

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

JESUS AS TEACHER AND HEALER

(By Rev. Professor Jordan, D.D.)

These verses set our Lord before us under two aspects, viz.—as Teacher and Healer. He entered into Capernaum and as soon as it was the Sabbath again he taught in the Synagogue; henceforth the teaching will be the most prominent abiding thing in his ministry, it is the force which is to mould the lives of his disciples, create inspired apostles and change the current of the world's life. But in this particular passage it is the healing power which is selected for our special consideration. This also was a manifestation of his unique personality, the power of divine life in human form, the influence of a pure and perfectly healthful being. This affected very powerfully the imagination of his contemporaries and it stirred up an excitement which he labored to keep within bounds. On some it had more effect than the clear strong teaching, so that their great argument was "when the Christ does come will he work more miracles than this man?" This again, inflamed the bigoted passion of his fierce opponents, so that they were driven to their worst device, namely, that of attributing his extraordinary power to diabolical influence. We still stand with reverent adoration before this manifestation of beneficent power. He who refused to use the strange powers of his deepest life to minister to his own needs carries every where a living helpful force. Though we reject the many foolish fads and dangerous doctrines which are so often suggested now by the word "healing," we still in a very real sense look to Jesus as the healer and helper of our whole life as well as our teacher. Faith in him has a healthful influence over the spirit and the body.

Many of our Lord's miracles, may we not say all of them are parables of man's deepest life. We cannot explain the process. In answer to many a question concerning the "how" we have to fall back upon the words of the man who was born blind "one thing I know that whereas I was blind now I see." But the fact stands there as a constant testimony of the power of Jesus to meet our varied needs, and the spiritual lessons are always clear and direct.

The Lord Jesus in the Synagogue. He who had long sat in silence as a scholar assumes the position of teacher, and the thing that strikes all observers, at once, is his unlike-ness to the ordinary teachers. His style was fresh and unconventional living and authoritative. This was to them certainly a new teaching; but here the prominent thing is not the matter of the teaching but the power that accompanied it. It excited the hearers even those who were most sober and stolid and one afflicted creature began to raise a tumult and in his own way to give testimony. Uncleanness is stirred by the presence of purity; the evil spirits are tormented, when goodness appears in radiant powerful forms. But this kind of testimony Jesus Christ cannot accept. The real witness to his power must come from a sound mind; from a heart that he has cleansed and a conscience that he has quickened. In the presence of this wretchedness Jesus shows his true dignity and power. At his word the strange unnatural tumult of the soul is stilled, there is one last struggle and then health and peace. Even we who are in comparative health may learn that He has power to cheer morbid conditions and to still feverish excitement.

The Lord Jesus in the house. The favorite word of Mark "straightway" gives the impression of swift movement and constant activity and such was no doubt the features of our Lord's ministry at this time. Not hasting and not resting, "He went about doing good." The scene shifts from the synagogue to the home, but still the subject is healing. We meet in the quiet circle of the home sickness of a different kind. Even in the place where he goes for rest and friendly fellowship there is need for his beneficent activity; everywhere there is work for him. It is the busy man who is most needed and who, as a rule, is ready to do the most work. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever and "straightway" they speak to him of her. It was quite natural that they should tell him the sorrow that was in their home; and today this is our way to comfort and relief. To have Jesus as our intimate friend, our helper in the home, is still a sweet privilege; and the order here is the same as in our own life, first his effective services gently rendered, then our work in the spirit of gratitude. His touch had healing power; it is the symbol of the life that comes through contact and communion with him. The fever which we are afraid to touch, from which we often flee in cowardly incapacity, he drove away. Then she arose and ministered unto him; she became one of the many women who rendered service to Christ during his earthly ministry. This was in every case a service of gratitude. Jesus had touched their hearts and lives and had drawn forth the service which was given first to him personally and then to the poor and needy "in his name". Thus the true church is created a church not simply of creed and ritual but of sympathetic life.

Ex-territorial rights for foreigners, in certain countries of the East are well understood as absolutely necessary for safety. Why missionaries in China should claim them for their converts, however, has never been clear, and the abuse of the privilege by the Roman Catholics has been felt to be back of a great deal of the trouble in that country, and a real grievance against which the Chinese government had a right to protest. The other side is brought out by the Chicago "Interior," and is called forth by the new treaties being negotiated between England and China. These new treaties look to the subjection of all English residents, merchants and missionaries alike, to Chinese law and Chinese courts. The "Interior" says, "Heretofore English and American citizens could defend themselves in consular courts before representatives of their own nations. Missionaries are, therefore, not a little agitated over this phase of the present situation, affirming that Chinese courts away from the seacoast are as a rule only recognized agencies of blackmail, and that the provincial judges no more regard the law of a case than would highway robbers. When missionaries have heretofore interfered to protect their converts, it was only to deliver the stricken out of the paw of the lion. They cite instance after instance of robbery, imprisonment and even capital punishment upon the part of native judges who use their courts merely for the gratification of greed and revenge. Missionaries have of late been compelled to sit silently by and see men of irreproachable character accused of the most heinous crimes and punished at the will of the judges."

The highest good in many lies in the good they meant to do.

THE PSALMS IN METRE.

We have several times referred to the work of the committee on revision of the Psalms. On this side the Atlantic the result of its labors was received with almost a unanimous chorus of commendation. In Scotland the authorized version has still its warm friends, and in the following we present our readers with the criticism of "Auld Licht," as given in "St. Andrews," the ably conducted journal for the young men of the Church of Scotland:

It is ten years since the nine Presbyterian Churches of America set about the revision of the Psalter. The committee then appointed began its serious work in 1900, and since then it has met half-yearly for a series of lengthened sittings. The objects aimed at have been five in number—(1) A faithful rendering into English verse of the exact thought of each Psalm; (2) the adoption for each Psalm of the "metre" best adapted to the sentiment; (3) a careful division of each Psalm into stanzas corresponding with the strophes of the original; (4) a careful presentation of the parallelisms abounding in the Psalms and of the poetic figures and metaphors used; and (5) the use of English that is at once idiomatic and Biblical, and at the same time current in the best poetical literature. In all, twenty-three "meters" are employed.

The work has not yet been issued, but it is on the eve of production and selection of a few examples cannot fail to be read with interest in Scotland, where the Authorized Version, notwithstanding the serious inroads that have been made upon the service of praise by hymnology, is still not only in common use, but also associated inextricably with all that is best in the life of the country. How far the revisers have succeeded may best be judged by their rendering of verses or stanzas from a few of the best known and most commonly used Psalms. It may, however, be pronounced that the only Psalm remaining absolutely untouched is the hundredth; and the minimum of change is to be found in the twenty-third, where the translators have contented themselves with converting "My table Thou hast furnished" into "A table Thou hast furnished me." A second rendering of the same Psalm opens thus—

The Lord, my Shepherd, holds me
Within His tender care;
And with His flock He folds me,
No want shall find me there.
In pastures green He feeds me;
With plenty I am blest;
By quiet streams He leads me,
And makes me safely rest.

In the old-time communions in the Church to which the writer "belonged" the first table was filled up to the verses in the twenty-fourth Psalm, beginning "Who is the man that shall ascend," the precursor intoning the lines preparatory to the people singing them. In their new guise the verses are hardly recognizable—

What man shall the hill of Jehovah ascend?
And who in the place of His Holiness stand?
The man of pure heart and of hands without stain,
Who swears not to falsehood, nor loves what is vain.

He shall from Jehovah the blessing receive,
The God of salvation shall righteousness give;
For this is the people, yes, this is the race,
The Israel true that are seeking His face.