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## THE POOL OF BETHESDA

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“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, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 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 long time in that case, he saith unto him, ‘Wilt thou 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 steppeth down before me.’ Jesus saith unto him ‘Rise, take up thy bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked.”

From the words of the Bible as related above it might well appear that this remarkable healing took place at the Pool of Bethesda and possibly it did so, but wherever this healing occurred, the writer is convinced that this story is garbled in the translation, or by reason of it having been passed for many years from one to another by word of mouth the true import of the tale is hidden, until now when through the study of the Bible under the light of Christian Science the true version of what happened on that occasion shows forth.

After some thirty odd years of close study by the writer it appears to him that Jesus was using the Pool of Bethesda as an illustration to make plain to the afflicted man who evidently needed the healing so sorely, that his troubles were wholly mental, false beliefs manifested on the body.

To glimpse just what Jesus intended to be brought out in his conversation and in his illustration, let the reader transplant himself to Jerusalem, and become an interested onlooker of this Christ healing which is about to occur, and listen carefully to what is

being said. Jesus is speaking to the impotent man. He has been telling him that disease is not physical but mental, a false belief superimposed on the body, but evidently has not been able to make the point clear to him. So he turns to an illustration to make it so. Jesus as we all know was an adept in the use of parables and illustrations, in fact he taught by this means almost exclusively, and when understood they become priceless.

The following is the substance of Jesus' teaching on that memorable occasion:

Jesus said, "You know the Pool of Bethesda, do you not?"

The man answered: "Yes indeed. I've lived all my life up to this time here in Jerusalem. I remember when I was a boy I used to play about this pool and swim in it. In those days the pool was clean and sweet, but now since they put the sheep market alongside it, the water isn't fit for anything."

Jesus said, "You have answered me just as I would have had you answer me. I couldn't have done it better if I had put the very words into your mouth. That pool is just like your own consciousness. As the pool was sweet and clean in your young days before the town spread itself out and the sheep market was established beside it, causing it to become contaminated with all sorts of uncleanness, so your consciousness was sweet and clean in your young days, until through evil associates and by reason of partaking of the common things of the world, it too became unclean, befouled with many evils, and ultimately with sickness, poverty and perhaps other troubles."

Jesus continued: "You will recollect that the pool has five porches. So also this mentality of yours has five physical senses. Due to the spillway being in the middle of those five porches there was naturally a slight current there which drew all the unclean matter into the midst of those five porches; and so similarly into these five senses are drawn all disease, sin, death, poverty, and other troubles, and they are to be found nowhere else. To make it plainer—sin, disease, death and other evils have no existence whatsoever save only in those five physical senses wherein they lodge, for nothing else has cognizance of them."

Jesus followed this with: "Once in so often there came a heavy

rain or the spring freshet, and when this occurred the water came bubbling into the pool from the springs beneath, and caused it to overflow its banks. Then the water rushed through the five porches and over the spillway carrying out the refuse and accumulated dirt which had collected within those five porches and finally the pool became sweet and clean and pure as in its pristine days. So, my son, the Christ comes into your consciousness and when it does so it dispels the false beliefs, or evil thoughts, with their accompanying evils of sin, sickness, death, poverty, and such like, and they are carried away, leaving your consciousness clean and pure as it should be." During this conversation the man himself is listening, straining every nerve, as it were, to grasp the meaning of Jesus' words, praying with mingled doubt and hope that a healing might be brought about even though for thirty-eight years he had failed to improve. Jesus went on: "This is the way in which the pool is cleansed and when this is accomplished anyone may bathe or swim in its waters, and would be cleansed of no matter what kind of grime or dirt might have accumulated on the body, and in the same manner when consciousness is cleansed of human thinking, and spiritual consciousness obtains, then anyone coming into that spiritual consciousness will be healed of whatsoever disease he may have, or whatsoever trouble may be his. Surely, he went on, it must be plain to you, that just as in the pool when the water becomes clean and purified anyone may bathe therein and be made clean of no matter what may have been the contaminating agent, so when the pure water of the river of Life, or spiritual consciousness has taken the place of the foul waters of mortal mind, one who steps therein will certainly be cleansed of whatsoever disease or other trouble he may have had."

When Jesus had finished using this illustration it became evident to him that the man had grasped the point and saw at least to some degree what he was trying to set forth, and acting on this assumption he said to him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Even though the man apparently saw what Jesus meant, nevertheless his hopelessness shows forth, as evidenced by his reply, and in marked contrast we see the glory of God as shewn forth through Jesus. The man answered "Sir I have no man—no spiritual or true sense of

man as he really is, spiritual, perfect, whole, harmonious in every way, as the son of God—when the water is troubled—when my consciousness is in a state of trouble and confusion—to put me into the pool—to lift me into that spiritual consciousness of which you have spoken and made so clear to me—but while I am coming—while I am endeavoring to get that vision of the real and true man as harmonious and perfect—another steppeth down before me—this false sense of man as a mere mortal, sick, sinning, dying, impotent and utterly helpless, steps into the pool, or enters my consciousness and leaves me quite helpless.”

Jesus said in effect, “Well my son, because I have that Mind which was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and because therefore no false sense of man can obtain in that Mind, I say, and when I say “I” I mean it is God, Spirit, the only “I” which is speaking, for Mind alone speaks and acts,—therefore I, Mind, say “Rise, take up thy bed and walk.”

And immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked.