

her affections are grovelling. How dark the mind is in a state by nature! How great the need for spiritual illumination!

Vv. 13, 14.—Christ is very patient with this dull scholar. He continues his teaching, presenting the truth in clearer light.

V. 15.—Still her views are carnal. Christ offers salvation, and she supposes he means some kind of water that will slake for all time to come the natural thirst. And had Christ left her at this stage she would never have discovered His meaning. But as He purposed to save her, He let light into her dark soul. And she believed in Him as the sequel shows. A good proof of her conversion is seen in the fact that she wished to save others. See vv. 23, 29.

LESSONS.

1. How benighted the soul is in a state by nature! It is guilty, polluted, a stranger to true happiness, and yet it realizes not its condition.

2. The world can never satisfy a human soul. All the cisterns of earth's joys may be tried, but they will be found to be "broken cisterns that can hold no water." He who drinks of these waters shall thirst again; shall still ask the question, Who will show me any good thing?

3. Christ alone can satisfy the cravings of the soul. He alone can pardon and restore to God's favor and image. By taking up His residence in the heart by His blessed Spirit. He alone can enable a man to say from sweet experience, Now I am happy. See Romans 5:1-5.

4. What matchless grace in Christ! He sought out this poor woman, addressed her most tenderly, led her on step by step until she was saved. Who would not love such a Saviour as this?

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Jesus at Bethesda*, John 5:5-15.

When Christ was on earth He went about doing good. He healed all manner of bodily disease, thus showing that there was no spiritual malady beyond His reach. This miracle of healing recorded here occurred in the earlier part of our Lord's ministry,—during His second appearance in Jerusalem after His baptism.

At Jerusalem, near one of the gates, was a pool named Bethesda—which signifies the *house of mercy*. At certain times its waters were moved, and then whoever stepped in first was healed of whatever disease he had. As might be expected many ailing persons crowded into the covered recesses around the pool waiting for the opportune moment. Among others was one whose case was indeed most distressing. For thirty-eight years he had an infirmity. Some suppose that this was brought on by certain habits of sin. See v. 14 in which Christ told him to sin no more. If this view is correct we are taught the goodness of Christ's compassion which brought

healing to such a one—and that too unasked.

Christ knew all about the case. He must therefore be divine. Incidentally many proofs of our Lord's divinity are given in the Gospels. He asked the impotent man if he wished to be healed. The reply showed that while the desire was strong, hope was feeble. He was helpless. He could not go into the healing water with sufficient alacrity, and there was none sufficiently sympathizing to aid. Each one was intent on a cure for himself or for his friends, leaving others uncared for. What selfishness! But Christ pitied. He spake the words of omnipotence, and a cure was effected.

The Jews found fault with the healed for carrying his bed on the Sabbath. If they did not know who this man was, the question they asked him was right. But if they knew that he had been a cripple and had been healed by Christ, then the question was prompted through hatred to Christ. However this may have been, v. 12 implies that they had a suspicion, at least after their question was answered, who had wrought the miracle and given the command to carry the bed.

The healed could not at first tell the Jews who cured him, but having seen Him afterwards, he informed them. This no doubt he did in honor of the healer and with no intention of exciting the hostility of His foes.

LESSONS.

1. This passage suggests the truth that in our natural condition we are morally impotent. We cannot save ourselves.

2. We should desire to be saved from our sins. What is disease of body compared with disease of soul?

3. Christ can save. He is able to save even to the uttermost. He is willing to save all who go to Him. He is the true Bethesda. The pool at Jerusalem could heal only one at a time, but Christ can save multitudes and yet have room.

4. It is right to perform works of mercy on the Sabbath.

THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Bread of Life*, John 6:47-58.

Christ had performed the miracle of feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes, and had recrossed the sea of Galilee to Capernaum. Many of the people had followed him. Their motives however were not good. They sought him because they had eaten and were filled. Christ told them so, and urged them to be more anxious about the meat which endureth unto everlasting life than about the meat that perisheth.

The people asked Christ what proof he could give that he had a right to demand of them faith in Him, stating that Moses furnished a proof of his mission by giving Manna from Heaven. Christ replied that it was God not Moses who gave the Manna. He