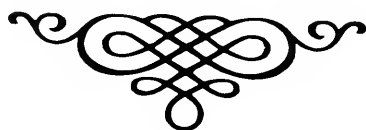


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Our Lord's miracles of healing : consider
relation to some modern objections and

OUR LORD'S
MIRACLES OF HEALING.

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OUR LORD'S MIRACLES OF HEALING

Considered in relation to some Modern
Objections and to Medical Science.

BY

✓
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WITH PREFACE BY THE MOST REVEREND RICHARD
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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Preface	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter I. Miracles of Healing narrated in the Gospels . .	11
II. Fevers	17
III. Paralysis	39
IV. Leprosy	81
V. Demoniactal Possession (and Lunacy)	107
VI. Dropsy	132
VII. Menorrhagia	135
VIII. Ophthalmic Disease.	142
IX. Organic Defects of Organs of Sense. . . .	152
X. Surgical Injury	163
Conclusion	166

NOTE.—For the full list of the Miracles of Healing see Chapter I.; where will also be found a table of the Contents of each chapter, with the title or titles of the miracle or miracles discussed therein: e. g. to find the case of the man with a withered hand, refer to Chapter I., where it will be found classed as the fourth miracle discussed in Chapter III. on Paralysis. The student is recommended to read this book throughout; and then, for purposes of reference, to follow the suggestions given in Chapter I.

P R E F A C E

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "NOTES ON THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD."

I HAVE been asked to prefix a few words of recommendation to a book which, in my judgment, needs none.

No one who reads the following pages will deny the large amount of interesting and instructive matter which the past training and special knowledge of the writer have enabled him to bring to bear on the illustration of the Miracles of our Lord. Questions which others, myself certainly included, have dealt with slightly and superficially, and with the want of a severe accuracy, are here more thoroughly treated by one who speaks with a modesty, and at the same time an acquaintance with the points at issue, and a consequent

authority which, I think, must inspire confidence in all.

I will not refuse myself the pleasure of adding, that the writer was for some years honourably known to me in the diocese of Dublin as doing, at such times as he could rescue from other engagements, the work of an earnest layman in the Church ; until, being drawn still more closely to the Church's work, he was content to relinquish high professional prospects, and to exchange a ministry to the bodies of men for the harder, but more excellent, ministry to their souls.

RICHARD C. DUBLIN.

DUBLIN, *September 4*, 1871.

M I R A C L E S.

MIRACLES OF HEALING.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a noteworthy fact that no English theological or medical writer has published a work on the miracles of healing performed by our blessed Lord, suited to the discoveries of modern medical science, and to the progress of modern thought. And this is the more remarkable, because there is a much closer connexion between medicine and theology in Holy Scripture than between theology and geography, natural history, and so forth.

To say nothing of the Old Testament, the reader of the Evangelical narratives cannot fail to perceive that throughout our Lord's ministry disease is in many instances described as connected with sin; that forgiveness and healing are frequently said to be conveyed

by the same exercise of power to the one person ; and that the main earthly object of our Great Exemplar appears to have been the healing of "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

It will not, then, I trust, be deemed presumptuous in one who desires to see this want supplied, to attempt to step into the gap, and make some observations calculated to advance the study of Holy Scripture from a medical point of view. Nor should the imperfection of what follows be deemed an argument against this study, but rather an incentive to increased diligence in working a not over explored mine.

The only English book worthy of the name "*Medica Sacra*" is the well-known work of the learned Dr. Mead¹, who flourished as a London physician in the early part of the last century. But it is not too much to say, that, besides this work being generally inaccessible, it refers only to some four or five out of the twenty-one miracles of healing recorded in the Gospels as having been performed by our Lord ; and these it treats in a way in many respects behind the medical science of the present day.

There have been indeed some other English publica-

¹ *Medica Sacra: sive de Morbis insignioribus qui in Bibliis Memorantur Commentarius*. Lond. 1749. An English translation, from which most modern quotations are made, was published in 1755, the year after the author's death.

tions on this subject²; but while most of the more modern works relating to it are written in foreign languages, several of them, as well as all the Mediæval and less modern French, German, and Italian works, are not only written in Latin, but are not particularly easy of access, even to readers in our public libraries.

In the present case I propose to give a nominal list of all the miracles of healing above referred to; and herein I shall select the miracles in question from the classification prefixed to Archbishop Trench's well-known work³. Next, I hope to classify similar diseases together; and, then, to discuss each miracle separately. But it is to be noted that, as regards any particular disease, the greater part of the remarks on it will be found under mention of the first case, which should be read by any one desirous of fully studying a subsequently-mentioned miracle of the same kind.

It may be well to state for what this book is *not*

² Harle, (Rev.) Jonathan, M.D., Essay on the State of Physic in the Old and New Testaments, &c., with an account of cases mentioned in Scripture. Lond. 1729. *Medica Sacra*; or, Short Expositions of the more important diseases mentioned in the Sacred Writings. By Thomas Shapter, M.D. Lond. 1834. I have not been able to get a sight of Harle's Essay. It is not in the British Museum or the College of Physicians. Dr. Shapter's book refers only to four of the cases mentioned in the New Testament.

³ Notes on the Miracles. It is to the 7th edition that reference will be made.

intended. It is not intended as a treatise on miracles in the abstract, nor on the Gospel miracles as distinguished from the Apocryphal or the Ecclesiastical. Nor is it intended as an answer to the Pantheist, the Sceptic, the Rationalist, or to the more bold forms of unbelief which confront us in our own day. There is plenty of English theological literature suited to all these ends; and several of such works need only to be put before the public in a modern and popular style to secure the attention of the candid inquirer. Nor does this book profess to be an exhaustive treatise; but should be rather regarded as a body of *notes*, which therefore may be added to by further study, or by the learning and research of others.

It is needless to say that these remarks are not intended for persons who consider their knowledge of creation to be so universal and infallible as to lead them to reject or doubt the existence of every thing which passes the bounds of their own experience.

Furthermore, these pages are not intended to show all or even the strongest points from which to argue in favour of the miraculous. The general consent of the Church in all ages to the truth of the Gospel narratives, is an historical fact which commends itself most strongly to my own mind; although it would not perhaps prove in the least degree convincing to those who require proof of revelation before they could believe in a Church in any sense of the

term. For instance, the general consent of the Houses of Parliament for two hundred years back to the truth of certain generally-believed stories told of Cardinal Wolsey and of Oliver Cromwell, would be taken by every one as evidence of quite as strong a kind regarding those public men, as that which could be given by many in Paris at present, but by no one in one hundred years to come, that a statue of Napoleon once stood on the top of the column in the Place Vendôme, and that they saw both pulled down during a time of popular excitement:

Having said thus much regarding one side, it may be well to make a few observations respecting the other; I mean respecting the object of this book.

First of all, it is intended for the educated reader. Not necessarily for the classical scholar; but for the English reader, who, by passing over all the words of dead languages enclosed within brackets, will be able to read throughout, as if no such words were introduced into the text. It is obvious, however, that they who possess an average knowledge of Greek and Latin will be able to prove for themselves some criticisms, which others not so favourably circumstanced must take for granted.

To such students, then, the following remarks are respectfully commended, with the hope that they may, under the Divine guidance, tend to give some light to the doubtful, assist in confirming the faith of

the wavering, and furnish believers with one more proof of the truthfulness of the Evangelical writers.

It is intended to show that those diseases healed by our Lord either were such as were not, and now are not, curable by human means ; or that they were such as are only imperfectly cured by man ; or such as are never cured immediately. That is to say, that they were well chosen cases, the healing of which, under the circumstances peculiar to each, could not be ascribed to human skill. Some of the diseases healed by our Lord's word or touch, were then, some even now, notwithstanding our boasted advancement of Medical Science, are not curable, save by slow and tedious progress. Some must run a certain course, if then indeed they may be healed, whereas others can under no circumstances be cured by man, although he be but "little lower than the angels."

They were in several instances such diseases as were common in the East at the time. The cures were not denied at or after our Lord's time by heathen writers, or by the Jews, who believed in the supernatural, and ascribed them to Satanic influence. Nor did either heathen or Jewish writers endeavour to explain them away as arising from natural causes ; or as brought about by human skill ; or as real to the parties interested only ; or as facts coloured by highly figurative language suited to the received opinions of the time ; or as poetic fictions embodying grand moral

truths. The heathen and Jewish belief in the miraculous was the same: and so, apart from the truths to which the miracles of Christ testified, His miracles to the cultivated heathen appeared to be merely some more added to others which he himself believed, and which at most proved that one more god might be added to his already long catalogue. To the Jew they were realities which could not be denied; and as belief in them on his own principles would involve reception of the worker as the promised Messiah, so ascription of them to the father of "lying wonders" was his only way out of the difficulty. For, be it remembered, the proof of a miracle, *in itself*, was no proof of Divine mission either to Jew or heathen, any more than it should be to us at the coming of Antichrist.

