

The Quiet Hour.

Jesus Forgives Sins.

S. S. LESSON.—Mark 2: 1-12. Feb. 14, 1904.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.—Mark 2: 10.

BY REV. C. MACKINNON, B.D., SYDNEY, N.S.

It was noised that he was in the house, v. 1. The first step toward the paralytic's cure was taken by unknown persons, who simply informed the public that Jesus had come. What a simple service! Yet if they had not rendered it, the paralytic's friends had not known of the presence of the healer. One may not be able to preach or to pray in public, or to teach in the Sabbath school; but everybody can point to the house of God and say, "Jesus is there."

One sick of the palsy, v. 3. Unable to walk, to move, to speak, he lay there a dead weight of helpless humanity, a pitiful type of the soul paralyzed by sin. "Would you like to know the love of the Saviour, to feel the forgiveness, to have the hope of glory?" "O yes." "Then why do you not believe and accept of His salvation?" "I do not know why; but I seem not to be able to do it. 'How to perform that which is good, I find not.'" Alas! how many are thus helpless! Let us pray that God's Spirit may breathe upon them.

Borne of four, v. 3. Some men need the assistance of more than one to bring them to Christ. What a call for bands of willing workers! You are anxious for some young lad. The minister's sermons do not touch him. The Sabbath school teacher can do little more than keep him in his class. His mother's voice has restrained him somewhat; but he is not yet won. You are his companion. Have you spoken the needful word? Come, take a hold. "Borne of four," he may reach the Saviour. And what a joy to have helped one to Him!

They uncovered the roof, v. 4. Determination knows no barrier to its purpose. They cannot get in through the door; they will get in through the roof. We must not be baffled in our Christian work, if we are confronted by an obstacle at the outset; we must seek some way to circumvent it. Neither let us reject some modern devices simply because they may seem strange and unnatural to us. The roof was a singular entrance to a house, but it served the purpose. Where the old-fashioned tract has failed, cards with signals on them, or other devices, have succeeded in arresting the mind. Do not be glad to just one method. The Waldensian teachers went about like peddlers selling rings and trinkets, but when asked, "Have you no more precious articles than these," replied, "O yes, we have one inestimable jewel." On promise of protection from ecclesiastical authorities, they produced it—The Word of God. Let Paul's aim be ours, "that I might by all means save some," 1 Cor. 9: 22.

When Jesus saw their faith, v. 5. The hand of faith never knocks at the door of heaven in vain, even if it be only faith on behalf of another. The wise answer of the bishop to the mother of Augustine, then a wild and wayward young man, but afterwards himself a bishop, when she entreated him on behalf of her son, was wonderfully realized: "Go thy way and God be with you; it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish."

Certain of the scribes, v. 6. They hang

about all churches, to cast the wet blanket of their cold criticism on every new movement. They have ever some fault to find, some troublesome question to ask, some suspicion to hint. Shut up in their feelings of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness, they nevertheless do nothing themselves. Their soporific, arm-chair religion will get a rude awakening when the Lord comes. Jesus reads them like a clock, and knows the hidden springs and wheels that move the hands over the smooth white face.

Who can forgive sins? v. 7. This is a vastly more important question than, Who can give health or wealth? For the strongest body will soon moulder in the grave, and wealth cannot go with us out of this world. But the forgiveness of sins makes us heirs of heaven. It is the key that opens up the treasures of divine grace.

Arise, v. 11. Christ enters into no preliminary explanation of what He intends to do, or how He is going to do it. He commands and faith responds, and in responding receives the requisite strength. The tasks that confront the church of to-day are as formidable as that before the paralytic when Christ said, "Arise." Let us have the faith to obey, and we shall find ourselves

"Strong in the strength which God supplies Through His eternal Son."

We are never to measure our obedience to Christ by our ability. He bids us do impossible things. But in facing the duty He gives us, the difficulties vanish before us. Let us first ask concerning any task, "Would Christ have me do this?" And if He would, we can do it.

Christ in the Daily Life.

BISHOP PHILLIPS BROOKS.

There is in the world to-day the same Christ who was in the world eighteen hundred and more years ago, and men may go to Him and receive His life and the inspiration of His presence and the guiding of His wisdom just exactly as they did then. That is the Christian life, the thing we make so vague and mysterious and difficult. This is the Christian life, the following of Jesus Christ.

Who is the Christian? Everywhere the man who, as far as he comprehends Jesus Christ, so far as he can get any knowledge of Him, is His servant, the man who makes Christ the teacher of his intelligence and the guide of his soul, the man who obeys Christ so far as he has been able to understand Him. There is no other test than this, the following of Jesus Christ. So far as any soul deeply consecrated to Him and waiting the influence that it feels He has to give, follows Christ, enters into His obedience and His company and receives His blessings, just so far He is able to bestow it.

I cannot sympathize with any feeling that desires to make the name of Christian a narrower name. I would spread it just as wide as it can possibly be made to spread. I would know any man as a Christian, rejoice to know any man as a Christian, whom Jesus would recognize as a Christian, and Jesus Christ, I am sure, in those old days recognized His followers even if they came after Him with the blindest sight, with the most imperfect recognition and acknowledgment of what He was and what He could do.

But we ask ourselves, is it possible that I should get from Him a guidance of my daily life here? Can Jesus really be my teacher, my guide, in the actual duties and perplexities of my daily life and lead me into the larger land in which I know He lives? Ah! the man knows very little about the everlasting identity of human nature, little of how the world in all these changeless ages is the same, who asks that; very little, also, of how in every largest truth there are all particulars and details of human life involved; little of how everything that a man is to-day, at every moment, rests upon some eternal foundation and may be within the power of some everlasting law.

The soul that takes in Jesus' word, the soul that through the words of Jesus enters into the very person of Jesus, the soul that knows Him as its daily presence and its daily law—it never hesitates. There is no single act of your life, there is no single dilemma in which you find yourself placed, in which the answer is not in Jesus Christ. He comes into your life and mine, into our homes and our shops, into our offices and on our streets, and there makes known in the actual circumstances of our daily life what we ought to do and what we ought not to do—that is the wonder of His revelation; that is what preclaims Him to be the Son of God and the Son of man.

The Church Should Keep Close to the Book.

BY REV. I. H. M'GANN.

The Christian religion must not diverge from the Christian's book. This would savor of heathendom. India would be less heathenish did the religion of the Hindus have any relation to the religion of the Vedas. The precept is forgotten and the life is degraded. If the Christian's Bible commands missionary effort, that should be sufficient argument for all Christendom.

The Bible teaches us that God has his eternal purposes. One of these is the conversion of the whole world to himself. John iii. 17: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The fulfillment of this purpose is declared in Revelations xi. 15: "And there were great voices in heaven saying: The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Would that it had already come to pass!

For the conversion of the world God chose to put himself in alliance with the world; with his believers. As far back as Isaiah we read God's command and challenge to the Church: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; and then, behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand and his arm shall rule." The same command and challenge is voiced by Jesus, and he adds: "Lo, I am with you always." With this partnership the Church has to do, and blessed is the believer "who knoweth these things and doeth them."

When ever the Church has kept close to the book, God has proved himself faithful. The Bible commands missionary effort, and the fulfillment of our denominational life demands that we add to our faith missionary zeal, until we can say, in the words of Jesus: "We have finished the work thou gavest us to do." Can we say this without doing all we can and know to save the whole world? Let us fill the missionary treasury overflowing full, and offer enough laborers for the field to prepare the way for the Lord God. Let us keep close to the Book.—

Lutheran Observer.