

Resurrection

By Dan A. Stitzer

I

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”—St. John 14-12.

John Bradford marked the verse, laid it on the foot of the bed, and then for the next ten minutes stared abstractedly into space. He neither saw nor heard physically, but on his mental vision a great light seemed to dawn.

“I wonder! I just wonder,” he repeated to himself over and over.

He looked up at the little alarm clock and noted the time:—ten P. M. He hurriedly changed his slippers for his shoes, grabbed his hat and ten minutes later rang the bell of a noted eye specialist, a particular friend of his.

The doctor came to the door himself, being unoccupied at that hour of the night. He greeted him with a cordial:

“Why, how are you, John? Come right in.”

He ushered him into his comfortable waiting room and wistfully waited for his friend to speak. After a few moments of perfect silence, as though it was the most momentous question in the universe, Bradford solemnly asked him:

“Doctor, people stricken blind through sickness— scarlet fever for instance—what happens to the eye or the optic nerve? What organic change takes place? Is the nerve destroyed?”

“Hm-m! Has your lady friend gone blind?”

“No, I simply want to know out of idle curiosity.”

“At ten o’clock at night?”

“Yes, at one o’clock, if I desired to know and you were still up.”

The doctor pondered for a few moments:

“The sense of sight is excited by the action of light on the retina. By this action a change is produced on the optic nerve fibers, and is conveyed by these to the brain, the result being a sensation of light or color. Now, in a case of blindness caused, we will presume, by scarlet-fever, no organic change takes place. Neither the eye nor the optic nerve is destroyed, and in some cases no one but a trained specialist would detect anything the matter with the eye without the aid of instruments. Blindness caused by a fever, I would say, is like a scorching or burning of the optic nerve, a paralysis due to the abnormally high temperature of the patient. The nerve, physically, is not destroyed; functionally, it is, and therefore dead; and where total blindness is the result can never be restored.”

“What I can’t understand is, why nature is unable to restore what it has destroyed; when it has not destroyed organically, but only functionally.” John answered.

“That I am unable to answer. Science may some day be able to answer the question,” the doctor answered stroking his chin perplexedly.

“Science! Science is too materialistic; it does not believe in anything else,” Bradford answered warmly.

“Quite so. Science works through and by nature’s laws. Whatsoever it cannot test and prove by those laws, it discards, rejects, and throws aside. How could it otherwise when its object is to discover and teach the truth. But to come back to the point: You must remember, in the present supposition the nerve cells, or rather their usefulness is destroyed.”

“Is that organic destruction?”

“No, but functional; in the case in point it amounts to the same thing.”

“And thereby doctor, you are begging the question and contradicting what your profession is teaching every day when it says that every act and every thought is produced at the expense and destruction of cells which are again renewed by new ones taking their place. According to your professional theory, total blindness is irreparable. According to mine it is not, and under certain conditions it may be restored.”

“I know what you mean. But has any one of your cult ever produced the goods?”

“Yes, One; and He taught the art to others, and they also produced the goods, as you term it. He commanded His followers to ‘Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,’ all through faith. And my faith is such, that it takes more than a professional theory to shake it. But it is getting late,” drawing out his watch and noting the time. “I thank you for the information you have given me. I want to go home now and—think.”

The doctor ushered him to the door, and after bidding each other good-night, John wended his way homeward thinking his professional friend narrowminded and prejudiced. The doctor retreated into his waiting-room, muttering under his breath concerning his friend’s dreams and superstitious theories.

“With his Hypnotism, his Spiritualism, and his Christian Science—he can’t talk on any other subject any more. He’ll go crazy some day, and I feel sorry for him,” he said, shaking his head wearily over his friend’s sad fate.

Arriving in his room, Bradford again put on his slippers, took off his collar, and after lighting his pipe settled himself in his big, comfortable Morris chair and once more stared into vacancy. Pipe after pipe he refilled, and not until the suffocating fumes in the room started him to cough did he note the lateness of the hour—three o’clock Sunday morning. He hurriedly raised the windows, undressed and went to bed.

II

On his way to work in the morning, Bradford passed by a small corner grocery inside of which and behind the show window he had often noticed a little child seated on some high box or stool, gazing listlessly through the window into the street beyond. She never seemed to take notice of him nor anything else, unless it was the recognition of a passing footfall, the rattling of a wagon over the cobble-stones, a trolley-car, or a few words spoken by her elder sister who stood behind the counter to serve customers.

She appeared to him such a demure, forlorn-looking, little child, with such pale, beautiful, classical features as though cut out of marble. Her long, chestnut hair was hanging loosely about her neck and shoulders.

Her appearance touched him, and he often felt as though he would like to enter and hold her to his breast. Her appearance prompted him to discover something about her history; so one evening on his way home he inquired of one of the little street urchins about her.

