)

This is what Christ said of His disciples, in His prayer to the Father. He has given us His life, and His works, in which we may triumph; and as we yield to Him to become His workmanship, His glory is stored up in us, to be revealed at His coming.

The goodness which He has wrought out and laid up for them that trust Him, is the glory which He imparts to men. Looking at

Him, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, or goodness to goodness. Therefore, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

These are some of the lessons to be learned from that first miracle in Christ's earthly ministry. There was a wonderful fitness in the performance of such a miracle at the beginning of His work. It set forth the whole of the Gospel. "And His disciples believed on Him. Let us be among the number." (John 2:11)--Present Truth, April 26, 1894.

Chapter 15

Reason and Faith

In the study of the word of God, great care should be exercised that reason is not allowed to usurp the place of faith.

This is one of the dangerous forms of self-exaltation, and one of the most dangerous and ruinous. The havoc wrought by it is everywhere visible in the Christian world today. It causes men to substitute their own inventions for the institutions of God, thus obliterating true faith in the minds of men, and causing the loss of that power which alone is able to keep them from falling.

This is done when man endeavors by his reason to grasp the mysteries which the word of God reveals, so as to make them comprehensible to the human mind. In this way most of the miracles of the Scripture records have been "explained away."

In truth, however, it is not the miracles that have been explained away, but that faith which should have dwelt in the minds of the ones affected by it. The word of God reveals the power of God,-the Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." (Romans 1:16)

And if that which shows the power of God is accepted by an individual in simple faith, without reference to his ability to

comprehend it, the purpose of God in sending His word to him is fulfilled.

But if, instead of so accepting it, he goes as far as his reason will take him toward comprehending it, and then declares that what marks the limit of his reason is the meaning of the text, he frustrates God's purpose toward himself by bringing God's wisdom down to the level of the wisdom of man, and making faith of none effect. The whole value of faith lies in the fact that it brings to an individual knowledge which reason alone could never enable him to get.

It is no more necessary in the spiritual life to comprehend the mysteries that pertain to it, than it is to comprehend the mysteries revealed in nature in order to live physically. He who would refuse to eat bread until he could comprehend the process of growth in the grain from which bread is made, would never eat it at all. The person who would insist upon doing this would be justly counted a fool.

Yet many people seem to think it necessary to comprehend the mysteries that pertain to the plan of redemption in order to the successful operation of that plan in their behalf. And this very effort to comprehend the mysterious manifestations and declarations of God's power defeats its operation toward them; for since God's ways are as much higher than man's ways as the heavens are higher than the earth, (Isaiah 55:9) after man has gone as far as he can in the process of comprehending, he is still infinitely below the truth as it is known by the mind of God.

And therefore when he gives to the words of God a certain meaning which marks the limit of his power toward comprehending them, simply because he cannot understand how they can mean just what they say, he puts a meaning upon them which is infinitely below the truth which God reveals in them to man, and which He designs man to grasp by simple faith.

Man's reason is not God's reason. Man cannot always reason correctly upon physical matters, and much less can he do so in regard to things spiritual. When the mind enters the domain of spiritual truth; it must substitute faith for reason, or it will never proceed very far in the requirement of knowledge.

Faith enables us to know that which, if it were obtained by reason, would require that we be omniscient, and able to reason as well as God himself. We must view faith in the light of this truth if we would prize it at its true worth.--Present Truth, April 26, 1894.

Chapter 16

Miracles and the Gospel

When John sent from his prison to know if Jesus was indeed the expected Messiah, Jesus had the messengers stand by while He was healing the people, raising the dead, and doing mighty works. Then He said to them, "Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the Gospel is preached." (Luke 7:22)

But Jesus is not the only one who works miracles. The spirits of devils do them also. (Revelation 16:14) False Christs and false prophets work miracles to deceive. (See Matthew 24:24; Revelation 13:12-14; 19:20) Miracles by themselves, therefore, are not necessarily a proof of one's Divine authority; and Christ did not depend on them alone to test His Divine mission. "Unto the poor the Gospel is preached." (Luke 7:22)

It was by His words, more than by His miracles, that men were convinced. The rough soldiers who were sent to seize Him, said, "Never man spoke like this Man." (John 6:46)

And so we are thrown back upon the word as the only test. If the ones who perform great signs and wonders are in any point opposed to the plain word of God,--if they seek in any degree to weaken its force, or to show that it does not mean what it says,--know at once

that they are not of God. "To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20)--Present Truth, May 24, 1894.

Chapter 17

The Hem of His Garment

Jesus was on His way to the house of Jairus, "as He went the people thronged Him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, either could be healed of any, Came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd." (Luke 8:42-44) "The life of the flesh is in the blood." (Leviticus 17:11)

Therefore the poor woman's life was steadily passing away. From Jesus she obtained that of which she stood in need, namely, life. Jesus said that power had gone from Him. Life from Him went into the woman, and gave her new life.

The miracles of Jesus were recorded "that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

He came for the purpose of giving life to as many as would believe on Him; (John 3:16) and the healing of the woman is an illustration of the reality of the life that He gives. It is not a matter of theory, but a fact. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23)

The law of God was in the heart of Jesus. (Psalm 40:8) Therefore the life of Christ is the righteousness of the law of God. It

is the perfection of the law in a living form. And therefore the life which believers in Christ obtain, is the righteousness of God's law, of obedience to the ten commandments. Without that life of Christ received, it is as impossible for a man to keep the law, as for a dead man to walk.

In order to receive this life from Jesus, we must come close to Him, as the poor woman did. Her case shows us what it is to be near to the Lord. There were certainly others who were nearer to Jesus in body than she was; because the throng round Jesus was so great that she could only reach through and touch the hem of His garment. Yet she got near enough to receive life from Him, while the others did not. It was her faith that made her near to Him, and that saved her.

Even so we are exhorted to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." (Hebrews 10:22)--Present Truth, May 24, 1894--
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Chapter 18

A Lesson from Real Life

"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ... Therefore by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:1,18-19) "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." (1 Corinthians 4:20)

The promises of the gift of the Gospel are not matters of mere theory, but a fact. And in order to show us the reality of the power, Jesus Christ came to earth and demonstrated it in such a way that all can comprehend it. In the life of Christ we shall find every Gospel truth illustrated. Let us see something of how the above text worked in real life.

A woman whose life had been slowly and steadily wasting away for many years, and who had spent all her living in a vain attempt to recover her health, and was only made to suffer the more from the experiments of many physicians, heard of the great Physician, and went to Him.

She was tempted, and the multitude of people pressed about Jesus so closely that she could scarcely approach Him; but, "She

said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." (Matthew 9:21)

Her faith was rewarded, for as she touched the border of His garment, immediately she was fully healed. Although Jesus was crowded and jostled by the people, He instantly detected that gentle touch. That touch was different from every other, because it was the touch of faith, and drew power from the person of Jesus. When the disciples wondered that in the midst of such a crowd He should ask, "Who touched me?" (Luke 8:45)

He said, "Some one did touch me; for I perceived that power had gone forth from me." (Luke 8:46,RV)

That power was the power of His life: for it supplied the woman's need, and what she wanted was life.

Here we have something that our mind can lay hold of, and our senses can appreciate. A real thing was done. Something real went from Jesus into the woman. It was not imagination; it was not a figure of speech; but it was an actual fact that the woman was healed. She had the life that she before lacked, and that life came from Jesus.

We can never know what life is,--only its Author can understand it,--but we do know the need of it, even of the righteous life of Christ; and here we to see how it is obtained. For the words of Jesus to that poor woman show that she was healed in the same way and

by the same means by which we are justified and have peace with God. He said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort; your faith has made you whole; go in peace." (Luke 8:48)

If we should apply the words of the Apostle Paul to her particular experience, we might read, "Therefore being made whole in body by faith, she had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

Perhaps this may enable someone to grasp more fully the reality of the righteousness which comes by faith of Jesus Christ. Nothing is said about forgiveness of sins in this instance, but we may be sure from other instances that such faith as the poor woman had brought healing of soul as well as the body.

But no one need have a doubt as to whether this is really parallel to Romans 5:1, and an illustration of the truth there stated, for we find the same words used with express reference to sins. In the preceding chapter (Luke 7) we are told of the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, after her tears of repentance had washed them. Jesus did not repel her, but said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." (Luke 7:48)

And then followed words almost identical with those with which He dismissed the poor woman of whom we have been reading. To the woman who was well in body, but morally diseased with sin, Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:50)

Compare this with: "Your faith has made you whole; go in peace." (Luke 8:48)

This proves beyond all possibility of doubt that the same thing is done in the forgiveness of sins that was done in healing the woman with the issue of blood. The method is the same, and the results are the same.

Therefore as we know that something real was done for the diseased woman, so we may be sure that something real is done for the repentant sinner. Just as something real, although invisible, went from Jesus into the person of the diseased woman, making her perfectly well and strong, even so we are to know that something real comes from Christ into the person of the repentant sinner, making him whole, and free from sin. That something is nothing less than the actual life of Christ. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ... If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:9,7)

The blood is the life; and so it is the life of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from sin. This is what we read in Romans 5:10, in continuance of the statement that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10)

Many think that the forgiveness of sins by the imputed righteousness of Christ, is something that exists only in the mind of God. Of course they acknowledge its reality, yet at the same time they do not realize it. There is always something unreal about it in their minds.

The trouble is that they fail to grasp and to make real the living connection between Christ and them. There is between the true disciple and Christ a connection as real as that between the vine branch and the parent stock.

The forgiveness of sins is too often thought to be illustrated by the payment of a poor man's debt by a rich friend. If a rich man pays the debt of a poor man, then the shopkeeper credits the poor man with the sum, and the record on the books shows that the debt is canceled. Of course the poor man is benefited, but he does not actually receive anything that will keep him in future. But it is different when God for Christ's sake forgives his sins. "[Christ] gave himself for our sins." (Galatians 1:4)

His life is given to be manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:11) Just as the sap flows through the vine to the farthest branches, and just as the life of Christ went into the poor, diseased woman, to make her perfectly well, so the sinless, endless, inexhaustible life of Christ flows into those who have faith in Him, to cleanse them from sin, and to make them walk in newness of life.

His life on earth was one of obedience to the commandments of God. "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (John 15:10)

The law of God was in His heart: "I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

So that His very life was the fullness of the law. He fulfilled the righteousness of the law: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17)

That is, the fullness, the perfection of the law, appeared in His life. And it is by this life that we are saved. It is not that we are accounted righteous because Jesus of Nazareth was righteous eighteen hundred years ago, but because "He ever lives," (Hebrews 7:25) "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," (Hebrews 13:8) to save by the power of His endless life, all that come to Him. Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of the law, in order "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:4)

The Revised Version reads, "That the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us," and gives "requirement" in the margin, as an alternative. The idea is, therefore, that Christ kept the law, in order that its utmost requirement might be fulfilled in us. Not by us, but in us: for whereas we have no power to do even what we know

to be right, Christ dwelling in us does the right by His own power through all our members when we yield them to Him. This He does for all who trust Him. And thus it is that "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)

We may thus note two things:

1. How we are made partakers of Christ's life, and
2. What the nature of that life is, and what it will be in us.

The miraculous healing of the poor woman shows us the first. The second we learn by reading the ten commandments, and by studying the life of Christ.

All that was in His life when He was on earth, is in it now, and that is what He gives to us. And that which was not in His life cannot possibly be given to us in it. Everything that is not in His life is sin, and Christ is not the minister of sin.--Present Truth, May 31, 1894.

Chapter 19

The Malady of Sin

"And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them." (Luke 5:17)

On this occasion Jesus showed the people that the greatest need of all was to be healed from sin, and that the power by which the sick were healed was the power of the forgiveness of sins. "That you may know that the Son of man has power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto you, Arise." (Luke 5:24)

Help For All

The poor man had his sins forgiven and was healed of his infirmity. All of the Pharisees and doctors of the law were just as needy of help. They knew that they were sinners, even as every man knows that he is a sinner, though not all would honestly acknowledge it.

But they were not healed of sin because they did not believe that the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Without Excuse

Someone may say, "But they were without excuse; for they saw the power manifested before their eyes, giving life to a palsied man."

True; and we, too, are without excuse if we have not forgiveness of sins and the power of His life working obedience in us. The miracles of Christ were recorded--not for those people back there,--but for us. "But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

The Power Now Present

Every man sees the power of the Lord working before his eyes today. "We are saved by His life." (Romans 5:10)

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from sin. But, "the blood is the life." (Deuteronomy 12:23)

The power of Christ's life is the power of forgiveness and cleansing, and the power which works the will of God in the believer. But that life is present with every man. Every sinner, no matter how wicked, lives by His life every day. "In Him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

Every soul that has life, or power to move, has evidence in itself that Christ's life is given to him. And if he will only believe it, lay hold upon it by faith, that same life will cleanse from sin.

The power of the Lord is present with every man to save him from sin and work righteousness in him if he will only let it be done. It is wonderful, but it is true.--Present Truth, August 22, 1895.

