**“Miracles—Do They Now Exist?” The Signs of the Times, 8, 22.**

E. J. Waggoner

Of late, this question has occupied quite a prominent place in religious journals, but none of them have disposed of it in so few words as the *Christian at Work*. We give its remarks on the subject, together with the question which called them out:- {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 259.1}

“If the age of miracles is not passed, can the sick still be healed by faith and prayer? And are such cures now wrought? If miracles are not to be looked for, how are the remarkable cases of sudden healing, called ‘faith cures,’ to be accounted for? or are they not cases of sudden healing?”-*Watch-Tower*. {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 259.2}

“The age of miracles is past; the modern ‘faith cures’ can all be explained by Psychology, just as bread pills have effected like wonderful cures. Miracles are something more than preternatural events,-they are supernatural occurrences sent to authenticate the divine character of a messenger. *That* is the touchstone of every miracle related between the covers of the Bible.” {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 259.3}

When any question is thus arbitrarily answered, it is an evidence either that it has been so thoroughly canvassed previously that the answer is self-evident, or else that the one who answers the question has no argument except his dogmatic assertion. We think it can be shown that the latter is true in this instance. {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 259.4}

It is a sad fact that the answer given above voices the sentiment of a large portion of the religious world of to-day. A sad fact, because it is only the stepping-stone to a disbelief in the inspiration of the Bible, and the divinity of Christ. The rank infidel claims, with equal reason, that such things as miracles never existed. Indeed, if we deny that miraculous cures may be effected now, we virtually do deny that they were ever performed. No one now living ever saw any of the miracles that are recorded in the Bible. We accept them on the authority of that book. The Bible has ample evidence in itself that it is an inspired book, and we are bound to accept its statements as the truth. We therefore believe that miracles were really performed by Christ, and by the apostles and prophets. But the same book upon which we rely for our information in regard to miracles in the past, assures us that they will occur. See Mark 16:17, 18; James 5:14, 15. Why should we accept the statement of the Bible in one place, and disbelieve it in another? {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 259.5}

“Miracles,” it is said, “are supernatural occurrences sent to authenticate the divine character of a messenger.” But it is well to remember that none of Christ’s miracles *seem* to have been performed for this purpose. There is nothing forced or unnatural about them. There was always a want to be supplied, some distress to be relieved. All of Christ’s miracles of healing were done as though they were the natural service of one who sees suffering, and puts forth his power to alleviate it. The idea of the pity and compassion of Christ is the most prominent in all his miracles. It is true that these miracles attested his divinity, and constrained the people to say “That God hath visited his people,” yet nowhere does the humanity of Christ appear more plainly than in his contact with the afflicted. At the tomb of Lazarus he wept; he had compassion on the widow of Nain, and on the multitudes who were ready to perish through hunger and fatigue. He “went about doing good,” not with parade and ceremony, as though to call attention to himself, but as one whose compassionate nature was touched by the sight of pain. Now we cannot believe that Jesus is any less tender and compassionate now than when he was on earth. Although we cannot see him with our eyes, he is as truly present, “beholding the evil and the good,” as when he walked with man; we read that he is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and that he cares for us. We might reasonably expect, then, that his power would at times be put forth to help his creatures, even if we had not been assured that such would be the case. {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 259.6}

But what is a miracle? It is simply a wonder, a wonderful thing. Then the fact that man, frail as he is, exists at all, is a standing miracle. David praised God because he was “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and Jeremiah felt that “it is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” No one could, by his own power, keep himself alive for a single moment. No man can create even the tiniest blade of grass, although he may know the elements which compose it, nor can he understand how it could be made to grow. The whole creation is a constant proof of the power of God continually exerted. Why, then, should we limit his power? If God is constantly performing miracles of one kind, why may he not perform others? {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 260.1}

But there is still another point to consider. In Psalm 103:2, 3, we read: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.” Here we have the forgiveness of sins, and the healing of diseases placed together, as two things for which to be thankful. Whoever will seriously consider the terrible condition of man in a fallen state, cannot but be convinced that the work of man’s redemption, the plan by which his sins may be constantly forgiven, is one of the greatest miracles that can be conceived. Now that Christ forgives sins, no Christian can deny. This is the good news which the gospel brings to man. If this were not true, the gospel would cease to be a gospel. But the psalmist carries the idea that the healing of diseases belongs to God as well as the forgiveness of sins, and it must be that he does heal diseases, or there would be no occasion for thanking him for it. And there is no intimation that the work of healing diseases should cease before the work of forgiving sins ceased. {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 260.2}

If we study the New Testament, we shall find this fact still more clearly taught. Read the plain testimony in James 5:14, 15: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith *shall save the sick*, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” There is no guess-work about this. It is a simple declaration of what *shall be* if certain conditions are complied with. It is very common to ignore this passage, or explain it away, claiming that it does not mean exactly what it says. But if we so dispose of the first part, we must treat the second in like manner, and claim that sins are not actually forgiven. Both statements are equally emphatic. There are many who can testify to the fact that God does forgive sins; and witnesses of his healing power are not few. Those who are disposed to cavil, will say that God does not heal all the diseases even of those who profess that their sins have been forgiven, for if he did, none would die. To this we can answer that man is not promised immunity from death. “It is appointed unto men once to die,” and this without reference to whether they are good or bad. Immortality is conferred upon God’s people only at the resurrection. See 1 Corinthians 15:51-54. But the fact remains that men are healed by the power of God, when human power utterly fails. It is God that keeps us alive, and it is he that heals all diseases. As before quoted, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed.” {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 260.3}

But there is still stronger evidence that the healing of diseases and the forgiveness of sins are co-existent, and it is given by our Lord himself. Read the account of the healing of the man sick of the palsy, as recorded in Matthew 9:1-8, also in Mark 3:1-12, and Luke 5:18-26. When Jesus saw the faith of the sick man and his attendants, he said to him: “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.” Here we have the power to heal the sick given as an evidence of the power to forgive sins. “Whether is easier?” Both are entirely beyond the comprehension of man. Sin is disease of the soul, as sickness is of the body. Sickness and death are but the result of sin (Romans 5:12), and God alone can save from both. In the future state, when all sin is forever done away, we are told that “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;” and it is said that the inhabitant of that country shall not say “I am sick.” Now since God, in his infinite mercy, is pleased to forgive us our sins, if we but comply with the conditions, and give us, even here, foretastes of the heavenly glory, is it not reasonable that he should at times relieve the pain which his followers suffer? Add to this the many plain declarations in the Bible, and who can doubt it? That there are many pretended cures, and many that are simply imaginary, cannot be denied, but to say that all “faith cures” are such, is to play into the hands of infidels. {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 260.4}

The Bible itself is the best evidence that it is the word of God, because it is always consistent with itself. The different parts have so close a relation that they cannot be separated. The man who begins to doubt any portion of it, is in danger of disbelieving the whole. If we let one point go, and hold to our unbelief, the rest must surely follow. There are many things in the word of God that are “hard to be understood,” and we cannot hope to know how God can perform his works; but it is foolish and wicked to reject and deny all that we cannot understand. Rather let us say with the psalmist: “Thy word is true from the beginning; and everyone of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.” E. J. W. {SITI June 8, 1882, p. 260.5}