“Do you mean little Mary in the store?” the child asked.

“Yes in the grocery store.”

“Oh she can’t see. She had a fever and went blind.”

He thanked the child and continued on his way.

From that time on the fate of this little child was uppermost in his mind. How he longed for power to help her!

For many years he had been a student of Occult Science in all its phases. He had not only been a student but had also practised it—especially Hypnotism—successfully, and thoroughly understood the power of the subjective mind over the body. He was a great Bible student and loved to read about the miracles of Christ, that greatest of all occultists.

“Were they miracles?” he oftentimes asked himself the question. Christ never called them so. They were the manifestations of a natural law thoroughly understood by the Master; a law, the control and understanding of which was latent in every rational human being if he but knew how to develop it; and most imperfectly understood by our sceptical scientists. Thus it happened on that particular evening, while reading his Bible he came across the verse:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”—St. John 54.12.

And this naturally brought to his mind the fate of the little girl in that little grocery store.

Several questions relative to the child’s blindness suggested themselves to him which he was unable to answer professionally. “Imbecile that I am,” he rasped between his teeth as he jumped out of his chair to don his street attire. Thus he came to visit his oculist friend.

One morning, soon after, as he passed the store, he noticed that there were no customers in. He turned back and entered.

The child was in her accustomed place, seated on the box, looking more sad than ever, he thought. Her sister was busy opening a box of oranges. As an excuse for entering, he bought a half dozen of them.

“How is your little sister this morning?” he asked while producing the necessary change to pay for them. “They tell me she is blind.”

“Yes sir, she is totally blind,” the girl answered.

“What was the cause of her blindness?” he asked in assumed ignorance.

“It was caused by fever, sir, six years ago. The doctor says she will never see. We had her to the eye hospital where they told us the same thing.”

“What does your father do?”

“Father died five years ago. That is the reason we keep this store.”

“How old is she now?”

“Eight years, sir.”

While he was getting this information the child sat motionless, patiently waiting for the rays of the sun to light up her wan, little face, as she had been accustomed to, morning after morning for years, drinking in his healing rays.

Bradford watched her in silence for several minutes. His heart went out to her as she sat there so forlorn, so forsaken; and again he felt that desire to take her in his arms and express to her his great sympathy for her. He walked over and gently placed his hand on her head. She turned her face up toward his, her sightless eyes meeting his, a faint smile on her lips.

“Little sister, what are you waiting for?”

“For the sun, sir,” she said, turning her face toward the east again.

“Did you ever see the sun, little sister?”

To be addressed as “little sister” by this strange man pleased her.

“I do not know, sir, but it shines so nice and warm on my face—and it makes me feel better,” she said, her face lighting up at the pleasure she derived from the interest he took in her.

It had been a threatening morning and vainly had she been waiting for the sun to break through with his warm rays.

“Some day you will again see it—that great, big ball of fire in the sky—the same as your sister and I see it when it shines,” he told her.

How her sad, little face lit up as she listened to his words, spoken in such a deep bass voice, so firmly and so convincingly! To her they were the sweetest message ever brought to her ears in all her sad, little life, and which to her had seemed so long.

“Do you believe what I have said?” he asked.

How could she doubt? The message had been to her as coming from some Guardian Spirit. Her very innocence prompted her to believe.

“Yes,” she answered, quietly but firmly, to his question.

“If I tell you something, can you remember it? It is very easy.

“I think so,” she answered confidently.

“Very good, my little friend,” he said as he took her seat and placed her on his lap. “Tonight, when you go to bed, and after you have said your little prayer, you repeat these words to yourself: ‘I am going to see; I am going to see.’ Keep on saying them and believing them until you fall asleep. This you do every night and every morning, and during the day whenever you think of it; and I also will do my part. Then some morning you will wake up and see the sun and all the other beautiful things you cannot now see—the flowers, the birds, the trees—and your little heart will be filled with joy.”

At this moment there was a rift in the clouds, the sun shining through with a bright, mellow light, his rays lighting up the child’s face whose cheeks were flushed with a pale pink, under the excitement.

He gazed in rapture on the child’s face. He had never seen such a beautiful, radiantly happy face in all his life. It appeared as though his words were blessed with the benediction of Heaven.

“How nice and warm it feels!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, and it means a good sign for your happiness.”

Never before had he experienced such joy as he did at that moment. He spontaneously clasped the child in his arms and pressed a kiss on her lips. She put her frail, little arms about his neck, tears of joy filling her eyes as she clung to him with all her little strength. From that moment he was her knight, her hero—yea her saviour, All doubts, if she had any, were dispelled from that moment. How could she doubt after hearing him speak such beautiful words—words for which she had been yearning all her long, dreary years.

