

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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For week of February 1 - 7, 2010

Hardy, Rev. E.R. (CSD), "**Walk By the Spirit,**" Christian Science Journal, Vol.12 (May 1894), p. 46.

--If we...accept Webster's definition for Spirit, derived doubtless from the testimony of the Scriptures, it will be self-evident that his language defines the Life, Substance, and Intelligence, that, from the testimony of the corporeal senses is unknowable.

• He defines Spirit as follows,— "Life, or living substance, considered independently of corporeal existence; an intelligence conceived of apart from any physical organization or embodiment; vital essence, force or energy as distinct from matter."

--When we accept this definition of Spirit, it must be done by the denial of the existence of matter, finite life, and material sensation, for he who would admit these in any sense real, finds himself utterly unable to understand or even to perceive Substance, Life, or Intelligence, "apart from any physical organization."

--The battle against disease and sin, under these circumstances, would only result in final overthrow, since such a position would be one of denying that which the corporeal senses declare to be real,— good and evil; the position would be one of a negation only, therefore condemned already by Wisdom.

GOLDEN TEXT: The fruit of the Spirit is goodness, righteousness, and truth (Eph 5: 9 *the*)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Gal 5:22,23

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written by Paul to the church at Ephesus from prison in Rome sometime between 60-62 AD.

MacArthur says of the *fruit of the Spirit* , v.9 "Better, as in the NKJV marginal reading, 'fruit of the light.' This speaks of that which is produced by walking in the light (cf. I John 1:5-7), namely moral excellence of heart, righteous behavior, and truthfulness (honesty or integrity)."

"The light that Christ brings signifies salvation, but it also serves to show up the sinful areas of life that need to be dealt with...a contrast is drawn between the levity and sin that is associated with excessive drinking and the rich joy that comes from the inspiration of the Spirit." (Eerdmans Commentary)

Daggett, Helen M., "**The fruit of the Spirit,**" Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.24 (15 October 1921), p. 103.

--HOW prone people are to dwell in thought and words on the evils which seem to befall them.

• Long hours are consumed with the giving of and listening to accounts in great detail of the trials and troubles [someone] believes it is his misfortune to have.

--There is no law of mortal mind that man must bow down to and serve.

• You can begin now to follow the leadings of Truth, and you can begin now to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit.

---Because of the supreme power of the law of God, the only law there is in reality, there is no reason whatsoever for continuing to believe a lie about yourself or your neighbor.

• As it is explained to us in the apostle's epistle to the Galatians: "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*"

Renew, Irene, "Fruits of the Spirit," *Christian Science Sentinel*, Vol.33 (13 June 1931), p. 804.

--"*Christian Scientists bring forth the fruits of Spirit, not flesh.*"

• This terse statement by our revered Leader in "Miscellaneous Writings" (p.153) gives us food for much meditation.

---As we take this thought into our consciousness the questions arise, What are these fruits of Spirit? and, "How can they be expressed in daily living?"

• Paul, that courageous exponent of spiritual truth, has given us a very definite answer by declaring the fruits of the Spirit to be "*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.*"

---He also declares that no false beliefs or so-called mortal laws can render them ineffective.

--On page 79 of "Retrospection and Introspection" our Leader says, "*Be temperate in thought, word, and deed. Meekness and temperance are the jewels of Love, set in wisdom.*"

SECTION II: Jesus heals the palsied man (Mark 2: 3-12)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Matt 9: 2-8; Luke 5: 18-26

TIME LINE: The first part of the Year of Popularity and Fundamental Principles (Jesus' 2nd year of ministry), 28 AD in Capernaum.

"one sick of the palsy"

This story is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew and Mark it is called "The Sick of the Palsy;" in Luke it is called "The Paralytic." "This conflict episode is the first of five conflict episodes (2:1-2; 13-17, 18-22, 23-28; 3:1-6)." (MacArthur Commentary) "The story presupposes that the infirmity has a spiritual cause (cf. Ex 20:5; I Cor 11:29-30; James 5:14-15; in [Matt] 9:32-34 a demon makes a man deaf and dumb)." (Oxford Bible Commentary)

"Jesus had been traveling throughout Galilee, preaching and teaching, and people keep coming to him to be healed and cured. His reputation as a miracle worker is dogging him, and it seems to handicap him when he wishes to preach about God's kingdom because the good news does not necessarily save one from suffering or death." (On Your Mark) His "entry into Capernaum was unknown by the public," but when "someone discovered his presence, the news spread like wildfire." (King James Commentary) "As Jesus arrives at Capernaum, some people carry to him a man who was unable to walk, presumably near the shore in the hope that Jesus will heal him ([Matt] 9:2-8)." (Eerdmans Commentary) "Brought to Jesus on a bed, the man's paralysis was severe. Jesus' words of forgiveness [v.2] may indicate that the paralysis was a direct consequence of the man's own sin." (MacArthur Commentary)

"The peculiarity of this miracle is that it was worked to prove a doctrine, and that in the face of opposition. There were present certain scribes and Pharisees, some of whom had doubtless come from

Jerusalem expressly to oppose Jesus. Jesus at once threw them a challenge by saying to the man, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' The scribes understood this to mean that He claimed to forgive sins as only God can do. Instead of repudiating this suggestion, as a mere man would have done, Jesus accepted it, and proceeded to prove His claim by a miracle." (Dummelow Commentary) "In response to the scribes' and Pharisees' questioning, Jesus claims that 'the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins' ([Luke]5:24)." (Eerdmans Commentary) "It is certainly easier to claim the power to pronounce absolution from sin [*whether is easier*, Matt v.5] than to demonstrate the power to heal." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"[Luke] alone mentions the glorifying of God by the paralytic [v.25], and the fear of the bystanders." (Peake's Commentary) "The audience was stunned again when Jesus healed the man of his paralysis [Matt 9:8]; and *they marveled*, (lit., they were afraid)." (King James Bible Commentary) The scribes and Pharisees "perceive that God's power is being democratized." (Theological Bible Commentary)

"A 'reporter's' perspective on Jesus' healings," Christian Science Journal, Vol.122 (February 2004), p. 31.

--It isn't easy getting access to this teacher and healer. He's mostly interested in healing people, and there's no lack of people to heal. His followers urge me to listen to his sermons. But let's face it, healing is where the story is.

--One day he came into Capernaum [Mark 2: 1-12] and those of us in the press followed along, hoping for a good story. Pretty soon the crowd gathered so deep that no one could get through, not even four men who wanted to get a sick man to Jesus so he could be healed. I have to admit that I'd almost written the lead for "the healing that couldn't be done" when an amazing thing happened.

--The four guys carrying the crippled man climbed up on top of the house where Jesus was preaching and they actually took the roof off so they could let the man down to Jesus.

Newton, Maude de Verse, "Rise Up and Walk," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.57 (October 1939), p. 359.

Rise up and walk, my brother;
It is the mist of doubt
That dims discernment and would shut
Your real dominion out.

Rise up and walk—Love's image
Is straight and strong and true;
Unfailing strength is ever yours—
This seeming is not you.

Before you call, the Father
Has answered every need;
Rise up and claim your heritage—
You are His son indeed.

Rise up—go forth with knowing
You walk in wisdom's might;
The sun of Truth is clear and high
To guide your feet aright.

SECTION IV: Jesus speaks with his disciples about fruit bearing and loving (The parable of the True Vine) (John 15: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-12, 16, 17)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Ps 80: 8-16; Isa 5: 1-7; 27: 2-6; Ezek 15: 1-6; 17: 1-10; 19: 10-14; Jude 1:21

TIME LINE: Thursday of Passion Week, 30 AD, in Jerusalem.

“In the Hebrew Bible the vine is used as a symbol of God’s people Israel...As often happens in John, Jesus fulfills and displaces Jewish traditions: the identity and hope of Israel are realized in him, and his followers share in this realization.” (Theological Bible Commentary)

“This is not emotional or mystical [*continue ye in my love*, v.9], but defined in verse 10 as obedience. Jesus set the model by [his] perfect obedience to the Father, which we are to use as the pattern for our obedience to Him.” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

Miller, Bert A., “The True Vine,” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.14 (1 September 1911), p. 6.

--IN conversation with others recently, on the advisability and necessity of all loyal and active members of branch churches becoming members of The Mother Church, in order to receive the full privileges of membership with the "vine" over which our revered Leader has held such loving and careful supervision, the following from the fifteenth chapter of John impressed me very forcibly: "*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*"

--We can all plainly see, if we stop to analyze the situation, that no branch church, or its members, can prosper and progress as they should without realizing the full import of the meaning and object for which The Mother Church was established or founded. In the "Historical Sketch," found in our Church Manual (p. 17), we read that it was "*to organize a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.*"

• Mrs. Eddy further defines church, for the benefit of her followers, in Science and Health (p. 583), as "*that institution, which affords proof of its utility and is found elevating the race, rousing the dormant understanding from material beliefs to the apprehension of spiritual ideas and the demonstration of divine Science, thereby casting out devils, or error, and healing the sick.*"

Hull, Elna W., "The husbandman," POEM, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.88 (22 December 1986), p. 2393.

Love tends the garden of my mind
to bring to fruit still fragile buds
of faith, and charity that nods
gently to Spirit's gentle wind.

Love nudges out sin's noxious weeds
which boast a false dominion there;
sees that no gate is left ajar
inviting predatory raids.

Love nurtures every sprig of hope
tending toward light; prunes away
aims threatening to reach awry,
that thought be trimmed to beauty's shape.

Love is a patient husbandman,
who works serenely to unfold
the vision, to my eyes yet veiled,
of man, His image and design.

SECTION V: Controversy over Sabbath Healing—the “woman with a spirit of infirmity” (Luke 13: 10-17)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Luke 6: 6-11

TIME LINE: The last months of Jesus’ ministry, 30 AD, at Jerusalem.

“This story, peculiar to Luke, recalls a similar incident in 6:6-11, at which time Jesus’ opponents discussed what to do to Jesus.” (HarperCollins Commentary) However, "it has great similarity with other Sabbath miracles." (New Commentary on Holy Scripture) “As a physician, [Luke] has an interest in and sympathy for stories about women, of which he records more than any other gospel writers.” (King James Commentary) "This story is told not so much for the sake of the miracle, as for the light it throws upon the question of Sabbath observance." (Dummelow Commentary) “The nature of the problem with the Jewish nation is illustrated by [this] incident in the synagogue. (Oxford Commentary) This was Jesus’ habitual Sabbath day practice. It so happened that these occasions became times when Jesus healed in addition to preaching. At this “midpoint of Luke, Jesus enters a synagogue for the last time.” (Eerdmans Commentary)

In v. 11 *had a spirit of infirmity* "suggests that her physical ailment, which left her unable to stand erect, was caused by an evil spirit." (MacArthur Commentary). However, "the story assumes a healing rather than an exorcism." (Interpreter's Dictionary) The word "hypocrite" was among the strongest ever used by Jesus. He here applies it to the whole class to whom the ruler belonged and for whom he was the spokesman--the class who are mentioned as "adversaries" in disguising their hatred toward Christ under a pretended zeal for the Sabbath. Their zeal for the Sabbath was at no time sincere, for they favored indulgence where their own interests were involved, but applied their Sabbath rules sharply where others were concerned. It was their tradition and not the Sabbath which Jesus had broken, and he here attempts no other justification of himself than to show that he is guiltless under a fair application of their own precedents. Taking their own conduct on the Sabbath day as the basis for his justification, Jesus presents three contrasts, each of which made his action better than theirs:

1. He had blessed the woman instead of an ox.
2. He had loosed from a disease instead of from a comfortable stall.
3. He had relieved a waiting of eighteen years' standing instead of one of some few hours' duration--the brief time since the watering of the morning.

He mentions the woman's descent from Abraham because, according to their ideas, it made her worthy of every consideration. In attributing the infirmity to Satan he acknowledges the action of the demon as Satan's agent. Diseases were not infrequently ascribed to Satan and the demons. The people rejoiced not only in the miracle, but in that wisdom which silenced the narrow-minded rulers.

“Here [*when Jesus saw her*, v.12] Jesus takes the initiative and acts unilaterally; it is not a matter of the woman’s quest and faith (contrast 8: 43-48).” (People’s NT Commentary) “Here [*thou art loosed*, v.12] the Greek tense is perfect and indicates that the curse was complete and certain.” (King James Bible Commentary)

"woman which had a spirit of infirmity"

“The bent-over woman demonstrates the appropriate response to her healing by praising God. But she is primarily a passive figure of inaction typical of the women in Luke, who receive healing and exorcism without any antecedent action of their own....Third, Luke here provides the only New Testament evidence for the term ‘daughter of Abraham’. By affirming her as a daughter of Abraham, [Jesus] is recognizing that she shares in the blessing that is promised to Abraham's children—thus her Sabbath liberation. On the other hand, the healing presupposes that she *is* Abraham's daughter—not that she becomes Abraham's daughter as a consequence of it. It is not a statement about her piety, nor is it used to suggest that her behavior is exemplary.” (Women in Scripture)