Chapter 20

Some Sabbath Miracles

The reason why we have the record of so many of the miracles of Jesus, is thus given: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:30-31)

In the teaching of Jesus and the apostles we are told the way of life; but in the miracles which God wrought by them we have visible manifestations of the reality of the life, and of its power. There is not a spiritual truth set forth in the Epistles, that does not find an illustration in some of the miracles performed in the bodies of men.

God gave to Jesus "power over all flesh, that ... He should give eternal life" (John 17:2) to all who come to Him. By the power which He had to deliver the bodies of men from disease, He showed power to release their souls from sin. "For whether is easier, to say, Your sins be forgiven you; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (then He said to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." (Matthew 9:5-8)

Some of the most striking of the miracles of Jesus were done on the Sabbath day, and to a few of these we wish to call special attention.

The Man With a Withered Hand

First we read the story of the healing of the man with a withered hand: "And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught; and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth your hand. And he did so; and his hand was restored whole as the other." (Luke 6:6-10)

The right hand is one of the most necessary parts of the body, especially to the laboring man. Very difficult indeed would be to work with the right hand hanging useless at the side, and many kinds of work would be impossible. What Jesus did was to give that man power to work. The man stretched forth his hand in faith, and was made strong to work, thus illustrating the words of Jesus, "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent." (John 6:29)

The Man Blind From Birth

"And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night comes, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. ... And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." (John 9:1-7,14)

By this miracle Christ gave a visible proof of the fact that He is the light of the world. The blind beggar listened to the words of Christ, and so received his sight. From this we may know the truthfulness of Christ assertion: "I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

When the blind man's eyes were opened he was able to see the light of the sun, but nevertheless Christ was his light, showing that the light which the sun in the firmament sheds upon the earth is only the light which it has received from the Sun of Righteousness. (Malachi 4:2)

We cannot see Christ, and it is impossible for our minds to comprehend how His life can be given to us, so that we may have eternal life and righteousness; but we do know the fact that the sun gives light to the earth, and that in its light there is life; and since in the miracles of giving sight to the blind we have the evidence that this light and life come from Christ, we may in like manner know the fact that He can impart to us His life of righteousness.

It is just as easy to believe in Christ as the Saviour from sin and death, as it is to believe in the sun as the cause of life and fruitfulness to the earth.

Sin is darkness. The hearts of men became darkened when they did not glorify God as God. (Romans 1:21) "[They had] the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God." (Ephesians 4:18)

Christ gives the light of life, so that just as He gave sight to the blind, He takes away the darkness of sin from all who accept Him in truth.

Healing the Infirm Woman

"And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said

unto her, Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity. And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, You hypocrite, does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him." (Luke 13:10-17)

This woman had been bound by Satan. The loosing of her, therefore, was a striking illustration of Christ's power to free from sin, for: "Whosoever commits sin is the bond-servant of sin," (John 8:34) "[and] is of the devil;" (1 John 3:8) "[And] of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (2 Peter 2:19)

The woman could not lift herself up. So every sinner may truly say, "My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up." (Psalm 40:12)

But the same sinner, seeing the power of Christ on the infirm woman, may also say, "You, Lord, are a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head." (Psalm 3:3)

The woman "had a spirit of infirmity." (Luke 13:11)

Christ had compassion on her and healed her. So we may know that: "We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Hebrews 4:15)

And we may also know that His sympathy is of a practical kind. In this miracle and the one preceding, we have a blessed illustration of the power that is in Christ: "To open [the] eyes [of men] and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan and to God." (Acts 26:18)

The Impotent Man Healed

"After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered. ... And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a longtime in that case, He said unto him, Will you be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steps down before me. Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up your bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and on the same day was the Sabbath. ... And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and

sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father works hitherto, and I work." (John 5:1-3,5-9,16-17)

The man had no strength. Moreover, it was sin that had reduced him to that condition, as we learn from Christ's words to him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you." (John 5:14)

This is a practical lesson for us, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6)

We have no power, but He is able to strengthen us with might by His Spirit.

Why Done on the Sabbath?

It will be observed that the fact that these miracles were done on the Sabbath is specially noted. Take notice also that in none of them was the need so urgent that the healing might not have been deferred another day.

The blind man could have waited another day without special inconvenience. The man who lay by the pool was not in such imminent danger that he must necessarily be healed immediately. So also in the other cases, their infirmities were not immediately endangering their lives.

Besides, none of them were expecting to be healed, so that they would not have suffered any disappointment if Jesus had said nothing to them until the Sabbath was past.

But Jesus did not delay an hour. Moreover He healed them on the Sabbath day, knowing full well that it would offend the Pharisees, and increase their hatred for Him. These things show that He had a special object in doing these miracles on the Sabbath day, and that the Holy Spirit had a purpose in calling our attention specially to the day in which they were performed. What was that object?

The answer is easy. We may dismiss at once the supposition that Jesus acted in a spirit of bravado, to show His contempt for the Pharisees, or that He would unnecessarily stir up their hatred towards Him. The miracles were done for the same purpose that they were recorded, "That you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

Neither did Jesus do these miracles out of disrespect to the Sabbath day, for He kept all the commandments. Some have the mistaken idea that Jesus did them to show that the Sabbath may be broken in case of necessity. But Jesus did not break the Sabbath, although the Jews falsely accused Him of so doing. It is never necessary to break the Sabbath, but Jesus himself said, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." (Matthew 12:12)

We learn therefore that Jesus, instead of breaking the Sabbath, as the blind Pharisees suppose, was showing its true meaning. True, He worked upon it, but how? It was by His Word. Ever since the creation of the world, when the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their host, and "God did rest the seventh day from all His works." (Hebrews 4:4) He has still continued to work by the Word of His power, which upholds all things. God gave the Sabbath that we might know that He is the God that sanctifies us: "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." (Ezekiel 20:12)

So in performing those miracles on the Sabbath day, Jesus was showing that the Sabbath is to free men from bondage, and not to be a bondage to them. It commemorates creative power, by which all who believe are made new creatures in Christ. "For we which have believed do enter into rest," (Hebrews 4:3) even God's rest. God rested when He had finished His work. He rested upon His Word of power. So we find rest through work,--not our work but God's work. "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent." (John 6:29)

But believing, as we have seen, gives us rest. The work of God gives us rest from sin, for we triumph in the work of His hands. "For You, Lord, have made me glad through your work: I will triumph in the works of your hands." (Psalm 92:4)

So by these miracles Christ teaches us that the Sabbath, even the day which the Jews held as the Sabbath, but which they did not keep according to God's commandment, is the crowning glory of the Gospel. Kept as God has given it to us, it enables us to see Christ as both Redeemer and Creator,--as Redeemer because He is Creator. The Sabbath of the Lord--the memorial of creation--reminds us of "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." (Romans 1:16)

It reveals to us, as nothing else can, Christ as the anointed by the Holy Spirit, "to preach the Gospel to the poor; ... to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)--Present Truth, September 19, 1895.

Chapter 21

The Light of the World

"And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth." (John 9:1)

And Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." (John 9:5-7)

In this simple story we learn how literally true are the words of Jesus, "I am the light of the world." Here was a poor man who in the midst of light was walking in darkness. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," and immediately gave the man sight.

It is very evident that the poor man was wholly dependent on Jesus and His word for his sight. Jesus was literally to him the light of day. But that case is only illustrative. What Jesus was to that man, He is to all. He is literally the light of the world. "All things were made by Him," (John 1:3) "[and] by Him all things consist." (Colossians 1:17)

God has set His glory upon the heavens: "O Jehovah, our Lord, How excellent is your name in all the earth, who has set your glory upon the heavens!" (Psalm 8:1,RV)

The light of which the sun was made bearer, is nothing less than "the light ... of the glory of God." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

All the light of this world came from the word of God, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)

It was this same word that gave light to the poor, blind man. There was no healing virtue in the clay, nor in the water; but the man obeyed the command, "Go and wash," and in those words of Jesus he found the light. Thus he found that the words, "Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," (Psalm 119:105) are most strictly and literally true. He who follows Christ cannot walk in darkness, because he has the light of life. (John 8:12)

The man upon whom this miracle was wrought was only a poor beggar, who until that day had never seen the light, yet as soon as the miracle was performed, he had more true knowledge of the light than all the learned Pharisees and doctors of the law had. Note his clear and decisive answers under cross-questioning. When there was a doubt expressed as to his being the same blind man who begged by the wayside, he settled that question by saying, "I am he." (John 9:9)

He was not ashamed to acknowledge his low degree. Neither was he ashamed to acknowledge his dependence upon Jesus for his sight. On being asked how his eyes were opened, he said, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight." (John 9:11)

It was a simple testimony to the truth, and therein lay its convincing power. The most learned man in the city could not have told it any better. Then there was a dispute as to the character of Jesus. First he bluntly declared, "He is a prophet." (John 9:17)

Note that he did not give it as his opinion or belief, but as a fact that admitted of no dispute. In his simplicity he did not presume to advance theories, but stuck to what he knew, and that was far better than theories. If professed Christians, and Christian teachers, were better acquainted with the practical facts of the Gospel, there would be far less groping among systems of theories.

Further than these simple facts, the young man would not allow himself to be enticed. To the Pharisees' declaration that Christ was a sinner, he replied, "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." (John 9:25)

That was a fact which the Pharisees would gladly forget, but the young man held them to it; and it really settled the whole question. For to give sight to a man born blind, was a creative act, and showed

divine power. That being admitted, there could be no further question as to the character of Jesus.

The result was characteristic. The Pharisees could not gainsay the facts so simply yet graphically told by the young man, but they were bound not to accept the light that had so brightly dawned upon him, and so they said, "You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us? And they cast him out [of the synagogue]." (John 9:34)

When men meet facts which they cannot overthrow and will not accept, they betray their confusion by appealing to their age, or their position, or their learning.

But the great lesson for us to learn is the reality of the light which God gives by His Word, and the positive assurance with which those must speak who have received that light. If all the philosophers in the world should unite to demonstrate that the sun is an opaque body, and that we actually receive no light from it, the most ignorant man in the street could say, "I don't know anything about your science, but I know I see."

And with that fact he could overturn all their theories. So the simple man whose eyes are opened to see "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ," (2 Corinthians 4:4) can silence every learned objection with the simple declaration, "I was blind; now I see."

Doubtless few will accept the truth through his simple testimony; but he may be sure that those who will not accept it on

such evidence, would not accept it under any circumstances. One thing that an unlearned man knows is worth more than ten million things that wise men do not know.--Present Truth, November 19, 1896.

Chapter 22

Changing the Water into Wine

The purpose to be served in making the miracles of Jesus a part of the Gospel record is clearly stated in the Scripture itself: "These [miracles] are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:31,RV)

In our study of the miracles, therefore, this object should be kept in view, that we "lay hold on the life which is life indeed." (1 Timothy 6:19,RV)

All the revealings of the power of God in the world about us teach the same lesson, when they are properly understood, and so the miracles should also serve as Divine interpretations of the Gospel of life and power which is proclaimed in the more familiar, and so less startling, operations of the same Master Workman.

"The miracles of the Bible are not only emblems of power in the spiritual world, but also exponents of the miracles of nature--experiments, as it were, made by the Great Teacher in person, on a small scale and within a limited time, to illustrate to mankind the phenomena that are taking place over longer periods throughout the universe."--Bible Teachings in Nature, Hugh MacMillan, p. vi-vii (Preface).

When thus viewed, they will not only teach their own lesson to us, but they will also throw such a light upon God's book of nature that we may read the same lesson on every page. And thus recognizing constantly the presence and power of the living God in us and around us, we may learn to receive it in its fullness as "the power of an endless life." (Hebrews 7:16)

The record of the miracle which we are to study in this lesson is brief, simple, and natural. It is God giving us a view, at close range, of His own mighty power with the simplicity of a father explaining his work to his little child for the purpose of encouraging confidence. And the account closes with these words: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." (John 2:11)

In our study of the Holy Spirit's account of this miracle we should see the manifested glory just as clearly as did the disciples, and with the same result, believing for life in His name. Note the simple facts: "They wanted wine ... And there were set there six water-pots of stone. ... Jesus said unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He said unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bore it." (John 2:3,6-8)

Then the ruler of the feast tastes "the water that was made wine." (John 2:9) and immediately calls the bridegroom and says: "Every man at the beginning sets forth good wine; and when men

have well drunk, then that which is worse; but you have kept the good wine until now." (John 2:10)

We are not told how the water was changed into wine. In obedience to the word of Jesus, they poured the water into the waterpots, and in obedience to the same word they drew out and bore to the governor of the feast that which on tasting proved to be the best wine of the feast.

There is one word, however, which gives all the explanation which is needed, and that word is "Jesus." He is the Word of God, and "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." (John 1:3,14)

And not only were all things made through Him, but He also is "upholding all things by the word of His power," (Hebrews 1:3) "[and] in Him all things consist," (Colossians 1:17,RV) or hold together. It is by the direct and constant revealing of the power of God through Jesus Christ, "the power of God," (1 Corinthians 1:24) that the orderly march of the stars and planets is maintained, and that the so-called operations of nature are carried forward. "My Father works hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17)

And in performing this miracle Jesus is giving a sample, as it were, of His work and revealing himself as the one through whose personal agency all the processes of vegetable growth and fruit-bearing are carried forward.