That night, after she had gone to bed, she hurriedly recited the prayer she had been taught. She was impatient to offer one as her overflowing little heart dictated. First she asked a blessing on her friend; this kind, generous man who had told her such a wonderful story of the joys she was to experience before so very long—the joy of romping and jumping, and playing with her little companions; the joy of beholding the face of her sister and mother; the joy of beholding the sun, the grass, the flowers, and the little birds in the great light of day which had been blotted out of her life, and which had dwarfed her body and soul.

Then she asked a blessing upon her own little self: that this good man’s words might come true, and that the good Saviour would never forget his little friend in her great darkness, after which she repeated those words as she had been told.

III

That evening, all by himself in his room, Bradford consulted the Scripture. He searched through the four gospels for passages favorable to increasing and confirming his faith. When he came to the passage, "Oh ye of little faith! if your faith were but like a mustard seed," he inquired of himself whether his faith measured up to the size of a mustard seed. He believed in his heart, it did. He was a staunch believer in the Bible and its teachings; and in his theory of mental healing he had unbounded confidence. While in the hypnotic class he had seen demonstrations which he could not have believed otherwise. Had he not seen a cancer removed from the Professor's wife's cheek? Had he not seen a man's hearing restored? All through hypnotic suggestion. These were the facts that confirmed his faith.

After ten o'clock, the time he thought necessary for the child to be sound asleep, he retired and set his mind to work. For one hour he concentrated his powerful mind and will on his helpless little friend, projecting his thoughts on her subjective mind, telepathically, forgetting everything else concerning himself and his immediate surroundings.

Night after night, week after week, he continued in this practice. Several times he dropped into the store to speak encouragingly to his little patient. He always brought her joy. Her faith in her eventual recovery was supreme and he was well satisfied. He cautioned her and her sister not to mention it to anyone.

She told him of a wonderful dream she had had: in which he appeared unto her; and that he took her by the hand and led her into a beautiful valley with cool running water and singing birds; and that she became very tired and laid down on the soft grass to rest; that he covered her with his coat, after which she fell into a deep sleep. When she awoke everything had been changed. Whereas before it had been darkness now everywhere it was light—such a glorious light. The birds—and, oh! they were such beautiful birds—were flying from tree to tree giving expression to their joy and freedom. Beautiful colored flowers nodded their heads to her wherever she went; the grass under her feet felt soft as velvet; and above all this, high in the sky, was that great, yellow ball of fire shining over all, and kissing it with his warm rays.

This dream represented to him a good omen and he was determined,—yea with an angry stamp of the foot, as it were,—he was determined to succeed. He knew that his powerful, positive mind was getting control over her subjective mind, and that, through his dominating influence she would eventually see.

Spring came with its joyful proclamation. All nature asserted itself; the ice and snow melted, the violets bloomed, the trees shot forth their leaves, and the birds began to mate and build their nests.

She still sat, every morning, on her high stool; not with that forlorn, disconsolate expression on her face, but with impatient expectancy waiting for his foot fall, which she unerringly detected. So one morning as he passed the door she tapped and beckoned him! to enter. She sprang into his arms and told him the glad tidings—that she could see him dimly. She could even tell the bright spot in the sky from where the sun shone. There was still a mist before her eyes, she explained, but she could see his form if he stood in the light.

He was overjoyed. What would his oculist friend think now? He asked her mother's permission to come and see her that night. He hurried home and hastily ate his dinner. He was impatient to be with the little girl. This night was to be the culmination of his efforts. He knew he would succeed in restoring her eyesight.

After she had been put to bed, he went up into her room alone. He held her thin, little hand in his and told her stories out of the "Arabian Nights" of "Sinbad the Sailor," and "Alladin and his Wonderful Lamp," until she became drowsy. He now exerted his hypnotic powers over her until he had induced a sound sleep.

The crucial time had arrived. He concentrated the entire power of his mind on the object to be attained. Over and over he repeated suggestions to her, telling her she would wake up with her eyesight restored. For a long time he continued thus, beads of perspiration standing out on his forehead. He became mentally weary. He finally released her hand and went downstairs, telling them not to disturb her in the morning; that she would wake about noon time. He went home fully convinced that his work was accomplished.

The next morning he avoided the store by taking another route. In the evening when he passed the store the mother stood under the door. She asked him to come in, and a moment after ushered him into the sitting room. He heard the patter of little feet, and a moment later she appeared, her whole body and soul expressive of the great joy she felt.

He held her in his arms all that evening until late in the night, she telling him of the great surprise in the morning when she awoke and discovered she could see plainly; he, telling her stories, caressing her and playing with her hair.

The next day being Sunday, he took her out into the park amongst the flowers, the birds, and the trees.

Thus the Spring, as in nature, had brought unto her Resurrection and a new Life.