The varied and conflicting opinions of doubters of or unbelievers in the miracles—I mean those of our own day—have been alluded to in a passing way. There is the bold way of denying the authenticity of the Gospels themselves. There is the less bold way of admitting these records to be only partly true; and so, that every man should decide for himself how far they are true. Also there is the plan of admitting their general truth, but arguing the copious use of figurative language in describing historical facts. This, however, is plainly nothing else than partly receiving and partly rejecting statements, to the truth of which the narrator stands pledged. There is also the plan, not so obsolete

as some think, of ascribing all these miraculous cures to natural causes, or to honest delusions on the part of the persons concerned.

From all this it will be seen that the vital difference between the unbelievers who rejected Christ in the days of His flesh, and those who reject Him now for intellectual reasons in Christian countries, is the firm belief of the former as contrasted with the ill-concealed doubt or avowed unbelief of the latter in the spiritual, immaterial, or supernatural. To the Jew who believes in Christ now, these miracles, which as facts he need not deny, are at once proofs of His Divine mission; while to the modern Rationalist, unbeliever, or semi-unbeliever, it is desirable to show that the language of the Gospel narratives is such as might have been expected from truthful writers; that SS. Matthew, Mark, and John write of disease from a popular or common-sense point of view, while St. Luke uses the technical language of a physician; that all agree, as to statements of facts, that the miraculous cures were such as could not be mistaken for cures by human skill; that the Divine Healer simply restored the primitive order, health, by a superhuman rather than by a supernatural power, by the working of a higher over a lower law⁴. And as to *how* this was effected is not more inexplicable than the action of medicines on the system in disease, or the effect of the mind on the

⁴ Archbishop Trench.

body in causing or curing ordinary disease; that, in fact, the art of the physician is the result of observation and experience, or of reasoning, as applied to facts which have occurred in duly recorded cases.

The undesigned coincidences, and the use of peculiar words by the different Evangelists, will also be seen to confirm the truth of their story in several instances, and to furnish a strong proof of the authenticity of the Gospels.

It is hoped that these pages may be found useful by some of the clergy, and especially by my younger brethren. Also to theological teachers of educated young persons it is hoped that they may prove of some advantage. But to my brethren of the medical profession I earnestly beg to commend these observations, and particularly to such of them as are teachers of medicine.

There is abroad in the medical profession a materialistic spirit; a tendency to unbelief, which is alien to the discharge of that holy calling, sanctified by the Great Physician, and second only to the ministry itself. There are several hundred medical students in London alone, to say nothing of other large medical schools; and the influence of these young men for good or evil in the towns, and villages, and parishes, in which they will often be the only representatives of lay religious thought, cannot be told. No calling has in its daily practice a more thorough opportunity of discharging

Christian duties, and of advocating Christian truths; and as Christian instruction rarely finds a place in the medical training of the present day, it is incumbent on us all to try how this want may best be remedied, and how the physicians of the body may be worthy disciples of "the beloved physician whose praise is in the gospel."

It may not be amiss to repeat that our Lord's Miracles of healing are not here considered with regard to "modern objections," but with regard to "some modern objections," as stated in the title, and on page 4. Medical men, also, will see the propriety of making numerous foot-note references to standard books quite familiar to them, instead of crowding the text with extracts and summaries which would serve to repel the medical student, as well as the theological teacher.

The author will be glad to receive suggestions from his Clerical and Medical brethren for the improvement of this treatise in a second edition, should such be called for. All such suggestions may be addressed to him at St. Faith's, Stoke Newington, N.

To his relative, the Rev. R. H. Belcher, M.A., Master in King's College School, he is under obligation for some valuable suggestions and references; and he has also to acknowledge some important suggestions made by an unknown reader of his MS.; suggestions which have been taken advantage of in the following pages.

CHAPTER I.

MIRACLES OF HEALING NARRATED IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

THE miracles of healing performed by our blessed Lord, and specially described as such by the Evangelical writers, are twenty-one in number, as may be seen from the following list:—

1. The healing of the nobleman's son.
2. The demoniacs in the country of the Gadarenes.
3. The healing of a woman with an issue of blood.
4. The opening of the eyes of two blind in the house.
5. The healing of the paralytic.
6. The cleansing of the leper.
7. The healing of the centurion's servant.
8. The demoniac in the Synagogue at Capernaum.
9. The healing of Simon's wife's mother.
10. The healing of the impotent man at Bethesda.
11. The opening of the eyes of one born blind.
12. The restoring of a man with a withered hand.
13. The woman with a spirit of infirmity.
14. The healing of the man with the dropsy.
15. The cleansing of the ten lepers.

16. The healing of the daughter of the Syrophœnician woman.

17. The healing of one deaf and dumb.

18. The opening of the eyes of one blind at Bethsaida.

19. The healing of the lunatic child.

20. The opening of the eyes of two blind men near Jericho.

21. The healing of Malchus' ear.

Of the preceding twenty-one miracles, several are cases of the same class of disease; and, therefore, the diseases healed may be reduced to *nine*, and classified as follows:—*Fever*, 2; *Demoniacal possession* (under which shall be discussed the case of the lunatic child), 4; *Menorrhagia*, 1; *Ophthalmic disease*, 3; *Paralysis* (including the case of the woman with a spirit of infirmity), 5; *Leprosy*, 2; *Organic defect of organs of sense* (vision 1, speech and hearing, 1), 2; *Dropsy*, 1; *Surgical injury*, 1. Total, 21.

They will thus be discussed under *nine* different heads, as follows:—

<i>Fevers</i>	<div> <div> <div>Simon's wife's mother.</div> <div>The nobleman's son.</div> </div> <div> </div> </div>	Cases of acute disease.
<i>Paralysis</i>	<div> <div>The paralytic.</div> <div>The centurion's servant.</div> <div>The impotent man at Bethesda.</div> <div>The man with a withered hand.</div> <div>The woman with a spirit of infirmity.</div> </div>	Cases of chronic disease.

<i>Leprosy</i> . .	{	The leper.
	{	The ten lepers.
<i>Demoniacal possession</i> .	{	The demoniacs in the country of the Gadarenes.
	{	The demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum.
	{	The daughter of the Syrophœnician woman.
	{	The healing of the lunatic child.
<i>Dropsy</i> . .	{	The man with the dropsy.
<i>Menorrhagia</i> .		The woman with the issue of blood.
<i>Ophthalmic disease</i> . .	{	Opening of the eyes of two blind in the house.
	{	Opening of the eyes of one blind at Bethsaida.
	{	Opening of the eyes of two blind men near Jericho.
<i>Organic defects of organs of sense</i> .	{	Vision—one born blind.
	{	Speech and hearing—one deaf and dumb.
<i>Surgical injury</i> .		—Malchus' ear.

Where a miracle is narrated by more than one Evangelist, the reader is recommended, before referring to this book, first to read over, in the English authorized version, the several accounts; and, if able to do so, to read them also in the original Greek. Moreover, as the chapter on fevers contains some general remarks on Christ's miracles of healing, suited to several or

all of the cases discussed; a reference to it is also recommended in studying any of the subsequent chapters.

GENERAL MENTION OF DISEASE IN THE GOSPELS.

In St. Matt. iv. 23, 24, it is thus written: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

"And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those which had the palsy; and He healed them."

The phrase translated "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" [*πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν*] may fairly be rendered, in the medical language of our day, "all manner of chronic and all manner of acute diseases:" the word translated "sickness" in the text [*νόσος*] meaning a disorder of long standing [*τὴν χρόνιαν κακοπάθειαν*], or a chronic disease, as distinguished from the word translated "disease" [*μαλακία*]; a term which has been technically defined as a temporary disorder of the body [*τὴν πρόσκαιρον ἀνωμαλίαν τοῦ σώματος*], an acute disease.

