The miracle-working power of forgiveness

"Jesus ... said, ... 'Which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven you," or to say, "Arise and walk"? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins'--then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (Matthew 9:4-6).

One of the most common expressions to be heard is this: "I can believe that God will forgive sin, but it is hard to believe He can keep me from sin." Such a person has yet to learn what is meant by God's forgiving sin.

Jesus healed the palsied man for the purpose of illustrating forgiving sin. The power in the healing of that man is the power in the forgiveness of sins. The words of Jesus made a change in him. The common idea is that when God forgives sin the

change is in Himself, that God simply ceases to hold anything against the one who has sinned. But this is to imply that God has a hardness against the man, which is not the case. It is not because He has a hard feeling in His heart against a sinner that He forgives him, but because the sinner has something in his heart. God is right, the man is wrong; therefore God forgives the man so that he may also be right.

The power that raised that man up made him walk. That power remained in him and he walked in all time to come, provided of course that he kept his faith. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He ... set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps" (Psalm 40:1,2). It is the power of God's forgiveness alone that keeps one from sin. If he continues in sin after receiving pardon, it is because he has not grasped the blessing that was given him in the forgiveness of sins.

The beginning of the Christian life is receiving the life of God by faith. How is it continued? Just as it is begun--simply holding fast the Life which at

the beginning forgives the sin. God forgives sin by taking it away. He reconciles the rebel sinner to Himself by taking away his rebellion." [1]

Note:

Waggoner, Signs of the Times, April 10, 1893.