

## **GREATER WORKS SHALL YE DO**

– ACTS 3:1-16. – JANUARY 24. –

**Golden Text:** – "His name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know." – Acts 3:16.

OUR lesson tells of one of the prominent miracles granted of the Lord at the beginning of this age. Peter and John were God's instruments in effecting an instantaneous faith cure. A man deformed from birth and unable to walk was made whole. The only power exercised was the power of faith on the part of the apostles, for the man healed, so far as we know, had no knowledge of Jesus, nor that the apostles were his representatives. Nor should we understand the apostolic command, "Look upon us," to mean the exercise by them of any hypnotic influence. Quite to the contrary, the power by which they healed was the same by which their Master had performed healings during the three and a half years of his ministry. The testimony in a nutshell is, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk, and he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength." – Acts 3:7.

## **THE DESIRE FOR HEALING**

Perhaps there was never a time in the world's history when humanity manifested more desire for physical healing than today. Nor can we blame the poor, groaning creation for desiring relief. It is with regret, however, that we note that our Lord's comment to the 5,000 whom he fed miraculously with bread and fish is still considerably applicable. He told them that they sought him because they had eaten of the free luncheon and not because of their love of the truths which he was preaching. He also told them to "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which

endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath the Father sealed." – John 6:27.

So today we could wish that the hungry and thirsty were for the real relief which God hath provided and which all of us need – relief from sin and death. In a word, we could wish that there were a greater appreciation of soul sickness from sin and that there is but the one Good Physician, who is able to heal this malady and through whose ministry we may be healed. Note the fact that some of the strong delusions are supported by their claim to relieve physical pain. This is the claim of Spiritism – that disease can be relieved through mediumistic powers, under another's control. It is the claim of the Mormons that they can heal diseases miraculously. This is the claim of Christian Science, Mind Cure, Faith Cure people, Divine Healers, etc. Some of these names are used merely as a cover and pretense, while by others they are used with full faith that they are of some supernatural origin. The attitude of the public seems to be Give us healing. Give us relief from our aches and pains. If it is of God, we are glad. If it is of the Adversary, as you claim, we still take it, even though we know it to be in opposition to the Divine will.

Such great inroads have been made in the churches of all denominations by these mind cures, hypnotic cures, that ministers of all denominations are perplexed what to do. The dominant idea with many of them is – our organization must be maintained at any cost. As a business man would purchase any kind of goods that would sell, so must the churches, they think, supply to the public whatever it demands; otherwise the congregation would diminish, the minister's salary would not be collected, and the whole denomination would fall to pieces. The ministers, therefore, feel that for self-preservation, and for the preservation of the organization they represent, they must meet the public demand, just as a theater manager feels that he must meet the public demand.

## THE EMMANUEL MOVEMENT

At this opportune moment, when ministers are in perplexity and congregations are demanding physical healing, and particularly implying that they will not serve a God who will permit them to have afflictions and to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities of the race, the Emmanuel movement steps to the front. At one bound it has leaped into general favor, because it avoids much of the absurdity of Christian Science, which implies that there is no sickness, no pain, no death. The Emmanuel movement acknowledges the ills and seeks to relieve them and, in this respect, is **[R4313 : page 21]** certainly on advanced ground. Started in Boston, after more than a year's success, it is being laid before the ministers of all denominations. Books are published instructing them how they may establish these physical healings, instituted in connection with churches of all denominations. Special classes have been organized in various colleges for the purpose of instructing those studying for the ministry how to perform these cures. The matter has gone forward with remarkable speed. How great will be its proportions within a few years is difficult to say. We have no pleasure in merely fault-finding. Did we consider these various healings as innocent, not to say divine, as some suppose them to be, we would be either cooperating with them, or, at least, saying nothing against them, even as we decline to discuss the various schools of medicine, believing that each represents more or less skill helpful to humanity.

But in these various cures for physical ailments now being promoted throughout Christendom, we see a great and a serious danger. Seeing this, it is our duty to raise a general voice to those who have an ear to hear the message. Our protest is that these are none such miracles as were wrought by our Lord and his apostles. True, there is a measure of similarity, just as some of the electric arc lights of our day closely resemble the sunlight. To our understanding, many of those identified with the various schemes

of mind healing, faith healing, Christian Science, Hypnotism, etc., are well-meaning, thoroughly conscientious; and thoroughly deluded. To our understanding their cures are not by divine power, but by that of the Adversary, whom the Lord is permitting to use these means of attracting the Lord's people and the world away from the spiritual things and their necessity; also from the spiritual healing. We are well aware that in thus writing we are putting ourselves on the unpopular side, yet our duty is to the Lord and to the Truth and to those who have ears to hear and who desire to hear the message of the Lord.

### **HYPNOTISM TINCTURES ALL DECEPTION**

Do not misunderstand us. We do not dispute that cures are accomplished, nor that some of the proceedings and theories are legitimate enough. What we do claim is that the Truth and rationality connected with these systems are the sugar-coating which covers the poison. The poison connected with all of them is the poison of the Adversary, the power of the fallen angels exercised in its most subtle form, namely, mental suggestion – hypnotism. This rational sugar-coating consists in the extending of kindly sympathy to the bereaved: in the recognition of the fact that fear is one of the most potent causes of human trouble and that **[R4314 : page 21]** faith in the Lord, or in a devil, for that matter, has the effect of resting the mind, relieving the nervous tension, and thus facilitating the eradication of pain. The doctrine of "Peace, troubled soul!" is certainly a good and wise one, particularly when based upon a Scriptural faith in Jesus as our ever-present help in every hour of need and when it promotes loyalty and obedience to him. This spirit of restfulness and "peace with God," if built upon false doctrines and erroneous suggestions and hypnotic influences, but hinders the soul from a proper approach to the Life-Giver and opens the way for the attacks of the Adversary.