On the expression "with divers diseases and tor-

ments" [*ποικίλαις νόσοις καὶ βασάνοις*], it may be noted that the word here translated "disease" [*νόσος*], probably means disease in the abstract, as opposed to health, a disturbance of the primitive and normal order of bodily soundness: serious, perhaps mortal, disease, but yet unaccompanied with "torments" [*βασάνοις*], which in several acute diseases, and in some chronic ones, e.g. in some forms of Paralysis, make life doubly burdensome to their subjects. Moreover, we find mentioned in this category "those possessed with devils" [*δαιμονιζομένους*], that is, persons afflicted from other than natural causes, the victims of an unseen evil agency; and also, in clear contra-distinction to them, "lunatics" [*σεληνιαζομένους*], persons whose peculiar malady was chiefly mental, and believed to increase at change and full of the moon. From this and other passages in the Gospels, it will be seen that our Lord is said to have wrought many more miracles of healing than are narrated at length by the Evangelists, and a fair consideration of the cases which have been fully recorded, will go far to establish the conclusion that there was something so special in each instance as to make its detailed narration desirable.

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY OF ST. LUKE.

The following pages are intended to show that the Gospel of "the beloved physician" speaks of these miracles of healing in the medical technology of the

Greek school of his day ; and so, that while the other Evangelists describe disease in the popular language of ordinary close observers, St. Luke expresses himself professionally. If the other Evangelists, being plain—or, as we should now call them, non-professional—men, had written of disease in technical terms, this might plausibly be adduced as an argument against their fidelity ; but if, in addition to accepting the universally-received opinion, that St. Luke wrote the third Gospel, and that he was a physician—if, in addition to accepting this view, it were found that he did not use technical terms where he might have been fairly expected to have used them, it would require no small ingenuity to remove the doubts raised by these circumstances in the minds of many. Indeed the technical terms themselves, as used in St. Luke's Gospel, prove that it was written by one well acquainted with medicine ; and, therefore, the narratives in this Gospel, if found to coincide with those in the others, will, on this particular point, furnish one more proof, in addition to the many others generally advanced, in favour of the credibility of the Gospel histories.

CHAPTER II.

FEVERS.

THE HEALING OF SIMON'S WIFE'S MOTHER.

THE following accounts are given of this miracle:—

St. Matt. viii. 14, 15.	St. Mark i. 29—31.	St. Luke iv. 38, 39.
14. And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.	29. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.	38. And He arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought Him for her.
15. And He touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose and ministered unto them.	30. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.	39. And He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.
	31. And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up: and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.	

This case especially illustrates the healing of an Acute disease; most of the other miracles of healing being referable to the class of Chronic affections: and, as we see above, the first three Evangelists relate it

with scarcely any apparent difference of detail, so far as the English version is concerned. St. Luke tells us of this woman (iv. 38) that she “was taken with a great fever” [ἤν συνεχομένη πυρετῷ μεγάλῳ]. St. Mark says (i. 30) she “lay sick of a fever” [κατέκειτο πυρέσσουσα]; literally, *she lay stretched (or lay flat) in a fever*. While St. Matthew informs us (viii. 14) that she was “laid and sick of a fever” [βεβλημένην καὶ πυρέσσουσιν], or, as it might be rendered with substantial accuracy, *she was struck down in a fever*.

The unprejudiced English reader of the above three accounts cannot fail to observe their substantial agreement; and where there is any diversity of detail, it is exactly such as goes far to prove the truthfulness of these independent accounts of the same transaction; and also to establish the value of their united testimony as to an alleged wonderful occurrence. The unprejudiced Greek reader cannot fail to observe certain differences of phraseology in the three accounts; differences—as shall be presently shown—arising from circumstances peculiar to the Evangelical writers themselves.

As St. Luke’s phraseology is full of meaning, it may be well to note his antecedents.

St. Luke, “the beloved physician,” is believed to have practised medicine at Antioch, which, at that time, as situated between the great schools of Alexandria and Cilicia, and not far from them, or from the western

schools, held a more central position than any great city of the ancient world. Greek was then the language of medical learning; and St. Luke himself was probably a fair example of an educated Asiatic Greek. The medicine of the New Testament is the Greek tinctured with the Jewish. Medical learning and practice in St. Luke's case, then, were chiefly Greek; and the medical writings of Aretæus the Cappadocian, most probably a cotemporary, are believed to represent the opinions or medical school to which "the beloved physician" belonged. There is a remarkable agreement between this Evangelist and Aretæus regarding demoniac agency in disease, Aretæus affirming and Hippocrates repudiating such influence: and the Greek reader of the third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles is more or less familiar with the occurrence of medical phraseology in these records¹.

¹ Besides those instances which will occur in the course of the following remarks, one or two others may be noted: e. g.—viii. 55, ἐπέστρεψε τὸ πνεῦμα—the breath, the token of animation, returned: Acts iii. 7, ἐστερεώθησαν αἱ βάσεις αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ σφυρά, the soles of his feet, and his ankle-bones (*tibia* and *fibula*) received strength.

These and other instances will be found in Freind's History of Physick (2 vols. 8vo, 1725;) while as to demoniacal influence in connexion with the opinions of St. Luke and Hippocrates, see notes on "Sacred Diseases" in the Sydenham Society's edition of the latter. See also a paper on the Medical Style of St. Luke, in the Gentleman's Magazine for June, 1841, where some of the above, and others not referred to in these remarks, are noticed.

"There fell from his eyes as it had been scales" (Acts ix. 18). Dean Howson (in Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St.

In the present case one of these occurrences of technical language claims our attention.

St. Luke says (iv. 38) that Simon's wife's mother "was taken with a great fever²." "A great fever:"—this expression is a technical one; and is to be found in the writings of that great medical authority Galen, who uses it in his celebrated treatise on fevers [τὸν μέγαν τε καὶ μικρὸν πυρετόν (Galen de Different. Febr. i.)].

Galen, who lived a short time after St. Luke, adopted the current phraseology of medical men of his time, just as modern French writers on Epilepsy specify the "*grand mal*" as distinguished from the "*petit mal*." At the time when our blessed Lord walked this earth pestilential fevers held a most prominent place among Oriental plagues; and their great prevalence and importance may be judged of from the fact, that a large amount of ancient Greek medical literature is on the subject of fevers alone. We know quite well, then,

Paul) argues for the literal truth of St. Luke's expression, because of his peculiar exactness in speaking of such subjects.—*Edition of 1870*, p. 78, *note*.

² "Was taken with a great fever" [ἤν συνεχομένη]. It may be said that the exact force of these words is not suggested by the English version. "Was taken with a great fever" may be held to suggest the notion of the actual seizure, the beginning of the disease; whereas the original words point to the woman's exact condition at the time immediately before her cure. A critic has well advised that "was suffering from," or "was labouring under," would better suggest the meaning to the English reader.

what was "the great fever" of St. Luke and of the Greek medical classics. It may be shortly described in modern language, and will be recognized by non-medical readers as substantially the same with Typhus of our own time :—

Fever, contagious or infectious, lasting for days or weeks, the onset sudden and well marked, or gradual and obscure, without well-marked remissions, accompanied by extreme prostration of strength, great and varied disturbance of all bodily and mental functions, and a strong tendency to local complications ; characterized, in most instances at an early period of the disease, by a peculiar eruption of the skin. The attack is essentially one on the nervous system, which shows signs of disorder in every direction ; even the very countenance assumes a dull, anxious, and confused expression ; in fact, the disease is rightly named Typhus [τύφος], smoke or mist, and hence the stupor arising from fever. Experience has proved that fever of this kind cannot be cut short, and that it will run a certain course for days or weeks, and endure in spite of the best treatment. Patients are liable to relapse, and recover slowly. There is no specific medicine for its cure. It is treated on general principles ; the physician meeting each symptom as it arises. The unexpected nature of its onset, the utter prostration, even in the strongest man, and the facts that the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint, are symptoms which

impress themselves on the ordinary observer. Thus we see that, according to St. Luke, Simon's wife's mother was "taken with [was suffering from]³ a great fever;" that is, she had encountered one of the most formidable enemies to humanity of that or of any age. In vain did physicians then, as now, attempt to remove, or sometimes even to moderate that scourge of our race, the hidden nature of which still merits the description of the Psalmist, who is believed by some good authorities to have referred to that class of diseases when he wrote of "the pestilence that walketh in darkness."

In contrast with the description of St. Luke, we find St. Mark stating that Simon's wife's mother "lay sick of a fever;" or, as I have before suggested, *lay stretched in a fever*, a mode of expression quite consistent with, although perhaps not intended to point out, the nature of the disease and the great prostration caused by it. Now, any ordinary observer with that faculty which we often call common sense—any such observer, who has seen cases of the *great fever*, will have been struck by the lying down from illness, or lying down flat which always accompanies it. One of the most marked symptoms of Typhus—the great fever—is this fact just noted; and more, at one stage of it the patient does literally *lie stretched*—lies on the back,

³ See note on [ἤν συνεχομένη] "was taken with," or "was suffering from," on p. 20.

and slides down as far as possible to the foot of the bed, from sheer nervous prostration and weakness; and this is one of the symptoms to which the attention of physicians is frequently directed by those who nurse the sick. And this common-sense description, quite consistent with technical accuracy, as I have shown, may be accounted for by the tradition of ancient Church historians that St. Mark wrote his Gospel under the inspection of St. Peter. St. Peter in this case would have had every opportunity of noting the prominent characteristics of a *great fever*, and personal anxiety alone would have caused him to take advantage of these opportunities.

But, again, in contrast to the technical correctness of St. Luke, and to the personal observation implied by St. Mark's description, note St. Matthew. He relates how Simon's wife's mother was "*laid* and sick of a fever;" or, as I have above suggested, *struck down in a fever*; the word [βεβλημένην] translated "*laid* or *struck down*" having a marked reference to another popular point of view from which the *great fever* might be viewed by a non-professional person—I mean its mode of attack, in connexion with its subsequent and continued prostration. The patient was struck down as by an arrow, or other missile, for such is the literal meaning of the Greek word:—she was apparently well one hour, prostrate the next. This, as I have above observed in describing the "*great fever*," is a

frequent mode of attack in bad fevers in the present day and in these countries. It was a marked and commonly known feature in the fearful famine fever which overtook Ireland in 1847, of which I remember, as a boy, seeing hundreds of cases; and in more mature years, as a physician to a large fever hospital, I had ample evidence of the same fact.

As, however, the word [βεβλημένην] implies a relatively present state arising out of a past act or acts; so the past act leading up to the “lying” which our Lord beheld may not have been the sudden access of the disease—her being struck down by the fever—but her being laid on the bed when first attacked by it, and her continuing to lie so when He saw her. In St. Mark vii. 30, in the case of the daughter of the Syro-phœnician woman, her mother is said to have gone to the house, and to have found the devil gone out, and her daughter “laid upon the bed” [βεβλημένην ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης]. Here, however, it may also be said that the expression implies, or has some reference to, the forcible manner in which evil spirits are represented as departing from those afflicted by them, leaving the individual, as one might say—were cant phraseology admissible—“floored,” lying in utter exhaustion after a vigorous attack and final struggle. In any case, the presumed fact of the sudden access of the disease is quite consistent with the use of the word [βεβλημένην].

Thus St. Matthew may be presumed to represent

the popular rumour regarding this case, perhaps the sudden invasion of the disease, but at any rate the gravity of the symptoms; St. Mark, the case as observed by one personally acquainted with it; while we must regard St. Luke as giving a professional account of the case.

Of our Saviour's miracle St. Matthew says (viii. 15), "He touched her hand, and the fever left her" [*ἥψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός*].

St. Mark says (i. 31), "He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up: and immediately the fever left her" [*προσελθὼν ἤγειρεν αὐτήν, κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς· καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετὸς εὐθέως*].

St. Luke says (iv. 39), "He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her" [*ἐπιστὰς ἐπάνω αὐτῆς ἐπιτίμησε τῷ πυρετῷ, καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν*].

Here again St. Luke writes in a remarkable way:—The fever was with him an entity to be rebuked. St. Mark notes with the accuracy of a non-professional eye-witness, as St. Peter probably was, that the disease left her "immediately;" while St. Matthew may again be presumed to record the fact which would chiefly impress itself on the populace, that the miracle was wrought in connexion with the significant action of taking the patient by the hand.

The accounts of this miracle given by all three Evangelists are singularly unfavourable to the suggestion of its being a poetic myth, or "unhistorical;" and

they are equally unfavourable to the objection that the case may have been cured by human skill, or by the *vis medicatrix nature*.

When the Lord rebuked the winds and waves, saying, "Peace be still," we are told that, contrary to the usual course of things, there was an immediate calm; there was not any swell on the waters before they settled into peaceful stillness. Even so here, the cure was not only complete, but immediate. "Immediately she arose and ministered [literally, "was ministering"] to them. "To them," according to St. Mark and St. Luke; "to him," according to the best MSS. of St. Matthew. On the perfection and undoubted nature of the immediate cure, as instanced by the words "she ministered to him," Bengel notes (St. Matt. viii. 15)⁴ how she showed that welcome sign of true health, the fact of discharging her duties as mistress of the house. ["*Officio matris familias fungebatur, sanitatis veræ signo læto.*"]

What we should expect to find in an ordinary case did not here occur. There was not any slow and painful convalescence, varied perhaps by relapse; no crisis with subsequent exhaustion and lingering weakness. No *man* was known to have cured a fever in so short a time, and in so undoubted a manner that the patient could at once proceed to the ordinary duties of her daily life.

Nor in this nineteenth century can the case be

⁴ *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, in loc.

mended in that respect. Using the word "cure" in its modern popular sense, it may be remarked that physicians even now do not profess to cure a fever. They profess only to pilot the ship through the storm, to obviate the tendency to death, to treat each symptom of injury to bodily or mental function as it may arise. They have no specific for it; nor, so far as present knowledge goes, can they expect ever to find one.

This case is, then, not one in which any mere *man*, however gifted, could have cured by such exercise of skill as would have induced the bystanders to reverence him as Divine.

It was not one in which a physician of superior ability could have accommodated himself to the prevailing superstitions of the day. Our Lord could have cured other diseases as truly and quickly as this fever; but some of them may have been such as man could overcome; and so their cure may have been esteemed man's work. True it is that this case possibly may have been amenable to human treatment; but the best that could be expected from the ablest physician was a long illness and a tardy convalescence.

To the fairly educated medical man the technical expressions evolved from St. Luke's account of this case will have great weight in proving his testimony to be true; especially when he has also the clear accounts of the same case from the other two Evangelists; all agreeing, and yet all strikingly different in detail, a

threefold cord of evidences, such as the consulting physician frequently has presented to him at the bedside of a wife, by the varying, yet accurate accounts of her skilled medical attendant, her watchful nurse, and her anxious husband.

And the undesigned coincidences to be found here are worthy of note. There are sufficient peculiarities in the story as told by each Evangelist to satisfy any unprejudiced reader that the three accounts were not written in concert. They coincide as to fact, while they prominently record details from various points of view. Thus—to quote one more besides those illustrations given above—St. Matthew says, “He touched her hand, and the fever left her.” St. Mark says He “took hold of her hand, and raised her up.” Here, again, St. Matthew gives the fact which struck the ordinary common sense narrator—cure in connexion with the sign or means of touch. St. Mark, the eye-witness, or amanuensis of the eye-witness, St. Peter, records how He not only touched, but took hold of her hand; in doing so took hold of it,—the power of that Divine touch raised her up. St. Luke dwells not on the sign or means of touch, which to him was not there the important fact, but to the spiritual as distinguished from human agency in “rebuking” the raging of a disease. And again, St. Matthew, as representing accurate public rumour, dwells not on the *immediate* cure, while St. Mark, as an eye-witness, does; and,

further, St. Luke, from a technical point of view, notes not *that*; for at the crisis in a fever, the essential disease, in one sense, often immediately leaves the sick person; but the fact that while the fever did leave her, yet, contrary to all experience she was not exhausted and left nearly dead, but she *immediately* arose. Instead of her weakness being greatest at this point, she was up at once and ministering to the Saviour.

One great proof of supernatural agency which the witnesses of this miracle had, must be wanting to us—the instantaneous cure evident to the senses. No narrative can convey more than a feeble description of the voice and manner which accompanied the command; nor can it give other than a faint idea of the astonishing change produced by the instantaneous cure⁵. No one who has never witnessed a fever patient at the height of the disease, and immediately after the crisis which often accompanies it, can, even from the clearest written description of a physician, have the same conviction of the change which the eye-witness feels and remembers.

When the Lord thought fit to cure by a word, He did so; but often⁶ we find a visible sign or means used, either with or without the healing word. In all cases we have the audible word or the visible touch, and so

⁵ See Newman's Essays on Miracles, 2nd Edition, 1870, p. 9.