The True Vine

In the usual method of changing water into wine the vine is the visible means of accomplishing the work. The water which has been poured upon the ground by the showers of rain, is gathered up by the roots of the vine, carried up by the stock into the branches, and becomes the juice of the grapes. When the process is completed, and the grapes are subjected to pressure, then can be obtained the water which is now changed into wine. Several months are occupied in this work, which goes on quietly by day and by night.

But Jesus has said, "I am the true [real] vine," (John 15:1) and the vines which we see in the gardens and the vineyards are not independent agencies for the changing of water into wine. They are simply the visible forms through which works the life of Jesus, the true vine, and as He at Cana of Galilee, dispensing with the usual visible forms of vegetable life, and disregarding the question of time, "manifested forth His glory," (John 2:11) by changing the water into wine; so He would teach us that the same glory is manifested when the same change is wrought by Him in the way so familiar to us. And as "His disciples believed on Him," (John 2:11) when they saw that which He did in Cana of Galilee, so would He have us believe on Him, when we see what He is doing in every garden and vineyard.

And as this miracle was written in order that those who read it might by believing "have life through His name," so viewing all the

processes of growth and fruit-bearing in the light thrown upon them by this miracle, and reading them as so interpreted, we may by believing "have life through His name." (John 20:31)

Manifesting Glory

It is evident that the Gospel is preached to us in this miracle, and through its teaching we may see how the Gospel is preached to us in every garden and field. The Gospel is "the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God," (2 Corinthians 4:4,RV) "the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God." (1 Timothy 1:11,RV)

And this glory is His goodness, (Exodus 33:18-19) His character, His righteousness. "the Gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." (Romans 1:16-17)

And so when Jesus at Cana of Galilee "manifested forth His glory," by doing the work which He wrought that day, He was simply showing that the power which changes water into wine is the power which God uses with which to save believers. And the glory which was then manifested is the glory which brings life to the dead, for: "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." (Romans 6:1)

And so recognizing "the glory of His power," (2 Thessalonians 1:9) day by day as it is revealed to us in the true Vine, we who are "dead in trespasses and sins, ... [are] quickened together with Christ,

And raised up with Him, and made to sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:1,5-6)

But this is "The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 1:19-20)

And so, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

And this is the work of the Gospel, that those who "have sinned and come short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23) should once more be "crowned with glory and honor." (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:9)

Fruit-Bearing

It was the work of Jesus "to preach ... recovering of sight to the blind," (Luke 4:18) that we might be able to see Him as the true Vine, and so submit ourselves unto Him, that "[He] who makes grass to grow upon the mountains," (Psalm 147:8) and hangs the luscious fruit upon the branches of every vine and tree, may "[fill us] with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:11) "I am the Vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

And this is the Gospel which He would teach in the miracle in Cana of Galilee.--Present Truth, July 7, 1898.

Chapter 23

The Power That Saves

"And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought Him to come into his house; For he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent her living upon physicians, and could not be healed of any, Came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately the issue of her blood stanch'd. And Jesus said, Who is it that touched me? And when all denied, Peter said, and they that were with Him, Master, the multitudes press You and crush You. But Jesus said, Someone did touch me: for I perceived that power had gone forth from me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him declared in the presence of all the people for what cause she touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said unto her, Daughter, your faith has made you whole; go in peace." (Luke 8:41-48,RV)

Here we have another of the miracles of Jesus, which are written that we might know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, we might have life through His name. (John 20:31) Most striking is this miracle adapted to the purpose for which it is designed; for nothing could more clearly illustrate the truth that we receive life and salvation from Christ through faith in Him.

Consider the facts in the case. For twelve years the woman had been suffering, and steadily growing worse. Physicians could do her no good, and she had no more money to spend on them, even if they could. She was dying in misery, without help or hope of help. She was indeed dying, for loss of blood means loss of life. "The blood is the life." (Deuteronomy 12:23)

This is a well-known and universally recognized fact. To shed blood means everywhere to take life. Therefore, when we read that the woman had been losing blood for twelve years, and that the loss was increasing, we know that her life was gradually and surely vanishing away.

But the great Physician came her way, and she had confidence in Him; "For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." (Matthew 9:21)

She touched Him, and immediately she was made whole; that is, all her lack was supplied; the loss was made good. What did she lack? What was she losing? Blood, life. Therefore in that she was made whole, it is evident that what she received was life- new blood. This is the simple fact. As surely as the miracle was performed, so surely did the woman in that instant receive life; yes, she actually received fresh blood; for she was made whole, and her lack was blood.

How was it done? Jesus tells us all that we can know about it, saying, "I perceived that power had gone forth from me." (Luke 8:46,RV)

From this we see that when Jesus supplied new life to the suffering, it came directly from himself. We read that: "All the multitude sought to touch Him: for power came forth from Him, and healed them all." (Luke 6:19)

In this verse, as in Luke 8:46, the Authorized Version has "virtue," where the Revised Version gives us the word "power." "Power" is the better word, for the Greek word is the same word that we have Anglicized as dynamite.

The power that works in all things, and that upholds all things, is the life of God; so the power that went forth from Jesus and healed the woman, as well as the multitudes, was life; and this we have already seen from the fact that Jesus supplied what she lacked, namely, life.

Jesus went about doing good because God was with Him, (Acts 10:38) and: "With God is the fountain of life." (Psalm 36:9)

The characteristic of a fountain is that although you continually draw from it, it always has just as much to give; so although Jesus was continually bestowing life,--it was flowing from Him to others,--the supply did not diminish, because He had the fountain in Him. "[He is] the Author of life." (Acts 3:15,margin)

The Touch of Faith

Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has made you whole; go in peace." (Luke 8:48)

In the margin of the Revised Version we have "saved," in the place of "made whole;" and this is the better reading. The words in the Greek are identical with those spoken to the sinful woman, who also touched Jesus, and who received forgiveness of sins. (Luke 7:37-50) Jesus said to her, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:50)

Here, therefore, we have a practical illustration of the statement that: "The just shall live by faith," (Romans 1:17) together with the statement concerning Jesus, that "we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10)

The woman was saved by the life of Christ, which she received through her faith in Him. By faith she received life from Him, so that she could truly say in the most literal sense, "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." (Galatians 2:20)

From the case before us, we see that these expressions are not mere forms of speech, but the statement of actual fact, We really receive life from the Lord. Whether we believe it and acknowledge it or not, it is true that our life comes from the Lord; for it was to the

heathen that the apostle Paul spoke the words, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

But there is a difference in the manner of our contact with the Lord. The multitudes pressed upon the Lord as He was on the way to the house of Jairus, but only one touched Him in faith, and thus received new life.

So all the multitudes of earth are in personal contact with Christ, whether they will or not, for only in Him can they have life; but when our touch is the touch of faith,--when we acknowledge Him in all our ways, (Proverbs 3:6)--then we experience His life as the power that saves.

A Blessed Reality

There was no imagination in the case of the poor woman who was healed by the touch of faith. There are imaginary diseases; but when the life-blood is surely ebbing away, the weakness that results is not a fancied one. No imagination is powerful enough to give strength to one who is in such a condition.

But the woman was made perfectly well and strong, and this new strength was no more imaginary than was her previous weakness. That which was done for her was as real as though a physician had performed the operation of transfusion of blood from a healthy person. Life is indeed real; and when Jesus tells us that He gives us His life, we may be sure that the gift is not an empty name.

How real and how precious does this miracle make the words, over which so many are offended; namely, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:32)

The blood is the life; the shedding of blood is the giving of life; we have no life in ourselves, but are "dead in trespasses and sins," (Ephesians 2:1) because sin carries death with it. (Romans 5:12; James 1:15) The taking away of sin is therefore simply salvation from death; but those who are dead cannot live unless they receive new life, which must come from outside of themselves; and this life Jesus in His love freely supplies.

A Different Life

Everybody is familiar with the expressed resolve to "live a different life," the different life to be of course a better one. But how few realize that the better life must indeed be "a different life."

The life that they have been living is a life of sin. The life itself is sin. With that life they can do nothing else than sin, for it must be evident to every one who stops to think, that a person can live no life except that which he has, and that if he lives a different life, he must receive another life.

This new life is just what we get by faith in Jesus, and the miracle which we are considering was done and recorded in order

that we might see the reality of the transaction. It is something on which to build faith.

Shall we not then, like the poor woman, "feel after" (Acts 17:27) the Lord?

If we reach out the hand in faith, we shall certainly find Him, for, "He is not far from every one of us." (Acts 17:27) "The word is nigh you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:8-10)--Present Truth, July 14, 1898-- Luke 8:41-48.

Chapter 24

The Power to Forgive

A reader of the Present Truth asks for an explanation of

John 20:33, saying, "I know God alone has power to forgive sins, but I have been asked the question, and to take the verse as it reads it seems as though Christ gave His disciples that power."

Let us first read the verse and its connection. Jesus had appeared to His disciples as they were gathered together, and said, "Peace be unto you. ... Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father has sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive the Holy Ghost; Whoever's sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoever's sins you retain, they are retained." (John 20:19, 21-23)

God's Word Absolutely True

One thing must be settled first of all, and that is, that we must take this verse, as every other thing that the Lord said, just as it reads. When once we know that we have the words of the Lord just as He spoke them, that is, that we have them accurately translated, then we have nothing to do but to believe them without any alteration or amendment or any fitting of them to some preconceived ideas.

In this case there cannot be the slightest doubt that our version gives the correct rendering of the words of Jesus to His disciples. Therefore we must accept the statement that Christ gave His disciples power to forgive sins. Why should we wish to believe otherwise? The fact that some people pervert the good gifts of God, should not hinder its from receiving them with gladness.

Men Sent in Christ's Stead

"As my Father has sent me, even so send I you." (John 20:21)

Then those whom Christ sends are commissioned to do the same work which He did here on the earth. And whom does Christ send? He sends every one who hears and accepts His gracious invitation, "Come unto me." (Matthew 11:28) "Let him that hears say, Come." (Revelation 22:17)

This is unconsciously admitted by every Christian, even though he might think it almost if not quite presumption to think that he is sent in Christ's place; for there is no one who does not find comfort in the assurance, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

But this assurance is in connection with the charge, "Go you, therefore." (Matthew 28:19)

Every believer is commissioned to bring sinners to God, by the power of Christ, who is with him for that purpose. But there is

plainer evidence still, that God has bestowed upon mortal men the high privilege of being "workers together with Him." (2 Corinthians 6:1) "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

This includes every one who is in Christ. It is not limited to the eleven who saw Jesus in the flesh. Whoever is in Christ, is a new creature. With such ones "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

One who is in Christ is not the same person that he was before; he is another man. "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

To whom has God given "the ministry of reconciliation"? Read the text, and see. It is to those whom He has reconciled to himself. Every one who is in Christ is a new creature, is reconciled to God, and has received the ministry of reconciliation. His life work is to induce others to be reconciled to God.

All Things Are of God

But how are we to do this? We are not sufficient for such a work. Of course we are not; but we must remember that when we are in Christ all things are of God. Even Jesus said, "I can of my own self do nothing." (John 5:30) "But the Father which dwells in me, He does the works." (John 14:10)

This ministry of reconciliation is on this wise: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

With Christ all things were of God. It was God in Him who was reconciling the world. And the same God "has put in us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19,margin)

What follows? "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us; we pray in Christ's stead, Be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20)

This is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. How few appreciate it. So many professed Christians are content with the thought that Jesus can save them, not realizing that He has sent them to be salvation to others. "He whom God has sent, speaks the word of God; for God gives not the Spirit by measure." (John 3:31)

God puts the word of reconciliation into him, and he cannot but speak it. But when the word of Christ dwells in men richly, it must necessarily have the same effect that it had in Christ. That is just why God puts it into us. Now read an example of the power of the Word.

An Example of the Power

"And, behold, they brought unto Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy: Son, be of good cheer; your sins be forgiven you. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think you evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Your sins be forgiven you; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, (then He said to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto man." (Matthew 9:2-8)

The word that heals is the word that forgives. The power to work miracles is the power that forgives sins. This is the word and the power of God alone, but He has committed it to men. He has put into men the word and ministry of reconciliation. But, "All things are of God." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

If this is not remembered and acknowledged, there is nothing at all. Jesus said, "The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 14:24)

He was here on earth as we are, in order that we might be here on earth as He is. Leaving himself and His own glory entirely out of the account, He spoke only the words of God, and the result was

mighty works. That same word is given to us, if we will but accept it, with the consequences which follow.

