

was obliged to go away across the lake. Meanwhile, on the part of the Pharisees and others, jealousy and opposition were steadily on the increase. Then came the *first apparent check*. The cure of a demoniac coupled with the judgment of sin (in the case of the keepers of the swine) resulted in a request from the people that He "would depart out of their coasts." So ended the first missionary journey.

In His own district He encountered a *second apparent check*, not for healing the sick and judging sin, as in the last case, but for healing the sick and forgiving sin, in the case of a palsied man. This event, as a lesson to His disciples, preparatory to a more extended missionary journey, gave the key to the view taken by Jesus of His work. Sickness no less than sin was one of those works of the devil which He had come to destroy.

Thus, *in the first place*, He spoke of an infirm woman as one "whom Satan hath bound." So, too, Peter described Him as "healing all that were oppressed of the devil." So Paul spoke of his own bodily affliction as "the messenger of Satan;" so in Hebrews it is said, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also . . . took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil—and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

*In the second place*, Jesus here based His action on an argument which, as a syllogism, stands thus:

The cure of sickness and the forgiveness of sins are equally the prerogative of God; I heal sickness without usurping that prerogative (*i.e.*, committing blasphemy); therefore I forgive sins without blasphemy. Or, the cure of sickness and the forgiveness of sins are identical in nature; I heal sickness; therefore I can forgive sins.

In a similar way, in the cure of a demoniac, Jesus argued: By the finger of God (or Spirit of God) only can cure be wrought; I cure; therefore I cure by the finger of God (or Spirit of God).

No man, as a mere man, can make the statement in the minor premiss of either argument. Just as no mere man can forgive sins, so no mere man can cure or heal. A farmer merely sows the seed, but God gives the increase; a doctor merely gives treatment, it is God who cures. A medical man, going in the power of God among the heathen, and showing the practical mercy and love of the Master, would, if but wholly filled with the Spirit, undoubtedly come very near to a modern representative of Jesus as He appeared to the men among whom He lived.

After the record of the two checks, there follow examples of *teaching in a centre of opposition*—to opponents and questioners—arising out of the preceding cure. Immediately after that cure Jesus, making His healing power a text for His preaching, used a further application of the same argument to confute the objection of the Pharisees that He associated with sinners, and said in effect: "I came not to heal the whole but the sick, the sick in body and the sick in soul, sinners and not righteous men."