⁶ In twenty-two out of thirty-three cases "He never *laid His hand* upon demoniacs."—Keble on Eucharistical Adoration, chap. ii. sec. 24.

may we not rightly call miracles such as these sacraments of healing? Some will say how could a word or a touch cure a fever? Let physicians explain if they can, how it is that few or no signs of injury can be found in the body after death by fever? how it is that medicines cure disease? or how it is that striking words or strong mental impressions often affect nervous diseases? They know the facts, but no more.

Bodily disease, as elsewhere observed, was closely connected with sin; as closely as the soul is connected with the body; and therefore bodily diseases were regarded as typical of spiritual ones. The dead raised up symbolized those dead in sin. Leprosy figured the utter pollution and loathsomeness of sin, excluding the leprous man, the sinner, from heavenly society. The blind man was a type of one spiritually blind; and so on with the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the lunatic, and others.

The faith of the person or persons interested is not sufficient without the outward sign. The son of the widow of Nain is restored to life by a touch of the bier whereon he lay, and by the Divine command, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise" (St. Luke vii. 14). The daughter of Jairus was raised by our Saviour taking her hand, and bidding her arise (St. Mark v. 41; St. Luke viii. 44). Lazarus was awakened by the cry, "Come forth" (St. John xi. 43). The Lord touched the leper, saying, "I will; be thou clean" (St. Matthew viii. 3). The blind man cast away his gar-

ment, and came to Jesus; but did not see until Christ spoke the words, "Receive thy sight" (St. Luke xviii. 42). When Christ beheld a man blind from his birth, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam (St. John ix. 7); after which words, St. John adds, "he went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." Again, in the case of the deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, we read that Christ took him aside, put His fingers into his ears, and spat and touched his tongue, and looking up to heaven, and sighing, said, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened (St. Mark vii. 32). The deaf and dumb spirit Christ addressed, saying, "I charge thee, come out of him" (St. Mark ix. 25); and we know how that faithful woman touched the hem of His garment, and was immediately made whole (St. Luke viii. 44).

These instances are given to show that an audible or visible sign in connexion with our Lord's great miracles—and notably those of healing—is a prominent feature in the Evangelical descriptions of them; and the fact of their connexion is not more inexplicable than other facts which to physicians are equally unaccounted for in the present day. As before observed, the action of medicines on disease is still a subject for theory and controversy. The effect is in many cases known, and, from experience in some cases, is to be looked for, but

does not always follow in others ; and yet the cause is hid. The Great Physician in mercy extends the border of His mantle over sinful man, to assure him, by the human physician, that as death and disease have been sent, so have recovery and medicines. But He extends *only* the border of His mantle, to show that the mere earthly physician fails and errs, where the heavenly Healer might forgive man's iniquities, and redeem his life from destruction. We call the mutterings of the fever patient delirium, and in the terrors of the mentally diseased we see what we call lunacy. But what know we of these conditions ? What relations have these sufferers with the unseen world ? We see through a glass darkly ; but it may be that *they* are face to face with invisible things, in mercy hid from us.

It may be fairly concluded, then, from the Scriptural accounts of this miracle,—

1. That the description of facts is substantially the same by the three Evangelists, SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

2. That while certain points are dwelt on with marked force in the account peculiar to each Evangelist, these prominent features are not only such as are thoroughly consistent with the respective positions and personal qualifications of the writers, but that each tends strongly to confirm the truth of the accounts of the others.

3. That these marked coincidences were undesigned, and so go far to prove that the Evangelists are to be thoroughly relied on as writers.

4. That the account of this miracle, given in the third Gospel, was clearly written by one acquainted with medical science, and that the traditional assignment of its authorship to "the beloved physician" is probably correct.

5. That the account given in the second Gospel bears strong traces of having been written by an eye-witness, or by the amanuensis of an eye-witness; and that the traditional assignment of it to him whom St. Peter (1 Ep. v. 13) calls "Marcus my son," is probably correct.

6. That the account given in the first Gospel most probably was written by one who was not an eye-witness; but yet by one whose account, when compared with those of the other two, shows him to have been truthful; and that his testimony is such as men would act on readily and without doubt in the most important transactions of worldly life.

If SS. Matthew and Mark being plain, or, as we should now call them, non-professional men, had written of disease in technical terms, we should have plausible reason for doubting their testimony; as also we should had St. Luke not used technical language with as much frequency as might reasonably be expected of a medical Evangelist, writing of disease in which the spiritual rather than the bodily was the more prominent idea.

7. That St. Luke's *ipsissima verba* tend strongly to

confirm the truth of Holy Writ—the fact that a miracle, and nothing else, was performed; and his account in conjunction with those of SS. Matthew and Mark should teach us to what absurd impossibilities we may be led if we deny the existence of an unseen world and of a superior and superhuman power; seeing that to unbelief in some of the commonest facts which we do see and feel, the like objections may be made, e. g. we know soul and body are united. What unites them? How is it that we are made to move, and not to stand still? How is it that a man can speak, while a monkey cannot? How does the soul act on the body? What is the motor power of the nervous system? Also if we reject the testimony of such writers as the Evangelists, how can we be sure that any thing ever happened which we have not seen?

8. That this miracle was performed on a wisely chosen case; because, although the disease might possibly have been cured by man, it could not and cannot be cured immediately and perfectly, but at best slowly, and sometimes without recovery of perfect health.

9. To young medical men and medical students who study God's Word with devout criticism, these remarks may tend to show the information to be had from the original words of "the beloved physician," that he was not a half-informed, or ill-read man in his medical calling, but was "well-up"—as the saying is—in the then received theories and writings of physicians of

the first class ; that all modern medical knowledge is not new ; and that there is nothing in the highest style of medical knowledge inconsistent with faith in the spiritual and supernatural.

10. And to such medical men as recognize the higher existence of the supernatural, our calling presents itself as a far more noble thing than it does to the doubting materialist. Science is with the former not the chief end of the student ; but becomes, as it should be, the handmaid to mercy ; and may we not use the words of one of the most eloquent public speakers of the present day⁷, and “ venture to hope—nay, to believe—that as public opinion becomes more Christian, a higher, nay the very highest, social consideration, will be every where assigned to the members of that noble profession of medicine, which ministers with one hand to the progress of advancing science, while with the other it daily lavishes its countless deeds of unknown, unacknowledged generosity and kindness on the sick and suffering poor.”

THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

Adopting the enumeration of Archbishop Trench, it will be seen that this miracle is related by St. John only, and in the following terms (iv. 46—54) :—

There was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick

⁷ Canon Liddon, *University Sermons*, p. 279, 3rd Edition, 1869.

at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son : for he was at the point of death.

“ Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

“ The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

“ Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way ; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

“ So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth : and himself believed, and his whole house.

“ This *is* again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, when He was come out of Judæa into Galilee.”

Not to go over the same ground again with regard to this miracle, the cure of which is identical in principle with that of Simon's wife's mother, I may refer to what was said in discussing the last mentioned, and particularly as regards the disease itself, fever ; the connexion of the cure with a visible or audible sign ; and the gravity of the case. Here the nobleman's son “ was at the point of death.” “ Sir, come down (said

the father to Christ) ere my child die." In the case of Simon's wife's mother, it was also grave, as we have seen.

Further, note that in this case, as in the former, the disease left him perfectly cured—"the fever left him" [*ἀφῆκεν αὐτὸν ὁ πυρετός*],—the very words used by SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke in describing the other case; and as in the other case, so here it left him at once—"at the seventh hour,"—"the same in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth." And here was no question of human skill. The cure was effected by a word, and at a distance from the patient. So, assuming the honesty of the accounts in the former case, this is even a stronger confirmation of the supernatural power of Christ—were such possible—than the former.

And the terms in which it is described by St. John are in striking, but undesigned, coincidence with the three accounts of the healing of Simon's wife's mother. In all, the disease has a name. In all, it is a serious disease. In all, it needs more than the ordinary physician. In all, the cure is effected in connexion with visible or audible means. In all, it is immediate and complete; and yet there is not the least trace of verbal agreement on the part of the several writers. There is no possible mode of explaining this account away, or of assigning it to human skill or to natural causes. The story is plainly true, or it is plainly false; and it is at least as probably true as many things which we believe

and act on as facts, without half as much evidence as the manifest simplicity of this account, and the undesignated coincidences of its chief points with like accounts of the other Evangelists afford us.

Read the chapter on the healing of Simon's wife's mother before this on the healing of the Nobleman's Son^s.

