

up the people for the advancement of their salvation. We hope that our suggestions will not be thrown away, and that we shall soon have correspondence to show what we have said are "words in season."

STUDIES ON PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

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No. 8.

St. Matt. ix. 2-9; St. Mark ii. 1-14; St. Luke v. 17-28.

The cure of the palsied or paralytic man at Capernaum is described with such minuteness by the Synoptists, that we cannot but believe that there was some distinct purpose in this fulness of detail. But we shall look at only one part of the story, and happily it is a part that must always claim attention. There has hitherto, however, been comparatively little profit, because there is the dread of coming to some direct issue. What is the most probable motive for our Lord's saying first, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and then adding, "Arise and walk"? According to the Evangelists the second part was given to enlighten the Scribes and Pharisees in their rigid unbelief: "but that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy house." But why did He not follow the natural method of curing the disease and at the same time of assuring the man regarding forgiveness? Why did He mention at all the forgiveness of his sins? And what radical connection was there in Jesus' mind between the man's physical state and his spiritual?

We must remove the idea that our Lord was posturing before the Scribes and Pharisees, and that He was dealing with the paralytic as a lay figure for the sake of the bystanders: to the soul as really as to the body He gave a distinct cure. Some of the Scribes made a show of zeal for God's prerogative by asking, "Who can forgive sins but God only," and contrary to His usual custom He gave them a sign to overcome their unbelief. This induces us to look into the conditions a little more minutely. The paralytic had been ingeniously introduced into Jesus' presence, and in acknowledgment of the bearers' faith the Lord gave words of power, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Our first enquiry is, where then was the point of contact between their faith and the man's forgiveness? Is forgiveness such that it can be conferred irrespective of the soul's condition, so that my faith can blot out your sin? The second point is the query as to what was forgiven. Was it the general condition of sinfulness or some special sins—was the man's soul to be made as a blank sheet so that he began afresh in the ways of this sinful world, or did some special sins weigh upon his soul, so that these were the sins that the Lord forgave? And the third enquiry is as whether there was any moral connection between the first part of the incident and the second. Was the bodily cure a mere sign to the unbelieving Scribes, or was there a real connection between the two parts, so that the second came as a fitting sequel to the first, and the order could not well have been reversed?

The bearers' faith brought the palsied man to Jesus and inclined Him to grant their request, but there must have been a preparation in the man's own heart in order to enable him to receive the forgiveness of his sins. Pardon of sin being a purely spiritual act, must be between the soul and God alone, but in this case the faith of others came in as the immediate solvent to bring these

into contact, while the man's own spiritual condition was the ground of Jesus' act in forgiving him his sins. No matter how strong the faith of the others had been, if the man himself had not been in a condition of penitence and spiritual desire of release from his burden. This introduces the second question as to the sins forgiven. These were sins, not sin or a condition of sinfulness. These were sins on the conscience, mind and memory, which were crying for forgiveness and received it. Sins in general may admit of a very general confession, but they have little weight in touching the conscience, or in being truly repented of: they may mass up as a burden too heavy to be borne, and yet it is by minute and personal self-examination into individual sins that our forgiveness is secured. It is therefore hardly possible for us to imagine any forgiveness given to this paralytic but of sins lying upon the conscience—sins of which he felt himself verily guilty, and sins which, but for the intervention of his friends, might have awaited the mercy of the Great Judge at the last day. The third enquiry is thus probably simplified. Jesus cured the soul of sins and cured the body of disease. We cannot but have the conviction that the two conditions were very closely connected, and that the palsy or paralysis had been induced by a sinful course. We need not shirk the fact that disease is often contracted by actual sin, the constitution ruined, and the way of transgressors made hard. But this very affliction may have its healing effect of showing sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and the deformity of the body may, under God's guidance, be accepted as a witness to a like deformity in the soul. We know as a fact that God does unite such spiritual or moral and physical conditions in many different ways, and the question of the disciples respecting the born-blind was distinctly human: the idea of a special visitation in sickness is laid down in our office for visitation for the sick. There is, then, every reason for our supposing that this stroke of palsy or paralysis was the result of this man's evil doing, and that the result of it upon his constitution was the means of recalling his own sin to his remembrance, and that the sense of his sins was lying heavy upon his conscience when the four friends made their way to lay him before Jesus? Jesus commenced at what was the root of his disease, but might have left the paralysis as a daily remembrance of what his past had been. For other ends the Lord wrought a cure on both soul and body, and we cannot wonder that he "departed to his house, glorifying God." But how much fuller does this interpretation present the whole incident, than when we see him pardoned in no particular sins, and recognise no special way in which "the works of God should be manifest in him." God's ways are marvellous and are worth our trying to find them out as far as we can.

