

man through. In Greek, dug it apart. No small disturbance to speaker and hearers below, the noise of digging, the sifting down of dust and larger fragments of earth, the increase of light as the aperture grew larger, the sight of perspiring figures above, and at last the pale and helpless invalid lowered and laid out on the floor. **Bed.** In Greek, a camp bed, a stretcher. No bedsteads in the Orient. **5. Their faith.** The faith of the sick man, who had doubtless asked to be carried, and that of the four, who believed it worth while to make great exertions to fulfill his desire. It was a larger faith than the leper's; it said not only he can heal, but he will. It was a belief that reckoned the getting into Jesus's presence equivalent to recovery. **Saith.** He saw in their faith larger possibilities, and with the quick response of divine love he did for them abundantly above what they had asked or thought. Jesus saw more in the man than we can: he may have seen his sins as the cause of his disease and a grief for his sins deeper than his yearning for health. **Son.** The Greek is "child," betokening an address of encouragement. Matthew adds, "be of good cheer." **Thy sins.** Does not sickness sometimes so reveal the soul's condition that one desires spiritual peace more than recovery? **Are forgiven.** The forgiveness is too much like a wish. Jesus speaks of what he knows. He has forgiven the man himself.

II. Jesus Reproves the Scribes (vers. 6-10). 6. Scribes. Their business was to copy the Scriptures. They were professional interpreters, walking commentators, whose learning was mixed with pride. Read what Jesus said about them as a class. Matt. 23. They have heard of the new teaching (1. 22) in Capernaum, and are glad they can listen for themselves. Where were they from? See Luke 11, 17. **Sitting.** In the best seats (Mt. 11, 23, & Rev. Ver.), in the attitude of listeners. **Reasoning.** Inquiring about the motives of Jesus. **7. This man, Greek, "this,"** expressing scorn. **Thus speak.** He speaks either with recklessness or else with intentional falsity. **Blasphemes.** Belittles a divine, by speaking of it as a human prerogative. **Who can forgive.** The earnest question sustains the charge of blasphemy. If none but God can pardon, no human being should ever pretend that he can do so. **8. Straightway.** Jesus makes a swift reply to their faulty reasoning. **In his spirit.** Not in his heart, as ver-6. We recall (1. 10) the descent of the Spirit and understand supernatural perception here (Acts 10. 38; 1 John 1. 32). **These things.** Or, in these ways. He meets their contentions by a proof of the faultiness of their reasoning: You reason that the man is not forgiven, and hence that I am flippant and blasphemous in saying so. You think I say he is forgiven, because I can thus deceive the common people more easily. You think I would not dare say, "Be healed," because that would require a miracle, and you reason that in pretending to do what only God can do my pretense would be detected. I will now proceed to claim divine power in a realm where you can judge for yourselves whether I really possess such power, or only pretend that I do. I will command this man to do what God alone can enable him to do. You will be able then to see that your reasoning is at fault. (How startled must

they have been!) **9. Whether.** Which one of two courses. **10. May know.** By an infallible proof brought to your own senses. **Son of man.** A title applied by Jesus to himself, but never used by his disciples, except once by the dying Stephen (Acts 7. 56). The scribes would remember Dan. 7. 13, and understand Jesus's use of it as a claim to Messiahship. "It is the name by which the Lord ordinarily in one pregnant word designates himself as the Messiah, the Son of God manifested in the flesh of man—the second Adam; and to it belong all those conditions of humiliation, suffering, and exaltation which it behooved the Saviour of men to go through."—*Alford*. He confirms their reasoning that he is human. He will not simply say that he is God (John 1. 1). He is human as well as divine. Touched with a feeling of human infirmities, destined to die for human sins, he has a right to forgive men their sins (John 8. 11). **12. Arose.** How pleased the four men looking down through the roof must have been now! The forgiveness of the man's sins must have been as unexpected to them as to the scribes, and not quite satisfactory. **Take up thy bed.** Compare John 5. 1-18.

III. Jesus Heals the Paralytic (vers. 11, 12). 11. I say unto thee. I bid one lying before me paralyzed to do what he cannot in his own strength possibly do. He thus demonstrates the presence of some other power than that of the man addressed, or possessed by any man. **Go unto thine house.** Not "walk," as in ver. 9, but proceed home as naturally as any well man would. **Take up the bed.** Promptly performed a physical act which shows the completeness of his restoration. **Went forth.** He did not have to get out through the roof, there's room to pass through the press now. No place in their hearts for sympathy, but plenty for wonder. **Before them all.** Scribes included. Every body who heard Jesus ask, "Which is easier?" had full opportunity to see that a miracle was as easy to him as saying the man was forgiven.

III. Application.

Can you so use the facts of this lesson as to fulfill Mark's design in recording them? (See Definition, Lesson I, Sec. 1. (c) and (d).) Who forgave sins? (ver. 9.) Did the one forgiven know it? Do you know that your sins are forgiven? Does each of your pupils know this for himself? How may he? (Rom. 8. 16; Gal. 4.6.) ... Did Moses, Elijah, or Paul dare say, "I forgive thee"? Did not Jesus claim divinity? See John 5. 27, 28. Are any in your class doubtful on this fundamental question? ... The advantages of co-operation (ver. 3). What people can do when they work together.... When Christ is in a home it gets noised abroad (ver. 1)... Grumbling (ver. 6, 7) out of place in a Christian (Phil. 2. 14)... The Lord's co-operation with those who endeavor to bring others to him. Have you, have any of your pupils, proved this?... The salvation of a soul more important than the symmetry of a lesson or sermon... Salvation: "How is your health?" More important: "Are your sins forgiven?" 3 John 2. Are not other applications suggested to you? One's own are often best. Editate. Pray.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Forgiveness and healing. Mark 2. 1-12.
M. Forgiveness and healing. Mark 2. 13-17.
W. Forgiveness with God. Psa. 130.
Th. Prayer for pardon. Psa. 25. 1-11.
F. Saving the lost. Luke 19. 1-10.
S. Forgive, as ye are forgiven. Luke 6. 27-37.
S. Rejoicing in forgiveness. Psa. 103. 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. Psa. 103. 3.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 85, Dominion Hymnal.
I am coming to the cross;
I am poor, and weak, and blind.
No. 86, Dominion Hymnal.
I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice,
And it told thy love to me.
No. 73, Dominion Hymnal.
All my doubts I give to Jesus,
I've his gracious promise heard.

TIME.—27 A. D.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

RULERS.—Same as before.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Forgiveness.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Forgiving Iniquities.

What evidence of the great popularity of Jesus in this lesson?
What at this time seems to have been his one purpose?
For what purpose only did he perform miracles?
What was it moved Jesus to say to the palsied man, "Son, thy sins," etc.?
How had great faith been shown?
Why should Jesus have made the response he did to their act?
Did he do it to provoke controversy?
What makes this day specially important in the history of his life-work?

2. Healing Diseases.

What ericism was passed upon him by some present?
What argument is contained in Jesus's question to the scribes?