"Imagine what it would be like not to walk straight for eighteen years. Think of how broken one would be in spirit. This woman probably had lost all hope, because her body had been bent for so long." (All of the Women of the Bible) “She was known to observe the Sabbath laws and to reverence her God.” (Women of the Passion) "Christ spoke of this crippled woman as 'a daughter of Abraham,' and was therefore more precious in His eyes than the ox or ass about which He chided the Pharisees." (All the Women of the Bible)

“the ruler of the synagogue”

The ruler of the synagogue was “an eminent layman whose responsibilities included conducting meetings, caring for the building, and supervising the teacher in the synagogue (cf. 8:41; Matt 9:18; Mark 5:38).” (MacArthur Commentary) He objected "on the grounds that, since the illness was not life-threatening, the people, who presumably were understood as encouraging Jesus to respond to the need, might seek such healing at times other than the Sabbath." (Oxford Commentary) His complaint "is an adaptation of Deut. 5:14; man is not to work—or to heal—on the Sabbath." (Interpreter's One-volume Commentary) "What an opposite effect the miracle had on this religious leader who should have been first to lead the praises of the assembled congregation for the Master's mercy in healing the needy woman! But no, while the crowd acclaimed Christ [his] adversaries accused [him]. At the back of the ruler's adverse criticism of [Jesus'] miracle was not so much the performance of it on the Sabbath Day, but that his feelings were hurt over the popularity of the Master." (All the Women of the Bible)

Huff, Barry, “**Repentance—a transformation of life**,” BIBLE FORUM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.124 (October 2006), p. 10.

--The good news of God's reign was not the only context in which Jesus urged repentance.

- In the face of tragedy, Jesus' message of repentance remained constant.

---For example, in Luke 13, after Jesus refuted speculations that suffering and death are always signs that one is being punished for sin, he urged his audience to repent.

- Then several verses later, instead of speculating about the cause of a woman's suffering whom was “*unable to stand up straight*” for 18 years, Jesus prompted the repentance that brings healing. Upon seeing this woman, Jesus proclaimed: “*You are set free*” (Luke 13: 12 NRSV).

---Immediately the woman stood up straight and praised God. Instead of offering a philosophical proof to explain evil, Jesus offered a practical summons to overcome it: Repent. In other words, change your thought to behold God's perfect creation and live in the reality of this divine view.

“**Finding Completeness In Divine Love,**”, Christian Science Monitor (27 June 1995), p. 17.

--The Bible assures us that “*God is love.*”

--Jesus was the perfect example of man’s completeness as Love’s expression.

- In his healing work he saw each man’s, woman’s, and child’s wholeness as God’s offspring.

• In one healing recorded in Luke there was a woman who’d had “*a spirit of infirmity*” for eighteen years and “*could in no wise lift up herself*” (see Luke 13:11-13).

---In studying this account I thought of how the woman may have been feeling mentally burdened, carrying weights of low self-esteem, depression, and defeat.

- But Jesus spoke to her the powerful words “*Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*”

---This was clear proof that limiting traits, including those often attributed to women—instability, emotionalism, dependence, vulnerability—are destroyed by the healing Christ.

Swan, Mrs. Carolyn B. (CSB and Associate Editor), “**Christ straightens the crooked,**” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.88 (3 February 1986), p. 21

--One of the many Old Testament prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, or Christ, promises that “*the crooked shall be made straight.*” [Isa 40:4]

• This prophecy was fulfilled in the redeeming and healing works of Christ Jesus. Religious teachings that had strayed from straightforwardness were corrected by the Scriptural revelation he taught and the divine law illustrated by his very life.

--Luke tells of a woman who was so bent over that for eighteen years she had been unable to straighten up.

• The text says that Jesus “*called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*” And at once “*she was made straight, and glorified God.*” [Luke 13:11-13]

--Dummelow’s Bible Commentary sums up this marvelous event as “An unasked-for cure.”

--How wonderful to know that it was, is, and will be possible, as long as anyone needs it, to receive Christian healing when we expect it and sometimes even when we don’t!

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*The weekly Bible Lessons are made up of selections from the King James Version of the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.