^s With reference to our Lord's healing this case, the Centurion's servant, the man sick of the palsy, the man at the pool of Bethesda, the man with the withered hand, and the ten lepers, without the visible sign or means noted on page 29, the author of the "Christian Year" thus remarks:—"By these comparatively rare examples, our Lord may have designed to symbolize the necessity of faith in all capable receivers of sacraments, and the sufficiency of it in certain cases without literally receiving; according to the principle, *Gratia Dei non est alligata Sacramentis*." (Op. cit. ii. 25.)

CHAPTER III.

PARALYSIS.

THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC.

In contrast to the miracle performed in the last two cases, affected with *acute* disease, let us consider a miracle performed in a *chronic* case, that of the Paralytic recorded by SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke:—

St. Matt. ix. 2—7.

2. And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick with the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3. And, behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth.

4. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5. For whether is it easier to say, *Thy* sins

St. Mark ii. 3—12.

3. And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

5. When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6. But there were certain of the Scribes

St. Luke v. 18—25.

18. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before Him.

19. And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before Jesus.

20. And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy

be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6. 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 thine house.

7. And he arose, and departed to his house.

sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts.

7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins, but God only?

8. And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11. I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all.

sins are forgiven thee.

21. And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23. Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

That this man had palsy of a very bad kind is manifest from the circumstance, mentioned by all three

Evangelists, of his lying in a bed, or being borne by others. It was a case of *complete*, as distinguished from *partial* paralysis of motion—if not also of sensation, or, at least, of Hemiplegia, or paralysis of one side of the body: I here use modern technical terms. The man was totally helpless.

Throughout the whole narrative our Saviour specially connects sin with the case, and so it has been conjectured¹, that the disease was here, as it has been in many other cases, the consequence of sinful indulgence, the fruit and punishment of unbridled carnal passions, or (it may be added) of unnatural crime. It has also been observed that, by this miracle our blessed Lord teaches that *sin* is the *cause* of disease; and that when sin is destroyed, the body will enjoy angelic health and beauty². And is it not perfectly true that even to the most superficial observer who walks our hospitals, or visits the sick in high or low station, *sin*, in nine cases out of every ten, is the plain cause of disease, and of disease resulting from our own evil tempers, or unbridled passions, or from the sins of our forefathers? What a fearful proof of this does not “family history,” in recording a hospital case, supply! Were drunkenness and unchastity unknown, would not the professions of medicine and surgery be almost unnecessary?

¹ Neander, *Life of Christ*, p. 272, Bohn's Edition, 1864.

² Wordsworth, *Greek Test.* Note on St. Matt. ix. 4.

If we take the word [*βεβλημένον*] translated “lying,” in St. Matt. ix., ver. 2—“A man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed”—if we take this word in the same sense in which we took it in the case of St. Matthew’s account of the healing of Simon’s wife’s mother, (viii. 14, which see pages 23, 24), viz. as implying the helpless condition and continued prostration, probably resulting from a sudden attack; then, the case is more forcibly put before us as one of hopeless paralysis, the direct result of sinful indulgence, occurring suddenly, and therefore signally and notoriously, in a young man. I adopt this last idea—that the patient was a young man, from Bengel, who in his comment³ conjectures that the patient was an adult, because he was borne by four; and that he was young, from our Saviour’s address to him, “Son, be of good cheer.”

And, indeed, from the same expression, it has been fairly conjectured that this disease was, in the instance before us, accompanied by pain of body, and anguish of soul⁴. Mental and physical suffering probably had a mutual connexion and reaction; and both required healing before there could be a perfect cure.

The progress of modern medical science nowhere appears to greater advantage than in connexion with diseases of the nervous system; and some very marked kinds of paralysis now much studied are those which

³ *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*.

⁴ Neander, *Life of Christ*, p. 272.

are accompanied literally by what St. Matthew calls [*βασάνους*] "torments⁵."

Such a case was that of the Centurion's servant, recorded by St. Matthew (viii. 6, &c.) : "My servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented ;" and St. Luke (vii. 2), describing the serious nature of the same case, says he "was sick and ready to die."

Many diseases were included under the general term "Palsy" in the New Testament. One writer⁶ has enumerated five : Apoplexy, which affected the whole body ; Hemiplegy, which affects but one side of the body ; Paraplegy, which affects the lower half of the body ; Catalepsy, of which the principal feature is rigidity of the muscles ; and Cramp, a not infrequent disease in Oriental countries now. This division is not, however, sufficiently exact for the purposes of modern medical science and practice ; and I only note it to show that the word "palsy," as used in the New Testament, was a popular, not a scientific, term ; in fact, that it was used much in the same way as we use it now.

The three Evangelists who relate this miracle substantially agree in every particular ; although, as I

⁵ For the great difference between Paralysis with muscular relaxation, and with painful contraction, see Todd's Clinical Lectures, 1861, p. 627, &c.

⁶ Richter, *Dissertatio Medic.-Theol.*, Goetting. 1775. See also Jahn's *Archæologia Biblica*, p. 218. Oxford Edition, 1836.

shall presently show, there are expressive words peculiar to each.

It would be no difficult matter to draw a picture of the palsied man as he lay, contrasting each prominent symptom of his disease with the immediate and total change produced by the Divine mandate, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house;" three different orders, each probably intended to exhibit an increased exercise of physical restoration entirely at variance with popular expectation.

The man who could not use hand or foot, who was borne of four, was seen first to arise,—implying partial use of the muscles of the trunk and lower extremities; then to take up his bed,—implying a somewhat vigorous use of the muscles of the chest and upper extremities; and, finally, to show his complete physical recovery by the long-continued exertion of almost all his muscular powers,—implied in taking up his bed, and walking to his house.

By no human means could such a case as this have been instantaneously cured either then or now. And although medical science has in our day advanced very much as regards the knowledge and treatment of this mysterious and interesting class of diseases; and modern physicians can often ameliorate, and sometimes cure, the less severe forms of palsy; yet, even with the light of our modern boasted knowledge, a professional inquiry into this case will fully establish the fair conclusion, that it was hopeless as regarded cure by human

skill; and that, even admitting a possibility of cure by human means, it could be accomplished only after a lengthened and trying course of treatment.

We may reasonably suppose this miracle to have been wrought on a man who was affected with what modern physicians call *complete paralysis of motion*, and probably at the first stroke with paralysis of sensation, and with unconsciousness also; and we may presume that this paralysis was connected with, or depended on, what is technically called "Softening of the Brain". Even if his disease affected the motor power of one side of the body only; even if it were but *hemiplegia*, with relaxation of the muscles; the want of motor power as regarded rising up, lifting his bed, carrying it, and walking home, would be practically the same as if the paralysis of motion were complete instead of being one-sided.

As before observed, St. Matthew describes this paralytic as [βεβλημένον] laid flat, stretched; perhaps suddenly struck down on his bed⁸; while the word used by SS. Mark and Luke [κατεκείτο] simply means "he lay." The same expression is used by St. Mark in describing the case of Simon's wife's mother.

St. Matthew, then, as in the instance of Simon's wife's mother, here uses a word which, we may believe,

⁷ Compare the original of the three accounts of this miracle with some standard medical work, e. g. Todd's *Clinical Lectures*, xxxiii., xxxix.; Beale's Edition, Lond. 1861, pp. 608, 695.

⁸ See the remarks on this expression on pp. 23, 24 in the case of Simon's wife's mother.

either expresses the two features of this case which most readily appealed to the public, or is at least consistent with their existence—I mean the sudden, and the hopeless nature of the affliction; while, as has been well observed⁹, the accounts of St. Mark and St. Luke throughout bear the vivid stamp of eye-witnesses; and particularly in the manner in which they relate the unusual feature in the case—the letting down the sick man’s couch into the room where the Saviour was. As an eye-witness, St. Mark would naturally note that the man sick of the palsy did lie on a bed; and that he was so helpless that he was “borne of four” (ver. 3). St. Luke, however, as a medical witness, would not be expected to note the facts, so familiar to him, that the man being palsied “lay;” or that he was so helpless as to require to be “borne of four.” The coincidences in the three accounts thus far tend strongly to mutual and cumulative confirmation of the truth of each account and of all three together; and the substantial identity of this feature in the three accounts is seen by the fact of the Vulgate rendering the word used by St. Matthew, and that used by SS. Mark and Luke, by forms of the same Latin verb [*jaceo*].