The Power Given to Men

Note that Jesus calls himself "the Son of man." He is the Son of God, but it was not under that title that He declared His authority to heal and to forgive. "The Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins." (Matthew 9:6)

So in John 5:26, God has given the Son authority to execute judgment, "because He is the Son of man." Strange, isn't it? If we had written that, we would have said that He has authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of God, wouldn't we? But no; it is because He is the Son of man. Jesus was here on earth as man, "a Man approved of God," (Acts 2:22) the representative Man; and when the people saw the power that was in Him, they glorified God, who had "given such power to men." (Matthew 9:8)

The salvation of God "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will. For unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that You are mindful of him? or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works

of your hands; You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him." (Hebrews 2:3-8)

Man's Place in God's Plan

God has given a work to men, that is not given to angels, which excel in strength. That work is the preaching of the Gospel. Why is it given to men instead of to angels, who are so much wiser and stronger? Because, "unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come." (Hebrews 2:5)

"The world to come" is the new earth, which was in the beginning, and over which God gave man dominion. (See Genesis 1:26-28) But now we do not see all things put under man, as in the beginning, because man has sinned, and lost the crown of glory, and so the dominion. Nevertheless, "Whatsoever God does, it shall be forever." (Ecclesiastes 3:14)

God having given the earth to man, will never take it away from him. But man has lost the power to rule the world, simply because he lost the power to rule himself. He rejected the word of the Lord. So we see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels, that is, made man, and as man we see Him, "crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9)

He has by His life and death won the right to the dominion of the earth, and is now exalted, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Ephesians 1:21)

But all who believe are raised with Him to the same position. (Ephesians 2:1-6) So then we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. All that He has is ours. He has gone on before us to the capital of our common heritage, leaving us here for a season to continue the work which He begun; but He is still with us with all His power, by the Spirit, in order that the work may be done as He did it.

A Priceless Treasure in Worthless Vessel

True as the world was in the beginning given to man to rule, to man is entrusted the work of bringing it back into its first condition. The word which God puts into the mouths of them that trust Him is the word that is to "plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, You are my people." (Isaiah 51:16)

But, "All things are of God." (2 Corinthians 5:18) "No man takes this honor to himself." (Hebrews 5:4) "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

It is not to a priestly class that this work is given, but to all believers, for all true believers are priests of God. "But you are a

chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

No man can at will declare the forgiveness of sins, any more than he can at will perform miracles. But to every contrite soul, to every one who is mourning because of his sins, God has commissioned us to say, "Your sins be forgiven you."

In order, however, for one to say this, he must himself know to the full the power of forgiveness. He must know from experience that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And whenever any man assumes any power as belonging to himself, or has a spirit of exaltation or boasting because of his supposed power, the word is not in him. "I can of my own self do nothing." (John 5:30) "All things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

What a glorious calling is ours in Christ Jesus! Think of it! To be taken into partnership with the God of heaven, who himself supplies all the capital and does all the work! What an "unspeakable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Truly, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

But, thanks be to His name, "He has revealed them unto us by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 2:10) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Corinthians 7:1)--Present Truth, November 10, 1898.

Chapter 25

Being Made Whole

The miracles of Christ are recorded for us that we may believe in Him, and believing, find life in His name. (John 20:31) Therefore when we read of the many interesting circumstances that were connected with His works of healing, we are not to think of them as applying solely to the persons who were healed, but to learn from them what we may expect when we ourselves come to Jesus for help in time of need.

The people who received His blessing in Judea and Galilee displayed many characteristics which we recognize as belonging to human nature at the present time, and we may learn from their experience how the Saviour deals with us under similar circumstances.

We read in the 5th chapter of John's Gospel of man who had had an infirmity thirty-eight years. He was greatly desirous of being freed from his disease, and with this object he lay beside the pool of Bethesda. At certain times the water was troubled, and then there was a rush on the part of the sick people who clustered round the pool to get first into the water, that they might be healed.

As Jesus walked one Sabbath by this place He saw the man, and knowing that he had now been a long time in that case, He asked him, "Would you be made whole?" (John 5:6)

Notice what a despairing answer the man returns: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steps down before me." (John 5:7)

He desired to be made whole earnestly enough, but he only saw one possibility of this being accomplished, and that was that some man would take pity on his helplessness and wait for an opportunity to help him into the water. Doubtless most of the sufferers lying round the pool had friends with these, and the man who had the most friends stood the best chance. The greatest thing that this man could think of that Jesus could do for him would be to undertake to wait by his side till the waters were again troubled. "Jesus said unto him, Arise, take up your bed and walk. And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked." (John 5:8-9)

This is what Jesus does for men. He comes to every one and says, "Will you be made whole?"

And He desires to do as much for us as He did for the impotent man on that occasion. We too may have been held by our infirmities thirty-eight years, or even more. Inherited tendencies to evil may have grown into fixed habits that are part of our lives, and that we cannot possibly overcome, but it is as easy for Christ to make us whole, and free from them, as though they were not a day old. When He calls the dead from the grave at the resurrection, it will be as easy for Him to raise Adam and Eve as those that have only lately turned to dust.

Jesus sees us in bondage to the lusts of the flesh, led captive by Satan, and defiled with the leprosy of sin, and He wants to make us "every whit whole," (John 7:23) but, like the man by the pool of Bethesda, we too often put Him off by saying that if we only had the help that others have, we would be all right. If only we were as free from trouble and temptation as others that we know, we would soon be whole. If some man would help us, or other men would cease to hinder us, all would be well.

The Saviour does not want us to lean upon these broken reeds, which always disappoint, and wound those who trust them. He has, all ready for us, all that we can desire and, passing by as worthless all our plans for helping ourselves, He solves the whole problem at once, by giving directly what we need.

If we are willing to abandon our confidence in our own methods and devices, acknowledge our weakness, and trust implicitly in His all-powerful, all-sufficient Word, we may pass straightway from the condition of weakness and infirmity, no matter of how long standing, and enter at once into the joyful experience of freedom in the Lord from all the power of the enemy.

All the years that the impotent man had been lying by the pool had brought him not a single step nearer the attainment of his desires. All our own efforts to make ourselves whole, leave us further from the end than before. A word from Jesus accomplished immediately more than the man had dared to hope. "And this is the

Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter 1:25)--
Present Truth, February 16, 1899.

Chapter 26

The Light and Life of Men

I have selected for consideration this evening the words found in the latter part of the 20th chapter of the Gospel according to John: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:30-31)

Not only were these signs and miracles recorded in the Gospel of John written for this purpose, but all the miracles that Jesus did were written for the same purpose, "that you might believe [believe and know] that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

Clothed With Light

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

Light is the easiest thing in the world to see, because it is light that enables us to see. It always seems strange to me to hear people say they cannot see light. With Him is the fountain of life, as we read: "For with You is the fountain of life; in your light shall we see light." (Psalm 36:9)

The life of God is light, for you remember we read, "Who covers yourself with light as with a garment." (Psalm 104:2)

His clothing is light; but the light with which God is clothed proceeds from himself; it is the shining forth of His own life, and He proposes to clothe men and women in the same way. The Lord warns us against being unduly anxious about our clothing, and what we shall eat or drink; the Gentiles are worried over these things; "But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. ... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:33,28-30)

Now think of that. Take the grass. Of the particular grass of the field of which He speaks is the lilies: "Consider the lilies, how they grow; ... If God so clothe the grass of the field, [that is, the lilies,] shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:28,30)

How is the lily clothed? It has a beautiful garment of white and green and various other colors. Solomon in all his glory, arrayed in his royal apparel, must have been a wonderful sight. The Queen of Sheba came a long way to see the glory of Solomon, and when she saw it, her heart fainted. "The half was not told me, [she said,] and I could not believe what I did hear." (1 Kings 10:7)

Who would not go a long way to see one of the kings of the earth, although he might not be arrayed as gloriously as Solomon was? And in order to see this sight one would trample underfoot a score of lilies without noticing them. If one should place before him a stalk of modest lilies, they would consider them very plain. "See the glory and all the magnificent array of Solomon!" "Yes, but Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these lilies, for the royal apparel of Solomon was something that could be put on and taken off; and when he took it off, nobody would know, to look at him, that he was any different from other men."

But the clothing of the lily is the life of the lily. It is not something that is put on, but something that comes from within; it is the inner life that the lily draws from God's great storehouse in the air and in the earth, manifested in the beautiful green, the delicate white, and all the variegated colors,--the manifestation of life in its freshness and brightness,--that is the clothing of the lily. It is God's own clothing, such as God himself wears,--His own life shining forth and making this beautiful garment. Now what does He say? "If God so clothe the grass of the field." (Matthew 6:30)

How? like Solomon? "Shall He not much more clothe you?" (Matthew 6:30)

I dare say you have all thought of that text much as I have in times past: "Why, yes, there is a promise that God will clothe us

with fairly good clothing, perhaps even broadcloth; we can trust the Lord to give us something fairly good."

But what does He say? He says He will give us better clothing than Solomon had, because the lily is arrayed in greater glory than Solomon, and God will "much more clothe you." (Matthew 6:30)

"Will He give us a more brilliant array than Solomon had?"

Oh, no; that is not the sort of clothing to be especially proud of; it is rather a thing to be ashamed of. Why? It is a sign of the curse. Every time a person looks at the clothing he has to wear, he should think, "Ah, this is an evidence of the curse; if it were not for the curse, we should not need this clothing."

So instead of being proud of what we have on, we ought to feel that it is an evidence of our fallen condition, that we are under the curse. Those who glory in the clothing they put on, glory in their shame.

A recognition of this fact will lead us to wear such clothing as will attract just as little attention as possible. We must wear clothing in this present life, for decency's sake and for comfort's sake, but we will make that fact as little obtrusive as possible, because the more we intrude our clothing upon people, calling attention to it by its striking character, the more we advertise our fallen condition.

God clothed the lily with His own beautiful life. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall He not much more clothe you?" (Matthew 6:30)

How? He clothed the lily with His own life; and if He does that, He will much more clothe you with His own life. He will clothe us with "light as with a garment:" (Psalm 104:2) "For the Lord takes pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation." (Psalm 149:4)

So we can sing and pray with the psalmist: "Let your work appear unto your servants, and your glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." (Psalm 90:16-17)

God will clothe us with His own beauty, with His own life, with His own light; and when He does that which is greatest, of course He will do that which is least: give us the little thing necessary for this life. O, what a blessed example is this of clothing! To be clothed as the lily is clothed: with His life, with His light!

It seems strange to me to hear people say they are studying to see light. How do you see light? Open your eyes; that is all you have to do. And then it is passing strange to hear people say they can see light in one thing, but cannot see light in another; they know there is light there, and by and by they expect to see it.

Light is one. When a person sees light, he has had his eyes open so that he knows light from darkness; he does not have to study every particular phase of it to know whether it is light or not.

Today we had sunlight. But now the sun has gone down, and what is this we have here tonight? Why this is light, too; it is the very same light that we had today. No matter where you go, no matter what is the source of light, when a person's eyes are open, he says, "This is light, I know it is light."

So, when you come into conscious touch with the life of Christ, when you see Christ as the Light of the world, then you will have no difficulty in recognizing His light wherever it is manifested; the mere "opening of the word" is sufficient. "The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple." (Psalm 119:130)

God Works Constant Miracles

Now let us consider one "sign": "These [signs] are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

My mind rests upon one of the many miracles that Jesus wrought, a record of which we find in the 8th chapter of Luke, and I want you to remember this, not only when you read this miracle, but whenever you read the account of any miracle, that the miracles of

Jesus were not merely isolated circumstances, or exceptional cases, but that is the way He does all the time.

God cannot do anything but miracles; He is always doing miracles. He is a great God, and He does only great things. So we should not think that once in a while the Lord has done a miracle, and possibly He may do one again. We are expecting that if our people are faithful, and receive the Spirit of God, miracles and signs and wonders will yet be wrought.

Why, my dear brethren and sisters, God is working miracles now, and if we only had our eyes open, we should see that miracles are just as common as the air we breathe. But their commonness should not make us despise them.

When we get into the world to come, we shall see miracles continually. We shall be brought into the immediate presence of God, and He will always be doing wonderful things, more wonderful things than we have ever dreamed of in this world. Every day there will be unfolded some new marvel of God's power. Will this get monotonous? Shall we become tired of it, and say, "Why, I have seen so many wonderful things that I am getting tired?"

No. Each new manifestation of the power of God will only whet the appetite for more. Who that had any sense of what is really good and beautiful ever got tired of seeing a glorious sunrise? Does the dewdrop ever lose its freshness? We have seen them morning after morning for many years, and yet every morning they are just as

attractive as ever. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

So God's mercies are new every morning, and if our eyes were open so that we could see the light, we should see that we are living in the constant manifestation of miracles. These miracles are a continual manifestation of the presence of the life of God abundantly around us in order that we may have life.

In what condition is a man who cannot see light? He is a poor, blind man. O, how many there are who need to make that confession, that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Revelation 3:17)

Yes, naked, because if a man is blind, he is naked, too. He is blind because he cannot see the light; and if he cannot see the light, he does not receive the light which would clothe him with the life of God. But if he opens his eyes to see the light, then he sees life, and believing, he receives life through the name of Jesus Christ.