PASTORAL FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has addressed the following Pastoral Letter to the Archdeacons and Rural Deans of his diocese:—

My dear Archdeacons and Rural Deans,—At the close of our annual gathering held here last Wednesday, you asked me to assist you in meeting the wishes of the clergy who wrote to you for guidance and advice as to the bearing upon their own services of the judgment which, with five right reverend Assessors, I have been called upon to deliver in a recent ritual suit. The request is plainly a reasonable one, and indeed I felt that I scarcely fulfilled my duty to my beloved diocese if I felt myself in the distant relation towards it of provincial judge, without, as your Bishop, writing you a few words of counsel for Christ's and His Church's sake on questions involved.

To judge of particulars wisely, we must take up one or two general considerations. We cannot learn our latitudes without reference to higher objects.

I ask the clergy then to consider the disproportion between those points of ritual which have been contested and the grand characteristics in which all agree of our English Eucharistic service—a liturgy Scriptural, primitive, with Communion in both kinds, in the mother tongue, free from superstitious or doubtful devotions, most reverent, yet truly "Common," the humblest people sharing every prayer and every action. Besides this great Catholic and Reformed heritage the diversities are small indeed. And when these diversities and questionings are contrasted with the tremendous burden of duty to Christianity and to mankind which this age above all ages binds on the shoulders of our Church above all Churches, the overwhelming contrast casts a new light on Christ's searching saying, that the world itself has to suffer for the "stumbling-blocks" among ourselves (St. Matt. xviii. 7).

I ask all to consider the vital importance of peace, charity, unity. Without these we can make no impression on the world's tasks which are ours to do. Without them we can carry no conviction of Divinity in our Faith. Without them, we cannot solve one great problem. Without them, in the presence of an enmity ready to pour in at every breach, our highest aims will become unattainable and our position almost indefensible. And peace and charity and unity are being visibly set at naught because we will not impose this essential on ourselves—such silence and stillness about differences as make the peace of families, above all of the household of God.

I ask the clergy to consider the ruling principle of St. Paul's life and counsel, that all that is lawful is not expedient; that the feeling of the flock of Christ is the substance and evidence of expediency; that they who have insight enough to know and act safely on the knowledge that things which bordered on even heathen ceremonies (1 Cor. viii. x.; vi. 12; Rom. xiv.) were not really dangerous, but admissible when understood by Christian intelligence, were nevertheless bound by a wisdom higher than knowledge, and a law greater than that of the new freedom of the Church; bound, like himself, to limit choice by expediency; bound to abstain not only from the parade of their convictions, but from the very use of them when surrounded by eyes that would be pained and spirits that would suffer at sight of what seemed their dangerous advance.

I feel that to say so much as this gives to those who are uneasy the right to ask men if I do not fear that men are in danger of being led to the Church of Rome. I answer, I do not. Considering how much wrong Christianity and this country suffered during the Roman domination, I do not wonder that fears arise. I lament the imperfect acquaintance with the subject, the unworthiness, the injustice to worshippers, with which the dignity and simplicity of the English use may anywhere be spoilt by imitations of past or foreign modes. But I do not think this will lead to Rome. With my predecessor, I believe that while our service is in this mother tongue of ours and is the glory of it, and Scripture makes so large a part of it, and inspires the whole, and is in every home and every hand, and the clergy as citizens and fathers of families, there will be no following for Rome. It has been shown that in all these years she has effected here a multiplication of edifices and institutions, but not of souls; that she makes no statistical progress. No. The ancient Church of England is with us. I do not fear that the new Italian Mission will make anything of our clergy or people. This is a digression I feel bound to make.

Again I entreat the clergy to reflect that there is no Church in the world in which parish priests or ministers have anything like the same independence, in or out of church, as our parochial clergy have. This means that there is no Church in the world in which so much responsibility for the preservation and good estate of the whole rests on each one of them. We are trusted as Englishmen only trust. Nothing but the sense of honour in many cases forbids our abuse of independence. What delicacy of consideration ought to possess our spirit towards thoughtful, troubled, even over-sensitive, even prejudiced parishioners.

If there were any whose first impulse would be to give no attention to any judgment or ruling, spiritual or temporal, but their own and their "organ's," I should still not despair that one hour's sober communing with themselves and with history would reveal to them what have been always the beginnings of schism and separation; what is the secret of the lost influence and serviceableness of the clergy in some other countries, not Roman only, and what the guiltiness of undermining our own power of good.

Such strong impressions are, however, made on our minds by extremists on either side that it is easy to forget that these are, after all, few in comparison with the solid, central mass of moderate and earnest men whose work is carried on in peace. By them,