As Christian Science and Mind Cure pervert reason and thus destroy the power of reasoning logically, so Hypnotism undermines the will, weakens it, and prepares the way for further intrusions from the fallen spirits. To our understanding, Christendom is thus permitting an undermining of faith and will power, and is preparing for the great day of trouble with which this age will in a few years close – a trouble which will result largely from the intrusion of the evil spirits into human affairs, through the entanglement of human wills, weakened by Hypnotism. We warn all to be on guard against these modern miracle-workers and we call attention to the fact that their operation is entirely different from anything recorded in the Scriptures.

### **THE CHURCH'S MIRACULOUS ESTABLISHMENT**

There is a reason for the miracles wrought by our Lord and his disciples. They were for the establishment of the Church – as a testimony to the Lord. Without them Christianity would not have grown as rapidly as it did. These miracles ceased as the Church secured an established footing. The miraculous gifts of the spirit, healing, etc., were supplanted by the spiritual gifts, or fruitage of holy living. As the Apostle declares, Whether there be miraculous tongues, they shall cease, and so with all the other gifts, including healing. The physical healing was supplanted by the spiritual healing. Thus our Lord's words were fulfilled, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father." What intelligent Christian who has experienced the opening of the eyes of his understanding will dispute the fact that he has received a far more valuable gift than that of the opening of his natural eyes? Who that is deaf, but has the ears of his understanding opened to spiritual matters, would not claim that he had a greater blessing than a restoration of physical healing? Who that has eaten of the Bread that came down from heaven and received spiritual strength, does not realize that his blessing is far beyond that enjoyed by those

whom Jesus fed with the five barley loaves and the three small fishes?

Who that has realized the healing of the soul does not realize that the healing of his heart affections is of much more value to him than the healing of any earthly disease? Who that was born in sin and shapen in iniquity and who has realized the forgiveness of his sins and has received grace whereby he may walk in the footsteps of Jesus, does not appreciate this as a greater miracle than the one recorded in our lesson? Ah! but some will say, "Let us have both the spiritual and the physical healing. Did not Jesus give both, and should not we expect both?"

We reply that Jesus did not give both, but merely the physical. Not until he had finished his sacrifice and had ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us, could any of us receive of the holy Spirit. And not until then could any understand the spiritual things, the deep things of God. It is for this reason that our Lord's sermons were generally limited to earthly things. He said, "If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12.) Again he said, "I have many things yet to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come." (John 16:12,13.) The Apostle tells us that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned....But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." – I Cor. 2:14,10.

## **OUR LORD'S MOUTHPIECES**

It is for this reason that we find some of the most helpful spiritual instructions in the writings of the apostles, without which we should not be able to get so large a measure of spiritual

nutriment from our Lord's utterances, which were in parables and dark sayings, thus reserved for the future use of the saints.

Under the picture of the Church at Laodicea, the Lord pictures to us the last stage of the Gospel Church. He represents it as saying, "I am rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing." Nominal Christendom has been disposed to boast of its riches in scholarship and property and intelligence and influence, and its high moral standing. The one thing it has coveted is the healing power, and now it is grasping this, to its further injury, to the increase of its pride and boastfulness and to the bringing of itself still more fully under the powers of darkness.

Notice how different is the Lord's view of the Laodicean Church, from that which it entertains of **[R4314 : page 22]** itself. He says, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see." – Rev. 3:17,18.

It is for us to take the Lord's viewpoint, to see what constitutes the true riches, the true source of happiness and joy in the Lord. It is for us to have our eyes opened, and not to be deceived by our Great Adversary in this time. We remember our Lord's very words on this subject; his intimation that at his second advent many would boast of their work and power of healing, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. 7:22.) But our Lord said to such, I do not know you. I do not recognize you. You have no authority to make yourselves my disciples.

Let us remember, dear friends, that the Lord's blessings upon the apostles were not in the nature of preservation from sickness

or calamity, but the reverse. We have records of several of the prominent brethren of the Church, but no records of any of them being miraculous healers. The healings which were done were performed for signs for those about. We have records of disasters permitted to come upon our Lord and upon the apostles and upon the Church of that time – hatred of the world, thwarting of their plans, cruel mockings, stripes, in perils of shipwreck, in perils among false brethren, hungering, thirsting, etc. If God manifested his favor thus to our Lord and the most influential members of his Church and their associates, what shall we choose for ourselves? If we allow the Lord to choose our portion for us, he doubtless will give us similar experiences in this time, and glory, honor and immortality by and by. If we attempt to choose our own way, the Adversary will try to delude us and we may be relieved of some physical pains or difficulties, which might have been for our eternal welfare. Let us choose the better part, pray for the spiritual things and labor for them, and accept, as respects our earthly affairs, whatsoever our Father sees best!