Touching His Garment

With reference to the miracles spoken of, (Luke 8:41-48) Jesus had returned to Galilee, and the people had received Him, for they were glad, "they were all waiting for Him." (Luke 8:40)

That was good, but how few of those who were waiting for Him got the blessing of His presence. "And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought Him that He would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as He went the people thronged Him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd." (Luke 8:41-44)

Another writer adds, "For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied." (Matthew 9:20-22)

They did not need to; it wasn't such a crime to touch the Lord that they should all deny it; but they told the truth, they had not "touched" Him, and so they lost the benefit of His presence. "And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitude throng you and press you, and you say, Who touched me?" (Luke 8:45)

They were pressing Him and pushing Him on every side in those narrow streets (only six or eight feet wide), because they expected some great sensation; they were expecting to see a miracle performed, so they were crowding along just like boys rushing out to see a fire. They were going to see something, and behold,

something was done, yet nobody saw it; a marvelous miracle was wrought, and she knew it.

If everyone in that crowd had known that there was a plague in his own heart, and had not been filled with idle curiosity for something to talk about, if all had been anxious to get to Jesus, and really "touch" Him, they might each have been conscious of a miracle. Yet a marvelous miracle had been wrought, and they did not know it.

There is a lesson for us. We are looking around for something that will stimulate us, and be food for talk; and yet marvelous miracles are going on all about us; the life of God is going out to quicken, to renew, to raise to life, and we know it not. Sometimes a congregation will wait and look for something to strike them with a sort of sensation, while some quiet person is receiving the life of God that cleanses from all sin; someone who is quietly sitting there comes in touch with the divine life, and knows that the Lord has been there, while others go away saying, "Did you see anything wonderful tonight? I did not, and I expected some marvelous thing."

Ah, but that person who came in touch with Christ felt something wonderful; he felt that he was healed of the plague in his heart.

They said it was strange that Jesus should ask who touched Him, when the people were pushing and jostling Him. But pushing Him and jostling Him was not "touching" Him. Coming into accidental

touch with Christ was not "touching" Him. Jesus said, "Somebody has touched me." (Luke 8:46)

Now this woman had not strength enough to push her way through the crowd, and so she could not get as near to Jesus as others could, but she succeeded in working up near enough to touch the border of His garment, and Jesus felt that touch. It is only when persons draw near with a conscious purpose and in full assurance of faith that they touch the Lord. When this woman thus drew near, and touched His garment, Jesus said, "Somebody has touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." (Luke 8:46)

"Virtue"--power, life--had gone out from Him, and immediately the woman saw that she was healed. Jesus said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort: your faith has made you whole; go in peace." (Luke 8:48)

That was the benediction pronounced upon this woman, "go in peace;" be justified; be made righteous by faith. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) "The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

Every person is a sinner, and that woman was a sinner. We do not say that her disease was the direct result of some specific sin that she had committed, but she was a sinner, she had this disease, and the disease was the result of a course of sin that is in the world. But

see what she received: Jesus said to her, "Your faith has made you whole; go in peace." (Luke 8:48)

Who can go in peace except the one who has received forgiveness of sins? That life, that "virtue," which made her whole of her plague also cleansed her from all sin. She received a perfect sentence; she was made perfectly whole.

The Reality of Faith

By what means? Now see the reality. This is not theory at all; it is not speculation; it does not require a philosopher to understand this; it simply requires somebody who has eyes and can see. Now if anybody goes out of this house tonight, and says, "I can't see," he is simply saying, "I am blind."

I have had persons straighten up, and say: "I can't see that."

They seemed to feel rather proud that they could not "see that." If they had understood what that saying meant, they would not have felt so complacent over it. You never see a blind man going about complacently saying, "I can't see, I can't see! I'm all right, I can't see."

Oh, no! The poor man wishes he could see; he does not feel like boasting over the fact that he cannot see. So if anyone, after reading this simple story, says: "I can't see how it can be!"

Then just let him know that he is saying, "I am blind."

But, thank the Lord, there is a cure for blindness. The spiritually blind man may anoint his eyes with eyesalve that he may see. "Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isaiah 55:1)

Buy what? Buy everything you need. With what? "Without money and without price." (Isaiah 55:1)

Buy the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which will open your eyes and make you see.

Drawing Life from Christ

What was it that the woman lacked? Life. What did she want? Life. What particular phase or form of disease was it that was taking away her life? It was loss of blood. You can all understand that; you have had wounds, and have seen blood flow. You may have had a wound which bled enough to cause you to feel faint. Why? Because the life was going out. The blood is the life.

So the life was departing from this woman. When she was healed, what was it that came into her body? Blood. All the loss was instantly repaired, and she was strong; the blood coursed through every vein in her body, and every part of her being was tingling with

life. Where did it come from? From the Lord. Something went from Jesus which supplied her lack.

There is a promise: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

And it is a real thing. Was that woman suffering from a real disease, or was it only imaginary? She was suffering from a real disease, and was about to die. Inasmuch as she had a real need, did she get anything to supply that need? Yes, that which she lacked came into her; that touch of faith brought something real and tangible to her from the Lord Jesus; but nobody could see it.

There are real things that these eyes cannot see, and that no eye has seen; but they are real, nevertheless. And there was a real thing in this case; real life came from Christ to this woman; He took her disease upon himself, for "[He] took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses." (Matthew 8:17)

Enough of life went from Christ to fill the vacuum in this woman's life, and then He drew from the great ocean of God's life sufficient to keep Him full. "Of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." (John 1:16)

Well, if we have received it, why do we not have it? Because we do not believe. By believing we get life through His name. Now in the case of this woman there was a literal transfusion of blood.

I remember, when speaking of this some time ago, a physician told me of an incident in his experience. He said he once visited a patient who was himself a physician, and who was suffering from anemia, or lack of blood. He gave his patient real treatment, God's own treatment: he prayed with him. And one day his patient, in a half-apologetic way, thinking he might be deemed fanatical, said, "Every time we have prayer together it seems to me as if I have fifty per cent more blood in me than before."

That was no mere fancy, because the Lord gives real things; and when He gives life, it takes the form of blood. So it was in the case of this woman; the life came from Jesus, and it was made blood, and the woman was made whole; she had touched the Life. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:1-3)

Rather, how can we help coming in contact with it? Where can you go that you will not come in contact with it? "But we must see Him;" you say, "we must see Him working."

Well, we don't have to go back nineteen hundred years to see Him; Jesus Christ is alive today. He says, "I am He that lives, and

was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18)

He is alive; He gives life; He is working just the same today as He did when He was here among men. His manifestation in the flesh was for the purpose of making God's presence so real that there would be no excuse for anyone to say, "I can't see it."

The purpose was to enable anybody to see God was working, and then get his eyes opened so that he could see the same thing taking place everywhere.

There is some excuse for a person who has been born blind to say he cannot see light, but there is no excuse for a man who is not blind and who has seen light. When God has called attention sharply to the fact that He gives life, and how He gives it, and the reality of it, then there is no excuse for our saying we can't see the reality of His working, and we don't know how to get it.

Turn to the 6th chapter of Isaiah:

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." (Isaiah 6:1)

What is the garment of the Lord? Light. And what is light? Life. The flowing robe--the hem of His garment--filled the temple. "And above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with two he

covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." (Isaiah 6:2-3)

Thus the light that clothes the Lord, the train of His garment that fills the temple, goes out and fills the whole earth, so that not only the temple of God is filled with light from His presence, but the whole earth is filled with it; and wherever there is a soul that is sick and wounded and sinful, let such a one know that Jesus of Nazareth still lives and passes by, and that he may reach out by faith and touch the hem of His garment, and know that he is made perfectly whole.

There have been men who have merely caught glimpses of Jesus. The poet says:

The healing of His seamless dress,
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

--John Greenleaf Whittier, Hymn: Immortal Love, Forever Full.

This is God's own truth put in pleasing words. He who recognizes Jesus Christ, sees the life, and believes in his own heart, touches the light and life, and is healed. But he must touch the life. "But," you say, "this means physical life."

Yes; Christ said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," (John 10:10)

That we might touch the divine life; that we might lay hold on eternal life, and have that life which is eternal for our present necessity. There is no "mind-cure" about that, no imagination or "thinking oneself well;" there is no "Christian Science" nonsense about it; it is Christian because it is Christ; and it is science because it is true. "Christian Science," so-called, does not reach out and get its life from God, but denies that there is any such thing as disease, and says, "I have life in myself."

That is a denial of Christ. Instead of only confessing, "I am poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked; in me there is no good thing; I am lost and undone,"

We should say: "I believe that in Him there is life, for He is life; I will keep in touch with that life that I may live."

Health Reform Touches the Divine

I shall, in the few moments left me, make a practical application: God has manifested life everywhere about us, and all these years He has been talking to us and calling our attention to the manifestation of His life in all the various forms with which He has surrounded us, that we might take these things directly from His hand and live upon them.

When a person is sick, there is no magic that will cure him; all that he needs is a fresh accession of life, and the belief that he gets it is no fanciful thing. God has given means by which we may take life consciously, and know in ourselves that we are healed.

Many people think that unless a thing is done on the stroke, it is not a miracle. Not always does God do a miracle instantly; miracles do not consist in the fact that they are done in an instant, it is the fact that they are done that makes them miracles.

Jesus at one time turned water into wine in a moment; that was a miracle. But for months the water has been taken up through the stalk of the vine and stored in clusters and then turned into wine, and that miracle has been wrought over and over and over, and simply because it has taken six months instead of six seconds, people think it is not a miracle. Well, if it is not a miracle, then you can do it; I'll give you six months, or six years, or even six thousand years to do it in.

That woman who came and touched the Lord was made whole instantly, but we may be contented if we learn to know the Lord and to come in touch with Him so that we are healed in a few months and become perfectly whole. The cure is nonetheless a miracle whether six months or six seconds of time are taken in the work, and God is entitled to the same praise.

"But why does it take three, four, or six months or a year for me to get well? Why can't I take hold of life at once?"

Because we are so stupid, so slow of heart to believe and learn, and so slow to take hold; but just as soon as you and I recognize the life wherever it is manifested, and appropriate it, to that extent do we get the benefit of it. If we would learn rapidly, we should soon get into a condition of health.

When we learn about the application of these principles of hygiene, which are a manifestation of God's own life, and recognize God in them, and take them as God's gift, we come into closer touch with the divine; then our life will spring forth, we shall see light manifested more clearly, and shall rejoice in the light; life will spring up again, we shall find that it is no fable, no fancy, no imaginary thing. The life of God is real, something to be delighted in.

I am glad for life. It is a blessed thing to live. He who comes to the Lord Jesus and receives life from Him knows it; he will never spend any time upon that foolish query, "Is life worth living?"

We know that what some people call life is not worth living, because it is not life; but the life which is manifested in all its roundness--God's own presence--is worth the living. The hem of His garment enfolds us as He carries us in His bosom according to His promise, "He shall gather the lambs, in the fold of His garment will He carry them." (Isaiah 40:11, Holman Christian Standard Bible)

He will surround us with His life, and fill us with the fullness of His love.

With the principles of healthful living that have been taught us, - how to relate ourselves to proper diet, to breathe pure air and an abundance of it, to harden our bodies by receiving life, not pampering ourselves, all these things are simply drawing us into conscious touch with the Divine Life.

Shall we recognize and take the Lord's life? Suppose we do not recognize the Lord's life in all this, and refuse it, what do we do? There were some priests once who were very learned, and who claimed to be very pious, and they made a boast of their goodness, but they nailed the Lord Jesus to the cross. Why? Because they did not know. Paul says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, ... which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Corinthians 2:8)

Suppose you and I do not discern the Lord's body, suppose we do not recognize the life; what do we do? We trample it underfoot. That is a terrible thing; but we do worse than that; for life has been manifested, and we have seen it, and yet we say, "I don't think there is any use of being so full of it; I know there is more life in it than there is in what I am using, but this is good enough for me."

What do we do? We reject life; we crucify the Son of God afresh. The chief priests did not know, and they put the Saviour to

death. O, what a fearful responsibility we take upon ourselves when we reject what we have seen and known to be good! It is the same as saying, "I know that is the Lord Jesus, and that He is perfect, but something a little less than perfect is good enough for me."

We take a fearful responsibility upon ourselves when we do that; let us not do it any more. The life of God which is in Christ Jesus has been manifested to us; let us take it, and thank God for His unspeakable gift.--Medical Missionary, March 9-14, 1899.

Chapter 27

The Miracle of the Harvest

Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.

--Anonymous (British, 19th c.), Poem: Unbelief.

Not consciously, perhaps, but yet he is reckoning on the operation of that Word of which the seed is the embodiment, "Let the earth bring forth grass, herbs and fruit trees, each after its kind." (Genesis 1:11)

So the laborer who upturns the soil and prepares the earth for the reception of the seed, the farmer who casts the seed upon the ground, is, whether or not he recognizes and realizes the dignity of his calling, "[a] laborer together with God." (1 Corinthians 3:9)

This he virtually acknowledges when, having cast the seed into the earth, without further thought or care he sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed springs and grows up, "he knows not how." (Mark 4:27)

He can do nothing, yet he waits in confident expectation of the harvest. Those "laws of nature" which he trusts to multiply the seed and produce the harvest are but the Word of life working out its own fulfillment. Therefore, though he may not know it, he is really

relying upon the Word of God, which not only bids the earth bring forth, but also declares that: "While the earth remains ... seed-time and harvest shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22)

Of the works of Jesus it has been truly said that "His miracles were parables."--A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke, Alfred Plummer, 1896, Section IV, par. 43. Not only did they meet and satisfy the need of those for whose immediate benefit they were wrought, but they were also demonstrations of eternal truth. Thus, in the feeding of the five thousand, we have the demonstration of the truth and the facts that underlie the yearly miracle of the harvest,--the annual multiplication of the bread for the feeding of the multitude.