SS. Mark and Luke both relate the circumstance about letting down the bed through the tiling, in language of simple yet undesigned coincidence; while St. Matthew, giving an account only of what Christ *said*,

⁹ Neander, *Op. cit.* p. 272. But it must not be concluded that they *certainly* were eye-witnesses.

passes this circumstance by : and although it does not lie within the scope of my argument to discuss the great doctrine of the Son of Man having power on earth to forgive sins—an invisible and more wonderful reality than to heal disease, which was an exercise of power evident to the senses—yet, in passing, it may be noted that the former rather than the latter is the doctrine taught by the Evangelist in this particular case, and hence the absence of minute detail as to fact and circumstance ; which, however, could scarcely be avoided by eye-witnesses¹ like SS. Mark and Luke. The three Evangelists speak of the bed whereon the sick man was laid, but each designates it by a different word from that used by the other two ; and this fact should be noted, because our English translators render three different words in the original by the one word “bed” in the Authorized Version.

St. Matthew’s word [*κλίνη*] means that on which one lies—a couch. St. Mark adopts and uses a Roman word (his own name, “Marcus, my son—John, surnamed Mark,” was Roman)—a word familiar to his readers² [*κράβατος* or *κράββατος*], adopted from the Macedonians, and rendered in the Vulgate by the Latin form of the same word [*grabatus*] ; while St. Luke uses a classical term of the later Greek writers [*κλινίδιον*], literally a

¹ See note on last page.

² His Gospel is believed to have been intended for Gentile, and of course therefore in large part for Roman, readers ; and hence he omits the Genealogy of our Lord ; and, while he gives but few Old Testament quotations, explains Hebrew words and customs.

diminutive bed or couch, a term not used by the other Evangelists.

The word used by St. Mark denotes—Archbishop Trench tells us³,—"a mean and vile pallet used by the poorest;" and from it we may conjecture that the "Son" to whom Christ said, "Be of good cheer," was a son of poverty, and that his disease was aggravated (as physicians know paralytic diseases are aggravated) by the want of those comforts and conveniences which render the sufferer's condition tolerable, and which made his cure to him a relief intense and unutterable. Every clergyman who visits his flock knows the truth of my assertion, that a poor man afflicted with severe paralysis is a miserable sufferer.

But St. Luke's peculiar word [*κλινίδιον*] is good Greek, according to the standard of his own time. It denotes, as already observed, a diminutive couch, and his use of it here may have been designed to show that the bed in question was a diminutive one, specially, though doubtless poorly, constructed for supporting a sick person; a smaller couch than that used for sleep or rest; in fact, such a couch as we see used for like purposes in our own day.

St. Luke, doubtless, had an object in using the word [*κλινίδιον*]; for probably he meant to draw attention to the fact that, although the bed was "a mean and vile

³ On the Miracles, p. 209, note, 7th Edition, 1862.

pallet," as St. Mark calls it [κράβαττος], yet that while it was mean, it was still *a bed* [κλίνη], as St. Matthew tells us, albeit so diminutive a bed [κλινίδιον], as to be let down through the roof of an Eastern house by the removal of a comparatively small portion of the tiling. And, on the other hand, observe St. Luke's verbal honesty, where the idea is to show that a sick man lay on a bed, "a mean and vile pallet," when the size or construction of it, or the possibility of lowering it through a hole in the roof, was not the point to which he would draw attention. In Acts ix. 33 (I here assume that St. Luke wrote this book), he writes of St. Peter finding Eneas, "which had kept his bed," [κατακείμενον ἐπὶ κρεβάτῳ], who had lain stretched on a mean and vile pallet "eight years, and was sick of the palsy." Why does he use St. Mark's word in the case of Eneas and not in the case now before us, and what may we learn from this fact? May we not conclude, that as he well knew of the common word used by St. Mark, and used it himself where it sufficed for *his* description; so that he undesignedly testifies to the truth of St. Mark's verbal description in the case before us; and to the necessity of *his own* technical accuracy in describing how it was that a helpless paralytic was let down on his bed through the roof of a house, a fact which some may have thought improbable.

It may be well to note the fact, that in the frescoes of the Roman Catacombs, this bed, or mean pallet

[κράββατος] ⁴, mentioned by St. Mark, is represented, in connexion with this miracle, as a light frame of wood not unlike those now used by ambulance bearers in carrying the wounded off the field of battle. We see the same thing in a somewhat similar form in what is called "the hospital stretcher."

Here, again, observe the remarkable coincidences even as regards this one word "bed," and how much we learn as to the honesty of the Evangelists and the perfect consistency of their accounts even with their individual peculiarities.

But SS. Matthew and Mark describe this man as [παρалуτικός] a palsied person, one sick of the palsy; while St. Luke avoids that term, and defines the condition of the patient by a word [παρалеλυμένος], translated in the Authorized Version, "taken with a palsy." This latter word has almost the same meaning as that used by SS. Matthew and Mark; but it is a technical term which the former, strictly speaking, is not; and so, while it marks the accuracy of "the beloved physician," the non-use of it, except by St. Luke, shows the thoroughly reliable nature of the records of the other two, who use popular phraseology quite consistent with the truth of the story.

The word [παρалуτικός] used by SS. Matthew and Mark means one affected with [παράλυσις] paralysis.

⁴ For the various spellings of this word see Greek texts of Wordsworth, Alford, Stephens, and Mill; and Liddell and Scott's Lexicon.

This latter word means, primarily, *a loosening aside*; and, secondarily, *a disabling the nerves in the limbs of one side*. The word [παραλελυμένος] used by St. Luke implies *relaxation or debility at the side*, and thence *general feebleness or exhaustion*. It is used in connexion with nautical phraseology, to describe the condition of a boat with disabled or abstracted oars, and thence is applied to the condition of the body when analogously circumstanced. From the accounts of SS. Matthew and Mark, it may be inferred that [παράλυσις] “palsy” had a loose or popular meaning as applied to paralysis generally, as is the case in England at this day, but the professional meaning of the term at that time, was a *partial* as opposed to a *total* disability of the nervous system.

The word [παραλελυμένος] used by St. Luke not only answered his purpose in describing the case accurately, but by using it he avoided the use of the word [παρλυτικός], translated, “one sick of the palsy, which, in *his* Gospel, might have been held to indicate a professional or restricted meaning, not in accord, perhaps, with the facts of the case; just as in reporting a sudden attack in the street now, it would be quite true for a daily newspaper to report the case as one of paralysis; while, in a report of the same case in a medical journal, we should expect and get technical accuracy of nomenclature. And there was good reason for St. Luke’s use of this peculiar word.

In the authoritative medical literature of his day—embodying, as it did, the terms and doctrines with which he was doubtless familiar in the works of Hippocrates the Great, to doubt whose infallibility was considered a medical heresy not very long ago⁵—the term paralysis [*παράλυσις*] nowhere occurs⁶; and where Hippocrates refers to this disease, he employs the term “apoplexy” [*ἀποπληξία*].

It is well known to learned physicians, that the ancients generally considered apoplexy and palsy as diseases of the same nature, but different in degree, apoplexy being a universal palsy, and palsy a partial apoplexy⁷. Apoplexy was looked on as a palsy of the whole body, of sensation, of mind, and of motion; and in this doctrine there was a remarkable agreement among the ancient physicians, Aretæus, Galen, Alexander, Trallianus, Ætius, and Paulus Ægineta, who flourished *after* St. Luke’s time.

Celsus, physician to the Roman Emperor Augustus, who wrote in the reign of Tiberius, and who was there-

⁵ In my Memoir of Dr. Stearne, founder and President of the Dublin College of Physicians in 1668 (published Dublin, 1865), I have noted (on p. 33) that this eminent Medico-Theological philosopher stated of Hippocrates, in his “*Animi Medela*,” that the father of Medicine was one “*qui nec fallere nec falli potuerat*,” p. 58.

⁶ “A word never used by the ancient Greek writers.”—Freind’s *History of Physick*.

⁷ See Dr. Mason Good’s *Study of Medicine*, 3rd Edit. 1829, vol. iv. 659; also Jahn’s *Archæologia Biblica* (Oxford Edition), p. 218, where he quotes Richter, already referred to on p. 43.

fore a contemporary of St. Luke, describes palsy and apoplexy by the general terms [Resolutio nervorum], a resolution or relaxation of the nerves. Celsus represented enlightened medical opinion at this time; and seems to have given definite meanings to the words now under discussion.

