**“Life from the Word” The Signs of the Times, 19, 2.**

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“And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” Deuteronomy 8:2, 3. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.1}

This reference shows that there was a special purpose in giving the manna to the children of Israel in the wilderness. It was, of course, for the purpose of supplying their physical necessities, but that was not all. God could have supplied them with food in some other way. He could have led them through a land where they would have found sustenance; but he purposely led them through the wilderness, in places where they could find neither food nor water, in order that it might appear in the clearest manner that their food came directly from heaven. It was for the purpose of making them realize continually that God was their sole support. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.2}

Jesus referred to this after he had performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes. The Jews blindly asked for a sign as proof of his ministry, and thought to set Moses up against Christ, as superior to him, by saying, “Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” But Jesus answered them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” John 6:31-33. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.3}

Christ, and not Moses, was the real ladder of the children of Israel in the wilderness. He was bringing them out of the bondage of Egypt, not physical namely, but spiritual. He was leading them not to a merely temporal inheritance, but to an eternal inheritance of righteousness. The keeping of the commandments of God was the sole condition of their everlasting inheritance. But they had no power to do that. Nevertheless, they were not to despair, and say, “Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it [that is, the commandment] unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?” Neither were they to say, “Who shall go over the sea for me, and bring it [the commandments] unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?” And why? The answer was thus given: “But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” Is our comparison of this text with the tenth chapter of Romans, in the last article, we found that the commandment here refers to none other than Christ. That is, they could find the commandment only by finding Christ, and he was near at hand. Outside of Christ there is no righteousness, no keeping of the commandments. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.4}

Some may thing that this fact was not known in the time of Moses, but a careful reading of the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy shows that it was exactly what Moses was teaching the people. In verse 15 and 16 we read: “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply.” This shows that life is found only in the keeping of the commandments of God. Then in verses 19 and 20 we read: “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 thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.” {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.5}

In this the people were plainly given to understand that their finding and keeping the commandments consisted solely in their finding and keeping Christ. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, because Christ dwells in the heart by faith. The life of the word is the life of Christ. We cannot understand how Christ’s life is conveyed by the word when it is received in faith. It is the mystery of the incarnation. It is the mystery of God manifest in the flesh. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.6}

But God does not leave his people to try to grasp abstract truth. He cannot explain it to our comprehension, but he illustrates it so that we may be sure of the fact. So for forty years he gave to the Jews a daily object lesson of the truth that he is their life. As they ate the manna which he gave them directly from heaven, so they were to eat of him. There was no human agency employed in supplying them with the manna for their physical necessities. So they were to recognize the fact that no human power could give the righteousness which the law demands. That same lesson serves for us, for it was written for our learning. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.7}

We cannot understand how it is that the bread that we eat gives us life and strength. We know the fact, and that is sufficient. Physiologists trace for us the changes that the food undergoes in the process of digestion, but not one of them can tell how it is that bread is changed into bone and muscle. That is the mystery of life, which is within the power and comprehension of God alone. So, although we may not know how it is that God’s word can give us life, we may know the fact. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.8}

In the raising of Lazarus and the ruler’s daughter Christ gave to us instances of the life-giving power of his word. His word, “Lazarus, come forth,” brought Lazarus from the grave in the full vigor of health. So at the last day his word will bring all the dead from their graves. The raising of the dead is accomplished by the same life-giving power that God bestows upon men in this world to save them from sin. Sin is death: “For to be carnally minded is death.” Romans 8:6. “And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Ephesians 2:1. To disbelieve that God does actually give us his life in Christ, as we accept his word in faith, is equivalent to disbelieving that Christ ever raised the dead, or that he ever will. But whosoever believes that there was power in the word of Christ to raise Lazarus from the dead, because the word had the very life of Christ himself in it, may have the same life in himself, by which to keep the commandments of God. {SITI November 21, 1892, p. 36.9}