By doing immediately, before the eyes of the people, what He does constantly by a slower process, through the operations of nature, He taught them and us that it is by His personal working that the seed is multiplied, the yearly harvest given, and the world's hunger satisfied.

Yet even in this instance He did not dispense with human cooperation. He took the small store of loaves that the disciples brought to Him, just as He takes and uses the small quantity of seed that the farmer casts into the ground; and when He had multiplied it, the disciples took what He had produced and conveyed it to the people,--which is all that the farmer is doing when he gathers in his crops and disposes of them to the people. "That You give them they gather." (Psalm 104:28)

That man needs to be constantly reminded of this fact is seen from the Lord's lament over His people in the 1st chapter of Isaiah: "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib," (Isaiah 1:3)--even the animals know the hand that feeds them,--"but my people do not consider." (Isaiah 1:3)

Therefore He said of them again, "She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil." (Hosea 2:8) "Stand still, and consider the wondrous works God." (Job 37:14)

And learn that He is the One from whom every good and perfect gift comes down.

But another and deeper lesson, yet so simple and unmistakable, was taught in the feeding of the five thousand, that henceforth men might more clearly discern it, not in the yearly harvest only, but in all that their eyes can see and their hands handle.

Whence came the bread that in the hands of Jesus grew before the eyes of the astonished multitude, and conveyed life to their frames? The life in it was identical with the life contained in every seed, in every grain, in every loaf made from the grain,--the life of Him who alone is "the Life." (John 14:6) He was feeding them with His own life, but no more so on that occasion than in all the lives before and after.

In order to convey His life to the people, so that they might feed upon Him, Christ clothed it with the visible form of bread. Thus the bread became His body, the life proceeding from Him, which took this shape that could be seen and handled and eaten by the people. Yet this bread was no different in this respect from that upon which these same people were accustomed to feed, as proved by the words of Christ when He took the bread at the Passover supper and said of it, "This is my body." (Matthew 26:26)

All life proceeds from God, and all the varied forms in the earth are the body with which He has clothed himself that the life may be manifested and we may see it, and feed upon Him. To His life in all things, "God gives a body as it has pleased Him," (1 Corinthians 15:38)--even as He gives "to every seed his own body." (1 Corinthians 15:38)

Yet how few "discern the Lord's body," (1 Corinthians 11:29) and behold their God in all the things in which He is revealing himself. Even those whom He fed with His body in the desert did not all discern it; for among them were those who shortly afterwards questioned, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (John 6:52)

All through the summer months the personal presence of God, His everlasting power and divinity, has been working in the waving fields of grain, preparing for His life "a body as it has pleased Him," even as He gave it visible form to feed the people in the desert.

Let us then as we partake of that which His bounty has provided, "eat in faith," (Romans 14:23) "discerning the Lord's body." (1 Corinthians 11:29)

Thus will it be to us indeed "spiritual meat," (1 Corinthians 10:3) "The bread of God that comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world." (John 6:33)--Present Truth, September 7, 1899.

Chapter 28

The Daughter of Jairus Raised

In reading the account of this or of any other of the miracles of Jesus we must bear in mind the reason why they were recorded for us. Near the close of His Gospel narrative, John said: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:30-31)

In the present lesson we have this truth very forcibly presented to us. Let us read the entire story. "And, behold, there came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw Him, he fell at His feet, And besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lies at the point of death; I pray You, come and lay your hands on her that she may be healed; and she shall live." (Mark 5:22-23)

The margin has, in place of "healed," the word "saved," which is the exact rendering of the Greek word used here and in other similar instances. It teaches us that healing and saving by the Lord are one and the same thing.

Then there comes an interruption, and we have the account of the poor woman with the issue of blood, who came and touched the hem of Christ's garment, and was made perfectly whole,--saved,--

and who received from the Lord gracious assurance of the fact that it was her faith that had saved her. "While He yet spoke, there came from the ruler of the synagogues house certain which said, Your daughter is dead; why trouble the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said unto the ruler of the synagogues, Be not afraid, only believe. And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogues, and saw the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when He was come in, He said unto them, Why make you this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleeps. And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put them all out, He took the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entered in where the damsel was lying. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha Cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto you, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And He charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat." (Mark 5:35-43)

There is the simple story; the question is, Do you believe it? If you do, the only remaining thing necessary is for you to understand that this was not an exceptional case, but was the manifestation of God's natural working. "He gives life to the dead, and exalts those things which be not as though they were." (Romans 4:17)

The things that have been, as well as the things which are to be, are in the sight of God the things that now are. He inhabits eternity, and all things, past, present, and future, are present with Him. Death is in His sight only a sleep; and for those who sleep in Jesus, and who therefore shall be awakened out of their sleep, it is so short a sleep, in comparison with eternity, that they are considered as alive before Him.

Think of one who has been raised from the dead, and who looks back upon his experience after ten thousand million times ten thousand million years of eternity; how long would the few years, or, the few hundred years, that he lay in the grave seem to him? They would not amount to a moment of time in comparison with the time that he has lived. He could no more take account of it than he could of a wink of his eye.

Well, that is the way everything connected with this earth looks to God, who views everything from eternity. To the Lord, who has power to lay down His life, and to take it again at will, death is as though it were not. "[Christ] has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10)

The sleep of death becomes perpetual (Jeremiah 51:39) only to those who reject Him who is the resurrection and the life.

Simple Faith

Mark the faith of Jairus. He was sure that if Jesus but laid His hands on his daughter, she would live. Even when word came that she was already dead, he manifested not the slightest doubt.

The faith of this man is not likely to be appreciated at first glance. He was a ruler of the synagogue, a man in high position among the people, and Jesus was one who was not recognized by the body of rulers and scribes and Pharisees. He had not studied in their schools, and held no authority from them, and therefore they looked down upon Him.

But in the household of Jairus, Jesus was regarded as a Teacher, and as such He was addressed, for that is the real meaning of the word that is translated "Master." What Jesus knew and could do, rather than where He had studied, appealed to the good sense of Jairus. He recognized a Master Teacher in this humble man of Nazareth, and honored Him accordingly.

The power and authority of Christ's teaching are seen by what follows. The Word that He preached was the Word that raises the dead.

Heathenism, Heartless Mourning

Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, (John 11:35) but His weeping was far different from that of the Jews on that occasion,

and of those who were gathered in the house of Jairus. He simply "shed tears;" they howled, and made a tumult. The word rendered "tumult" is applied to "the confused noise of a crowded assembly," as in the theater at Ephesus. (Acts 19:23-41; 20:1; 21:34; 17:5)

They were making such a "tumult" in the house of Jairus, and were "wailing." This word "wailing" is the word that is used to indicate the raising of a war cry, and is defined: "to utter an inharmonious sound, to tinkle, to clank."

Such mourning could not have been very soothing to the hearts of the stricken parents. It is wholly out of harmony with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, and therefore He had them all retire from the house. The Spirit of God cannot be present and working in the midst of a tumult. The work of the Spirit is soft and tender and subduing. Confused noise, boisterous sounds of any kind, whether of singing, weeping, or laughter, discordant noises, in short, anything forced and inharmonious, are entirely foreign to the Spirit of God.

In quietness and confidence is the strength of God's people; (Isaiah 30:15) for God's most powerful working is done in silence. His most marvelous work for men day by day is performed in the silence of the night, when they are unconscious.

How quickly these hired mourners showed the shallowness of their sorrow! As soon as Jesus said, "She is not dead, but sleeps. They laughed Him to scorn." (Mark 5:39-40)

Literally, they jeered at Him. In an instant they turned from professed weeping, to railing and mocking laughter.

It is impossible for our language to do justice to the tender words of Jesus, which He spoke to the little girl. The word "Talitha" is allied to the word meaning a young lamb, so that we may see in it an expression of tenderness, as, "Little one, arise!" Almighty power and infinite tenderness were united.

And straightway the damsel arose. Why? Because the Master had told her to arise; and He spoke with authority. Well, He speaks to us the same word. He says, "Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." (Ephesians 4:14)

By the power of that Word, if we receive it in faith, we may arise from whatever condition of helplessness we are in. Believing, we have life through His name. (John 20:31) Do you believe?

Eating the Life

"He commanded that something should be given her to eat."
(Mark 5:43)

Why was this seemingly trivial incident recorded? Because it was not by any means trivial. It shows that the Lord does not overlook the smallest detail, and that no detail is of trifling

importance. We are told, "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." (Colossians 2:6)

The little girl had received the Word of life in Christ, which is Christ himself, and had by it received life: now her life must be continued by the very same means, but under a visible form.

Jesus would show that in the food we eat we receive a continuation of the same life that comes to the dead through the speaking of His word. This raises eating to a position of sacredness, in that it is one of the visible means of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. "He that has ears to hear, let him hear." (Mark 4:9)--Present Truth, April 5, 1900--Original title: Life from the Dead. The Daughter of Jairus Raised--International Sunday-school Lesson for April 15--Mark 5:22-24,35-43.

Chapter 29

The Centurion's Servant Healed

The student should not fail to read this narrative in the Revised Version, as it is much more clearly rendered there than in the so-called Authorized Version. Let us briefly outline the story.

Jesus entered Capernaum, after completing His instruction on the mountain, and was met by messengers from a centurion, asking Him to come and heal his servant, who was at the point of death. Jesus at once set out for the centurion's house, but before He reached it He was met by another company bearing this message. "Lord, trouble not yourself; for I am not worthy that You should come under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto You; but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers; and I say to this one, Go, and he goes: and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. And when Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Luke 7:6-9,RV)

And the narrative closes with the statement that when the messengers returned to the house they found the servant whole.

Object of the Lesson

What is the lesson for us to learn from this little story? If we get nothing more from it than the mere knowledge of some of the details of one of the miracles that Jesus did, it will not profit us much. Whenever you read the account of any miracle of Jesus, remember these words: "These are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

The only object in telling us how this young man, and others also, received life, is to let us know how and where we may find life. What is the source of life? Our lesson answers the question: it is the Word of the Lord. "That which was from the beginning [was] the Word of life." (1 John 1:1) "The Word of God lives and abides forever. ... And this is the Word of the Gospel, which is preached to us." (1 Peter 1:23,25)

These miracles are recorded for the sake of showing us the reality of the life that comes from the Word.

No Healing Except by the Word

Moreover we are to learn that it is the Word alone that heals. Whenever any person is ill, and is healed, it is nothing else but the Word of the Lord that cures him. There is nothing else that can heal.

This fact is often obscured by the so-called "remedies" that are given, in spite of which people often recover. That which people for the most part depend on in cases of disease, is usually what retards recovery, and tends to make it impossible. The fact that so many people do recover from various illnesses in spite of the poisonous drugs that are administered, is evidence of the marvelous power of life that is in the Word which God sends to us. "What! are not drugs a part of the Word that heals? do you think that the use of means is inconsistent with faith in the Word of the Lord?"

What do you think? The Word is life; now can that which is deadly, and which must be dealt out with the greatest caution, lest the patient get a fraction of a grain too much, and so be poisoned to death, be a means of conveying that living Word?

When the body is worn with labor, and cries out for food, would you administer a dose of poison, instead of giving bread? The questions answer themselves. Poisonous drugs are not means of conveying the Word of life, which makes alive; they are in deadly opposition to it.

But that does not by any means signify that the use of means is inconsistent with healing by the Word. Far from it. Everything that is a means of conveying life is the agent of the Word. Christ is the Personification of the Word, and in Him we live, and move, and have our being, yet we live by eating and drinking and breathing.

The lesson that God would have us learn is that every real means of conveying life to mankind is but a means of conveying the Word of life. The Word itself is invisible; it can and does give life apart from any visible agency; but certain things that our senses can grasp are given to us as means of supporting life, in order that we may appreciate the reality of the Word.

In short, God sometimes lets us see Him heal, and preserve life, without any visible medium, in order that we may know that it is only by the Word that life and health come; and He often conveys life by means of some visible agent, in order that we may not forget that the spiritual Word is very real.

God's Word in Medicine

The Word is itself a means of healing. When good people, full of faith, say that they do not believe in using any means for the recovery of the sick, but only trust in the Lord, they unconsciously deny the reality of the healing Word.

The centurion recognized the fact that the Word that Christ spoke was as real as any messenger that he could send on his own business. God sends His Word on errands, and it obeys Him.

