**“The Power of Forgiveness” The Bible Echo 8, 21.**

E. J. Waggoner

“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; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And JESUS knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified GOD, which had given such power unto men.” Matthew 9:3-8. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 1}

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. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 2}

Bearing in mind the statement concerning the matters that “these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of GOD; and that believing ye might have life through his name,” not as simply the miracle before us. 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 thy bed, and go unto thine house,” 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. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 3}

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 own heart against a sinner that He forgives him, but we cause the sinner has something in *his* heart. GOD is alright,-the man is all wrong, therefore GOD forgive the man, that he also may be alright. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 4}

When JESUS, illustrating the forgiveness of sin, said to the man, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house,” 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 an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and *established my goings*.” Psalm 40:1, 2. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 5}

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, thy sins be forgiven thee,” and receives those words as for 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. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 6}

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, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” and which had made him a new creature in CHRIST. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 7}

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.” First read Colossians 1:12-14: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” See the same statement concerning redemption through CHRIST’S blood, in 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Revelation 5:9. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 8}

Mark two points: We have redemption through CHRIST’S blood, and this redemption is the forgiveness of sins. But the blood is the life. See Genesis 9:4; Revelation 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.” 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,” after the image of Him that created him.” Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 9}

Now we may read Romans 3:23-25, 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 hath 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.” {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 10}

All have sinned. The whole life has been sin. Even the thoughts have been evil. Mark 7:21. And to be carnally minded is death. 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 whom is GOD’S righteousness, “for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” 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.” {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 11}

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 ye have therefore received CHRIST JESUS the LORD, so walk ye in Him.” Colossians 2:6. For “the just shall live by faith.” 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. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 12}

“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 his strength any the less real? Was it not an actual fact that he received strength? Can’t understand it? Of course not, for it is a manifestation of “the love of God that passeth knowledge.” 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 ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of GOD, and that believing ye might have life through his name.” {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 13}

**“Recreation” The Bible Echo 8, 21.**

E. J. Waggoner

This is the time of the year when everybody who can do so, leaves the city for the country, the mountains, or the seaside, for the purpose of finding recreation. And yet there are far more people who are obliged to keep up their daily round of toil, than there are who are able to take a holiday vacation. It is not the very poor only, who cannot leave their tasks; there are many whose labour demands their constant attention, and who are for this reason obliged to forego the pleasure that they would gladly take. It is for this larger class especially, that we write this. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 14}

Recreation is not always obtained by those who go away for their holidays; for be it known that not all pleasure-seeking is recreation. Recreation means re-creation, reviving, refreshing. It means the receiving of new life. But very many who go away thinking to get recreation, come back jaded and weary, hoping to find rest at home, in their usual employment. We wish therefore to let the weary ones at home into a secret, which may also be profitable to those who go away. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 15}

All life comes from God, for with Him is “the fountain of life.” Psalm 36:9. He is the Creator. Therefore He is the only one who can re-create. Whatever blessing of health and life any person enjoys, comes directly from God. “Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:16, 17. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 16}

Let us see, now, how the Lord can give to those who are obliged to stay at home and work, all the advantages that they could hope to gain by a trip abroad. How many there are who would choose the fields, and the cool waters. Well, those who know the Lord can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.” Psalm 23:1-3. He who knows this may have more real recreation, both for soul and body, than he who is lying in the cool meadows, but is ignorant of it. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 17}

If we long for the mountains, or the ocean, we read, “Thy righteousness is like the great mountain; Thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast.” Psalm 36:6. And in his righteousness He will be to us “as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Do not the very words bring a sense of refreshment? {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 18}

On these sultry days memories of mountains streams of clear, sparkling, life-giving water haunt us and tantalise us until the heat seems almost unendurable. Now let us find something that is more substantial than a memory, and which satisfies. “How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life.” Psalm 36:7-9. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 19}

Of course it is refreshing. Recreation, new life, is what we want, and with God is the fountain of life. We may drink it in as we would drink from the mountain spring, and find far more real refreshment. He who is with God, therefore, finds the truest recreation. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 20}

This is evident, further, from the fact that the memory of former draughts from the pure spring, just as it gushes cool and sparkling from the earth, serves rather to increase our present discomfort than to allay our heat and thirst. It did not last. Even before we were home from our excursion we were vainly longing for more. Now listen to Jesus as He talks with the woman at the well of Samaria. It was a deep well, and the water was cool and good, but He said, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:13, 14. We can carry it with us continually. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 21}

That water is “living water,” and that is what we want. But how may we get it? Why, if you are taking it in now, if you receive these texts as the living words of the living God, spoken directly to you. Jesus said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63. All this refreshment is to be found in the words that tell of it. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 22}

Some one will say that this is imaginary. Not a bit of it. It is real. In the chapter just quoted from we have an example of the ability of Christ to give real recreation-the renewal of wasted energy. The day before several thousand people were in the hot and sultry desert, with nothing to eat, and Jesus fed them with bread, so that they were filled and refreshed. This He did, in order that they and we might know the real life that is in his Word. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 23}

Take another instance. A nobleman’s beloved son was lying at the point of death. His frame was wasted away, and his life was being burned up with fever. What was needed? Something to stop the fever,-something cooling. The man went to Jesus and asked Him to come and heal his son. Jesus said, “Go thy way; thy son liveth.” “And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth.” John 4:46-53. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 24}

Whoever believes that miracle, must know that the word of the Lord has cooling, refreshing, and healing properties. Nothing is so good in fever as cool water, both within and without. Many physicians have testified as to the value of water in fevers, and how the skillful application of it has reduced the temperature and saved the patient’s life. But all this was accomplished by the word of Jesus, which is living water. Therefore we know that in His word we may find on the hottest day refreshment for the body. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 25}

At another time Simon’s wife’s mother, “was taken with a great fever; and they besought Him for her. And He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her; and immediately she arose, and ministered unto them.” Luke 4:38, 39. Many other instances might be mentioned, but these are sufficient to show the life-giving power of the word of the Lord. Now what the Lord wants us to do is to take His words for all that they are worth, and use them in our every-day life. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 26}

That which we call nature is simply the ordinary working of God. The sunshine, the air, the dew and the rain, the great mountains, the broad ocean, the crystal springs, and the laughing mountain stream, all come from Him. They exist because of His word. When He speaks, they immediately appeared, because they are all in His word. Therefore we may find all the benefit of them in his word. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 27}

Try it, and you will find that it is true. The words of the Lord are restful. They give peace. Without them, a person may fret himself into a fever on the coolest day, or in the deepest recesses of the mountains. With them in the heart, he may find the fever of his blood allayed even in the crowded city, on the hottest day. When you have learned that the words of the Lord are righteousness and life, and that we may drink them in as water, you can say with the psalmist:- {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 28}

“My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches. Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.” Psalm 63:5-7. {BEST November 1, 1893, par. 29}