It never returns to Him without having accomplished that to which as sent it. "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to

the eater: So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:10-11)

So we read that when God's people of old were suffering affliction because of their folly, and were near to the gates of death, so ill that they could not eat, "He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." (Isaiah 107:20)

In the miracle recorded in the lesson that we are studying, we have an instance of this. "My son, attend to my words; incline your ear unto my salvation. Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and medicine to all their flesh." (Proverbs 4:20-21,margin)

Healed Means Saved

In the Revision we read that the centurion sent to Jesus, "asking Him that He would come and save his servant." (Luke 7:3,RV)

In the Common Version the word "heal" is used. Both mean the same thing. To save is to heal, to make "every whit whole." (John 7:23)

Whoever is not saved is not healed, and not perfectly whole, no matter how well he may seem to be. The Word that makes the body well, is the Word that saves from sin.

We are saved by the life, and Jesus has but one life to give. He does not live a double life. He gives himself, and that one gift of life contains everything that pertains to life and godliness. Our part is to recognize the Lord, to learn to discern His body in His gifts.

The Free Gift

What a narrow idea the elders of the Jews had of the character of Jesus! They supposed that He was influenced by the same motives that they were. "They, when they came to Jesus, besought Him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy that You should do this for him; For he loves our nation, and himself built us our synagogue." (Luke 7:4-5,RV)

As though that would make any difference with Him! His call to the Fountain of life and healing is, "Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come buy." (Isaiah 55:1) "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," (Revelation 22:17)

That is, as a gift. Life is too precious to be bought with money. It is a gift, as freely bestowed upon the pauper as upon the prince. Alas! how few there are who do not regard it as of but little worth!

The True Israel

There was one important thing in connection with this affair, which is not mentioned by Luke. Christ was astonished by the centurion's faith, and said: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Matthew 8:10)

Then He added, "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:11-12)

If we had nothing else, this would settle the question as to the constitution of the kingdom of Israel. That kingdom is composed of those who have faith. "Know therefore that they which be of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham." (Galatians 3:7,RV)

Salvation is by faith. Then the centurion, who had greater faith than anyone in Israel, was ahead of them in the way of salvation. He was, in fact, a part of Israel, while the unbelieving descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (Romans 9:6)

Those who have the name, but have not faith, are cast out; while those who have simple, childlike faith will form Israel, and will share the inheritance promised to the patriarchs of old.

Remember that "Israel" means "overcomer," and is equivalent to "Christian," and you make this lesson a personal matter. There will be many surprises in the kingdom.

Are you trusting in the name "Christian" or in the name--the living Person--of Christ? Accept every word that He sends, even though it may seem to be bitter medicine, and you will find it sweeter than honey-filled with the sweetness of His endless life.--Present Truth, April 12, 1900--Original title: The Word that Heals. The Centurion's Servant Healed--International Sunday-School Lesson for April 22--Luke 7:1-10

Chapter 30

Every Whit Whole

"There is an impression among some people that a man is a better man after having tasted sin after knowing evil experience, then repenting, being forgiven and restored. This is a mistaken impression. Innocence is far better than penitence. Penitence is infinitely better than despair, but a life is never so beautiful after sin's fires have swept over it as it would have been if it had been kept untarnished and had radioed God's first thought for it."--Dr. J. B. Miller, *The Building of Character*, 1894.

We reprint the foregoing for two reasons. First, because it corrects a false idea that is all too common, and second, because it contains a grievous error that is also very common, and which is sure to work ruin to every one who does not escape from it.

It is indeed a mistake to suppose that a man is better for having sinned. Many professed Christians, and especially some revivalists, seem to be proud of their previous career of sin, and are constantly advertising it. Now it is necessary for us always to remember that we are sinners, and that we have been brought up out of the horrible pit, and that we are kept from falling only by the power of God.

Nevertheless the tree of knowledge of good and evil is not the tree of life. God never designed that man should eat from the first. To say or to think that a man is a better man, and better able to serve

the Lord, because he has sinned grievously, is the same as saying that the fall of man in Eden was really no fall, but was necessary for his more perfect development; and that is to agree with the serpent, in charging God with arbitrarily and selfishly placing the prohibition on man, in order to keep him down.

It is, in fact, equivalent to saying that the penitent thief, who suffered the just reward for his deeds, was a better man than Christ, "Who did no sin;" (1 Peter 2:22) for if it were true that a man is better for having sinned, then the saved sinner would have an advantage over the Saviour. Christ not only did no sin, but "[He] knew no sin," (2 Corinthians 5:21) and for that very reason He is the Saviour of mankind. He knew the power of sin, however, for He met it, and conquered it. The error, and it is a most pernicious one, is that: "A life is never so beautiful after sin's fires have swept over it as it would have been if it had been kept untarnished and had realized God's first thought for it."

This is to belittle and disparage the power of God. It is to say that Satan has to a certain extent gained a victory over the Lord, so that He cannot do with man that which He set out to do. God declares that: "My strength is made perfect in weakness," (2 Corinthians 12:9) and that: "Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds." (Romans 5:20)

It is this error, which cannot be too strongly denounced, that is responsible for much of the discouragement that Christians give way to, and which prevents them from attaining the heights of holiness of

character, which God designs they should reach. It cuts the nerve of faith, by which alone the work of righteousness is accomplished.

No man will go farther or rise higher than he believes is possible. Consequently many people rest content with imperfection, because, having been born in sin, and having added to their heritage by long practice of evil, they think it is impossible that they can ever rise above a certain height. That this persuasion comes from the adversary of souls is evident from the fact that we are exhorted: "Be therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) "And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3:3) "And you are complete in Him." (Colossians 2:10)

No one can use the language referred to without forgetting or else depreciating or even denying the miracles of Christ. We read that when the man with the withered hand, stretched forth his hand at the command of Jesus, "It was restored whole, like as the other." (Matthew 12:13)

He himself said of the man whom He healed of an infirmity of thirty-eight years' standing, that he had been made "every whit whole." (John 7:23)

Of the impotent man at the temple gate, who leaped and walked by the power of the name of Jesus, Peter said, "The faith which is by Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." (Acts 3:16)

Shall we say that these men were not as strong as they would have been if they had never been ill? If so, we disparage the power of God in Christ, and say that Christ was an imperfect workman.

Then there are the dead that have been and will be raised at the command of the Lord. And here is the final test of the whole matter; for the dead, are the perfect examples of the working of sin.

- Shall we say that they never have so much life as they would have had if they had never died?

- Will those who are raised incorruptible at the sounding of "the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God," (1 Thessalonians 4:16) and who are thus ever with the Lord, follow Him about only half alive?

- Will they always have some of their grave clothes hanging about them?

- Will the musty odor of the tomb always cling to them?

Not by any means. No one believes it when it is put that way, and yet it must be so, if we can never be what we would have been if we had not sinned.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

And this superabundance of life in Christ cleanses from all sin, (1 John 1:7) so that we in Him become "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." (James 1:4) "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Is He not able to do that which He purposed? To say that He cannot, is to say that His sacrifice was incomplete, and His work a partial failure. Do not believe it. Do not let anybody shake your faith in Christ to "restore all things." (Matthew 17:11)

God has promised to make all things new; shall we say that the earth will never be as beautiful as it would have been but for the curse of sin? Never! "The Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." (Isaiah 51:3)

His people will be glad and rejoice forever in the new heaven and the new earth which He creates, because "The former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." (Isaiah 65:17-18)

There will be no trace of the curse to remind them of the past. (Revelation 21:4-5; 22:3) But the power of God will be no greater then than it is now. The power by which He will make a new heavens and a new earth for the righteous to dwell in, is the power by which He now makes new men to dwell in them. Our first birth has made us heirs of many infirmities; our second birth makes us "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." (Romans 8:17)

Being born from above, we become sons of God just as fully as Jesus himself is; and therefore since He never sinned, we become as though we had never sinned. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)

It is His righteousness, His obedience, in us, and nothing that we have done or can do, that makes us righteous. Therefore to say that we cannot be as perfect as we would have been if we had never sinned, is to say that sin handicaps the Lord, and that He cannot live as perfect a life in sinful flesh as He could if the flesh were sinless. Banish the thought. It is despiteful to the Spirit of grace.

What wondrous joy and comfort there is in the knowledge that Jesus is a perfect Saviour! What a firm ground it affords to faith, and what infinite possibilities it opens up! It assures us that we shall renew our youth, even though we have wasted it in dissipation and vice; for God redeems our life from destruction; He brings it completely back. "He is the Saviour of the body," (Ephesians 5:23) for He who forgives all iniquities also heals all diseases. (Psalm

103:3) Every evil habit and tendency may in Christ be replaced by its opposite; and the infirmities of body, that are the result of sin, may, yea, surely will, when the Divine life is fully and understandingly accepted and yielded to, be removed; so that out of weakness we may be made strong. This is "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:24)--Present Truth, July 5, 1900.

What a wonderful Saviour!

Chapter 31

Sight for the Blind (1900)

The student who confines his study to the verses indicated as forming the lesson, will lose a great deal, for some of the most striking features of the narrative are in the latter portion of the chapter. In our study, therefore, we shall proceed as though the entire chapter were included in the lesson.

The story is very simple, and easily learned. Jesus was passing by, and saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The disciples, full of the native childish curiosity that delights in the speculative rather than the practical, asked Him, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2)

It was obvious enough to anybody who thought instead of wondered, that the man was not born blind in consequence of anything that he himself had done, and Jesus said that it was not because of any special sin on the part of his parents, but in order that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Then adding that He must do the works of Him that sent Him while it was day, and that He was the Light of the world, He moistened some clay and anointed the eyes of the man with it, telling him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; the man did as he was told, and came back seeing.

How many who read this narrative realize that it is the true account of something that actually happened? To most of us, as we read the story of the various miracles of Jesus, they are more stories, and, while we nominally believe them, the events recorded are so very far away from us, and so lost in the haze of the distance, that it is almost, if not quite the same to us, as though they never happened at all.

Our minds do not take hold of them as real occurrences, and we should be most surprised if we should see anything of the kind take place now. People do not expect miracles, and yet they are the ordinary working of God, and are being performed before our eyes every day.

That miracles, even such as the opening of the eyes of the blind, are the ordinary work of God, is shown by the words of Jesus, just before He opened the eyes of the blind man, and with reference to that event: "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day." (John 9:4)

To open the eyes of the blind is one of the ordinary works of God, and He is constantly at it. This man was born blind. That is, his eyes remained after his birth in the same condition that they were before he was born.

Every child, as well as every other animal, has eyes before coming into the world as a separate being, yet it cannot see. Its eyes are closed. When it comes forth to the light, the same miracle is

wrought on it that was wrought on this man, for whom it was not performed at the usual time.

In his case God had delayed the process, in order that people might see that the opening of peoples' eyes is the result of special action on His part, and not of chance, or what people call "nature." This is what the lesson teaches us, and if we learn it and remember it, we shall have something of great value. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

There is no life and no living except in Him, and nobody can see except in and by Him, for He is light, and He is all the light that there is. Jesus is set forth as the revelation, the manifestation, of the Father: "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18)

And therefore He is "the Light of the world." (John 9:5)

He is the Word of life that was in the beginning, and was manifested unto us: "That which was from the beginning...the Word of life; ... which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 John 1:1-2)

And this life is the light of men: "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

From the statement that Jesus is the light of the world, coupled with the fact that immediately after saying it, He demonstrated it by giving a blind man his sight, enabling him to see as other men, we learn that the light that greets our eyes every morning, and that shines in the sun and moon and stars, is nothing else than the light of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

If we do not recognize this truth, we are walking in the light as though we were in the midst of darkness; we are blind. God is everywhere, filling heaven and earth, and if we do not see Him, it is simply because we are blind. We have eyes, but, they are of no real use to us. "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:5-7)

But whosoever lacks faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and love, "is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Peter 1:9)

Compare the preceding verses. Whoever remains in sin is as blind as the man was of whom we are studying. Every heathen, that is, every one who does not recognize and worship the Lord, is as

blind as the images of silver and gold in which he trusts. (See Psalm 115:2-8)

The change from sin to righteousness is a new birth, and is analogous to the first birth, by which we come into the world. When a child is born into the world, it is a new creature, yet so common is the occurrence, that few ever think of the mystery of it.

Nobody in the world can understand the mystery of life, the mystery of birth, but all believe in it; yet at the same time most people have no faith in the new birth, by which a man becomes a new creature.

Both births are accomplished by the same power, and one is really no more mysterious than the other; both are equally beyond the power of human comprehension. The same power that gives us our life in the first place, and that renews it day by day, has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness. "He gives to all life, and breath, and all things," (Acts 17:25)

And He gives all things, even all things that pertain to everlasting life and godliness, in the gift of life that is bestowed on all men. The free gift has come upon all; but few will acknowledge that they are blind, and so they never see.

Christ is anointed "to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind." (Luke 4:18)

And He does this work by the same power by which He upholds all things. The proof that a man can be born of God, and can be made free from sin, is found in the fact that we live, and see the light of day. "But," someone will say, "you are confusing the spiritual and the natural."

No; we are doing nothing of the kind. The perfectly natural, that is, the nature which is perfect, is spiritual. The exceeding great and precious promises of God are given unto us that by them we might be "partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4)

The Divine nature is spiritual, for God is Spirit, and the only real, perfect man is the man who has that nature. Having that nature, we discern spiritual things,--we see God. Without that nature, we see nothing, but are in reality dead.

The miracles of Jesus that are recorded, "that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

But life through Christ means sight, and perfect sight means the ability to recognize God in everything. If as we read the Bible, its words were real to us,--if we did not read them as in a dream, --we should have the perfect life of the Lord; for His Word is Spirit and life.

Whoever studies this lesson and does not see that which he never saw before, who does not see and experience the life and light that are eternal, has studied to no profit. These things are not written merely in order that we may fill up a vacant hour, or that we may learn a few things merely as matters of history, but that we might have present, eternal life. "Are you really studying the lesson?"

To every man who becomes a real man in Christ Jesus, there comes a change as real and as great as that which came to the poor man of whom our lesson tells. People who have not had this experience think that they see as much as anybody, and they will not believe those who tell them of things not seen by the eyes of our body. Never having seen spiritual things, they do not believe that such things exist.

But when they accept Jesus, the light of the world, they can say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." (John 9:25)

We never become really conscious of our blindness until we see, and strange as it may seem, we cannot continue to see except as we remember and acknowledge that we are in ourselves blind. That is, we see only in the Lord.

The man who is spiritually blind, and therefore really blind, thinks that he sees as well as anybody else; but the man who in Christ receives his sight, knows that he sees, and no cross-questioning or brow-beating by skeptical philosophers can shake his

testimony. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." (John 3:11)

Do you believe? then you can see. Do not wait to see before you believe, for it is not true, as commonly asserted, that "seeing is believing;" on the contrary, believing is seeing.

But remember this, that as long as you say concerning any truth of God,--anything that is spoken of in the Bible,--"I cannot see it," you acknowledge yourself to be blind, and are therefore not competent to be a judge of anything spiritual. Such a one needs to be taught.

But he who has received from the Lord the eyesalve, and whose eyes have been anointed that he may see, needs not that any man should teach him. (1 John 2:20,27) That is to say, although we are all in need of more knowledge, and may learn from everybody and everything, when we have once received the light of the Lord, we are capable of discerning between truth and error, between right and wrong, and do not need to ask anybody whether or not that which we see is real. Such assurance as this is most blessed. "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." (Ecclesiastes 11:7)--Present Truth, August 9, 1900--International Sunday-school Lesson for August 19--John 9:1-17.

Chapter 32

Sight and Riches for Blind Beggars

"And they came to Jericho: and as He went out from Jericho, with His disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timmus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the wayside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, You Son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried out the more a great deal, You Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and said, Call him. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good cheer; rise, He calls you. And he, casting away his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered him, and said, What will you that I should do unto you? And the blind man said unto Him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him: Go your way; your faith has made you whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed Him in the way."
(Mark 10:46-52,RV)

All Blind Beggars

All the miracles that Jesus did are written: "That you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:31)

Every one of them illustrates some feature or features of the great work of salvation from sin and death. This miracle is one of

the most striking, since the blind beggar so aptly represents all unconverted persons, in the church as well as out. It is to the church that Christ says: "Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see." (Revelation 3:17-18)

All who are not in Christ are but blind beggars, wretched and miserable, and at the best clothed only in filthy rags. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." (Isaiah 64:6)

From this miracle we are to learn that the acts of kindness and mercy that Jesus exhibited for the poor, blind beggar, He is ready and anxious to perform for all. God has chosen the poor of this world, and there are more promises specially to the poor than to any other class.

Consciousness of Need

The first thing to note is, that the blind beggar was conscious of his condition. Most people like to think that they are well off, even if they are not. They will not listen to correction or reproof, for their pride resents it. They may even pray for the Holy Spirit, but when

He comes as a convincer of sin, as He always does at first, He is rejected. So they go on blindly in the way that seems right to them, and the end thereof is death.

To be keenly conscious of one's lost condition is one of the greatest blessings. One is never nearer salvation than when confessing sin. "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)

Perseverance in Spite of Discouragements

But the one who seeks salvation will often find many who try to discourage him. Even professed Christians often hinder sinners from coming to Jesus. The people near Bartimaeus rebuked him, telling him not to make so much noise. What would the great Teacher, who had thousands following Him, and hanging on every word, care for a poor, insignificant, blind beggar? So many a poor soul is told: "You have committed the unpardonable sin;" or, "You are not one of the called; you are not of the elect;" or, "The Lord cannot be bothered with so unimportant a person as you."

Many such doubts will be suggested by the devil personally, or by some of his agents; for be it known that every soul who utters a single word of doubt or discouragement to any other soul is doing the devil's work.

This poor man, however, was not to be discouraged. The more the people tried to keep him from Jesus, the more determined he was to attract His attention. "He cried out the more a great deal." (Mark 10:48)

He had of course never seen Jesus, and had never known personally of any of His wonderful works; but he had heard of Him, and he recognized His opportunity now that Jesus was passing by. He believed in the power of Jesus, and hoped in His mercy. Let him be your example in perseverance, and let rebuffs and discouragements only strengthen your courage.

Called by the Lord

Jesus stood still at the call of Bartimaeus. Everything in heaven waits on the faintest cry for help. He who listens when the ravens cry, and who opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing, will never ignore the cry of suffering humanity. "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." (Psalm 103:13) "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. ... He will ever be mindful of His covenant." (Psalm 111:4-5)

No matter what the Lord is doing, He will always stop "To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." (Psalm 102:20) "And He said, Call him." (Mark 10:49,RV)

The word which Jesus speaks by other men is just as valid as the word that sounded from His own lips from the mountain top, in

tones that shook the earth. "[He] confirms the word of His servant."
(Isaiah 44:26)

To us God has committed the ministry of reconciliation, and He has put the word of reconciliation into us. Therefore the word which God speaks by the mouth of any of His servants is as sure and as steadfast as though He used no human agent. We have not, therefore, to distinguish between the writers of the Bible, and to say, "This is from Moses, and this from Isaiah, and this from Paul." No; all is from God.

The Assurance of the Call

They that were sent said to the blind man, "Be of good cheer, rise, He calls you." (Mark 10:49,RV)

How many doubt that they have been called. "If I only knew for certain that I was one of the called, I should be happy," is a statement that we often hear. We assure such a one that the Lord has called him, but he repeats, "O, if I only could know it."

Well, how did blind Bartimaeus know that the Lord had called him? The Lord did not lift up His voice, and He had not directed a single word to him. All the assurance he had was the statement of those who did hear Him. Suppose Bartimaeus had not believed them? Well, perhaps Jesus might have come to him, and called him personally, for He is wondrously kind and long-suffering; but such a manifestation of doubt would have been to tempt the Lord. Then,

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?" (Hebrews 2:3)

Has God really called us? Yes; "He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world." (Ephesians 1:4)

And, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39)

That is, the Lord has called "all that are afar off." This means everybody. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

God sent the word of salvation unto His people, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all)." (Acts 10:36)

Note the statement "He is Lord of all," in connection with the fact that God was preaching peace by Jesus Christ; it indicates that He preaches peace to all. So we read, "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, says the Lord; and I will heal him." (Isaiah 57:19)

All, both near and far, are called. "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah 14:22)

When one comes to another with these words of the Lord, and that other refuses to believe that he has been called, he is as unreasonable as Bartimaeus would have been if he had demanded that Jesus come to him in person, instead of sending messengers.

Be of Good Cheer

"Be of good cheer, rise, He calls you." (Mark 10:49,RV)

That is reason enough to be of good cheer. Everybody on earth ought to rejoice, because God has called all. "Be of good cheer;" when? Now, no matter what your condition or circumstances. "In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

In the midst of tribulation, our joy may be full, from the mere knowledge that we are the chosen of God. "He loves me, and has chosen me," sings the heart of the maid, as she thinks of the lover, who to her is best of all. Even so our hearts should sing for joy, as we remember that "[He] loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

He has given the highest possible proof of His love to us and all mankind.

As showing the call to be "joyful in tribulation," "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am

filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." (2 Corinthians 7:4) note the fact that Bartimaeus was still a blind beggar when he was told to be of good cheer. He was not told to be cheerful because he had been healed, or had received a legacy, but simply because Jesus had called him. That was enough. Some of the sweetest songs and the most joyful testimonies have come from poor, blind cripples whose hearts were aglow with the thought of God's unbounded and impartial love.

Leave All You Have

Bartimaeus cast away his garment, and "sprang up" to go to Jesus. He was a beggar, and lacked clothing, but that did not make him keep what he had, when Jesus called him. He was going to an audience with the King, and the more needy he was, the more he could expect to receive. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (Isaiah 64:6)

Yet how many gather their rags about them, and cling to them, trying to make them appear to be clean garments. This is when we try to minimize our faults, or even to make out that they are virtues. Better far to acknowledge them, and cast them away, that Jesus may give us an entire new suit of white raiment. Yes, even though some of our clothing were not so bad, it is better to give all up, for: "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Psalm 84:11)

And if we get back anything from His hands we are sure that it is right.

There was no delay, no hesitation. The blind beggar "sprang up, and came to Jesus." (Mark 10:50)

Why should he not do so? He had called to Jesus; why should he not make haste to come as soon as the word of the Lord came to him? If he had not, he would have shown that there was no real sincerity in his call.

Many bemoan their condition, separate from the Lord, and make many requests to Him, and then timidly shrink back when they get the assurance that they are called. Thus they cast doubt upon their sincerity in calling. If they did not believe that Jesus would give them what they needed, why did they call on Him? and if they did believe when they called, why do they not accept as soon as He speaks?

Saved by Faith

Jesus asked what Bartimaeus wished Him to do. Not that He did not know, but a thing that is worth having is worth asking for. God knows that we have need of food before we ask Him, yet He tells us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11)

Asking for a specific thing fixes our attention on it, and thus causes us to recognize God's gift in response. The request was

simple and direct: "Lord, that I might receive my sight." (Mark 10:51) And the answer came, "Go your way; your faith has made you whole [or, "saved you." RV, margin]" (Mark 10:52)

He was told to go away while he was still blind, just as the ten lepers were told, while still leprous, to go and show themselves to the priest. And immediately he received his sight. "Whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." (Mark 11:24)

Do you believe this story about Bartimaeus? If you do, you know how to receive forgiveness and perfect righteousness from God. These miracles were recorded, "that believing, you might have life through His name." (John 20:31) "With the heart man believes unto righteousness." (Romans 10:10)

The blind beggar's faith brought him sight, yes, and full salvation, too; for Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you." (Mark 10:52,RV,margin)

In the gift of sight, Bartimaeus got everything he needed. So:

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;

Sight, riches, healing of the mind,

Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

--Charlotte Elliott, Hymn: Just As I Am, 1834.

--Present Truth, November 29, 1900--International Sunday-school Lesson for December 9--Mark 10:46-52.

Chapter 33

What is a Miracle?

What is a miracle? Most people think that it is a reversal of natural action--a setting aside or overturning of what are called "the laws of nature."

This a great error. The so-called "laws of nature" are nothing else than God's ordinary way of working, so far as we are able to perceive.

But God "cannot deny himself," (2 Timothy 2:13) therefore He cannot at any time act in a manner contrary to what He does at other times. Miracles are always in perfect harmony with law, for they are God's ordinary way of working. Every act of God is a miracle. He cannot act except in a miraculous manner.

Sometimes He hastens the ordinary process, or removes the veil so that we can see some of His secret working, or shows us something that we have never seen before, and we call it a miracle.

If that same thing should be repeated before our eyes ten thousand times, however, we should probably cease to call it a miracle, and yet its nature would by no means be changed. The thing that we are accustomed to, we do not call a miracle, even though it requires nothing less than the mighty power of God for its performance.

But the miraculous is everywhere, and miracles will never cease as long as God lives, "Which does great things past finding out; yea and wonders without number." (Job 9:10)--Present Truth, October 25, 1900.

Chapter 34

Miracles and the Laws of Nature

The controversy over miracles never ceases, and, strangely enough, it is professed Christians that seem to have the most difficulty in the most hazy ideas.

It is not a matter of no concern or of light importance; for while none but God can ever understand the secret of miracles, the man who disbelieves in their existence, or who, professing to believe in them, thinks that they are a violation of law, has lost the mainspring of all Christian hope and progress. We have before us these words in a "Christian" newspaper: "It is a law of nature that a man can only die once, and a law of nature that the dead cannot come back to life. In the case of Lazarus the laws of nature are therefore set aside."

But as a matter of fact, death is not according to the law of nature, but the transgression of it. The law of nature, the law of all the universe, is the life of God, and so it is strictly in accordance with law that men live, and that even the dead are brought to life.

The resurrection of the dead is an exhibition of the perfect working of law that has been violated. It is the putting of the law of nature into perfect operation.

And this settles the case for all miracles; for death is the sum of all things contrary to the great law of nature, and the resurrection of

the dead is the greatest of all miracles; therefore the resurrection of the dead serves as the demonstration of the universal truth that all miracles are not contrary to the law of nature, but are the free working of law.

It is this that is our positive assurance of victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.--Present Truth, December 4, 1902.