He tells us, that, whereas a resolution or relaxation of the nerves was anciently called apoplexy if total, and paralysis if partial, he (Celsus) considered the term paralysis to be the proper appellation of both ["At resolutio nervorum frequens ubique morbus est, sed interdum tota corpora, interdum partes infestat. Veteres auctores illud ἀποπληξίαν, hoc παράλυσιν nominaverunt: nunc utrumque παράλυσιν appellari video"]. From this it will appear that St. Luke, probably of set purpose, refrained from using a word of then unsettled professional meaning; employing instead of it a term which technically and accurately defined the nature of the case—paralysis *with relaxation*, as distinguished from paralysis with painful *contraction* of the muscles—and which showed by marked contrast, the superhuman power of the cure. The other Evangelists, not being medical writers, of course would not be understood to write of palsy in any but the popular sense of the word.

It may be noted in passing, that in the expression, "Confirm the feeble knees," in Isaiah xxxv. 3, the word translated "feeble" is the same in the Septuagint version as that used here by St. Luke; and in

the Epistle to the Hebrews, xii. 12, where this passage is quoted, the same word likewise appears. Also in Acts viii. 7, where, assuming St. Luke to have been the author of that book, we should expect the same technical accuracy, we find the same word again; "many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed;" and again, in Acts ix. 33, the same word is used in describing the case of Eneas, "which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy."

THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

St. Matthew viii. 5—13. St. Luke vii. 1—10.

This case, mentioned only by SS. Matthew and Luke, has been incidentally touched on in discussing the last, which should be read in connexion with it. A comparison of the narratives may be found in any Harmony of the Gospels⁸; and, inasmuch as St. Matthew describes the Centurion as himself going to Christ, while St. Luke describes him as *sending* others to the Saviour, it may suffice to note that this and other points of comparison or of apparent diversity will be found fully discussed by Archbishop Trench⁹. The Archbishop's general position, as regards the point now chiefly alluded to, is the well-known axiom, and one universally acted on by us all, "Quod facit per alium facit

⁸ See Williams's Devotional Commentary on the Gospel Narrative, vol. ii. p. 92, edition of 1870.

⁹ Miracles, p. 225, 7th Edition.

per se:" in other words, a man is said to build a house, while we know he pays others to build it for him.

The general question of palsy, and of how fitted it was for the exercise of Divine healing power, has already been noted in the former case; several of the remarks thereon made, apply here also. But there are one or two features special to this case.

St. Matthew tells us (viii. 6) that this Centurion's servant was "sick of the palsy," the same word used by him in the former instance; but he adds that the paralytic was "grievously tormented."

St. Luke, on the other hand, says nothing of the name or character of the disease: he only tells us (vii. 21) that the man was "sick and ready to die," and from this some commentators have found a difficulty: e. g. that Most Reverend and learned Prelate, Archbishop Trench, says¹, "There is a certain difficulty respecting the exact nature of the complaint;" and he adds that St. Matthew's word "palsy," and the phrase "grievously tormented," seem not altogether to agree, nor yet the report in St. Luke that he was "ready to die;" "since palsy in itself neither brings with it paroxysms of pain, nor is it in its nature mortal." The Archbishop, however, adds that paralysis with contraction of the joints is accompanied with suffering; and that when to this is added tetanus, as is often the case in the East, the phrases "grievously tormented," and "ready to die," are perfectly consistent.

¹ Op. cit. 232.

But with all deference to so high an authority, is not this difficulty unreal? and are the medical facts exactly as thus stated? I rather think not. No fact is better established than that certain forms of paralysis, not uncommon in England at present, are accompanied with "torments." Paralysis, with contraction of the *muscles*, is one frequent form of this disease, and I have often seen it among the inmates of a workhouse hospital. The suffering in such cases is often terrible; but a reference to some standard work, such as that already noted², will be quite sufficient evidence on this point to medical students. Again, may I note just one form of paralysis not rare among us, and much written about by physicians now, called "Loco-motor Ataxy"? For some time past I have been in the habit of visiting pastorally, a wretched sufferer from this disease, under which he has laboured for about eight years. It has gradually crept from his feet upwards, until now he is almost helpless; and he requires the strongest sedatives to give him even temporary and partial relief from intense agony. He is verily sick and "ready to die," and in due course (perhaps very soon) will be killed by this disease. A mild form of palsy does not commonly end in death, but it is mostly followed by repeated attacks, gradually increasing in severity, until the patient not only is "ready to," but, as a fact, does "die."

² Todd's Clinical Lectures.

This was a severe, a mortal case, else the Saviour's aid were not wanted. The two accounts, then, are perfectly consistent. St. Matthew notes the tormenting nature of the disease. St. Luke says that he was so bad that no man could save him.

And this statement is also perfectly consistent with that recorded in 1 Macc. ix. 55, 56 of Alcimus, of whom we read, "His mouth was stopped, and he was taken with a palsy, so that he could no more speak any thing, nor give order concerning his house. So Alcimus died at that time with great torment." The Greek words here translated "palsy" and "torment" are the same as those used by St. Matthew; and it is scarcely necessary to add that the description of the disease is true to life. But St. Matthew says of this case, "And his servant was healed [*ιάθη*] in that self-same hour." Here that Evangelist uses the word peculiarly proper for "healing;" and he does so of set purpose. Elsewhere, e. g. xiv. 36, he says [*διεσώθησαν*], "they were made perfectly whole;" and likewise St. Mark uses a peculiar word [*ἐσώζοντο*], vi. 56, "were made whole." St. Matthew, then, marks the fact of the *healing* of the disease; but does St. Luke use this word of healing in this case? He does not. He goes farther, and tells us that they found him not only healed, recovered, but "whole" [*ὀγιαίνοντα*], body and soul in perfect health. St. Matthew's word has reference to bodily health, St. Luke's to the health of the

whole man, and therefore to soundness of mind ; which, as we know, is often most gravely affected in bad cases of paralysis ; and it may be said that these are the most hopeless cases. Well then did St. Luke say that the servant was “ready to die,” and yet that he was made “whole.” His word implies *Sanity*, our model of health—*mens sana in corpore sano*. It is not long ago since I saw a strong man reduced to this condition of an insane, suffering paralytic. He is now in a lunatic asylum, dying by inches³, and none but the Great Physician can make him “whole.”

It may be questioned whether the meaning here attached to “whole” [ὑγιαίνοντα] is the true one ; whether this word does fairly include soundness of mind as well as soundness of body ; whether the word of itself means more than being in a sound or healthy state ; and whether the nature and extent of this soundness should not be determined by the context ?

But even admitting the force of these queries, I believe the result will be much the same. The word in question occurs in the New Testament, in St. Luke v. 31 ; vii. 10 (the case now before us) ; xv. 27 ; and in 3 St. John, ver. 2. In the last instance it is used in a metaphorical sense, as implying greeting, “I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper and *be in health*.” In each of the other instances it is worthy of note that “the beloved physician” is the writer who

³ Since writing the above, I have learned that he has died.

uses it; and he would not be worthy of the title of a physician if he had contemplated "soundness" as having reference only to bodily health. The relation of mind to matter, the mutual action and reaction of body and soul, and the doctrine of spiritual influence in connexion with bodily disease, are ideas or facts which the reader of St. Luke will see were clearly recognized by that Evangelist. And whether we look on it as a matter of medical science, or as a matter of fact, it cannot be denied that soundness or unsoundness of mind must be closely connected with paralysis; and that any consideration of such cases which did not include the *mens sana in corpore sano*, must be regarded as utterly defective. In chap. v. 31, St. Luke writes of those that are whole [*ὕγιαίνοντες*], not needing a physician. Here, of course, he is writing of soundness as opposed to disease. But it is equally plain that the province of the physician [*ἰατροῦ*] then, as now, included treatment of the mind as well as of the body. And if the word "whole" were here to be restricted to soundness of body, it would quite destroy the force of our Lord's use of it as an illustration. For it evidently was his purpose to show that sin affected the whole individual, body and soul, as disease or health had relation to the whole man; and so he came not to call the righteous (the sound or healthy), but sinners (the diseased) to repentance. In ch. xv. 27, the same word, used with reference to the return of the Prodigal

Son, is translated "safe and sound;" and this good authorities have interpreted to mean "safe and uninjured." But, in this instance, there was no question of bodily disease at all; while, on the other hand, we read that the Prodigal "came to himself⁴." He had been beside himself with sin; but when he repented, he came, returned to himself, and was received back again, a sane man, by his father. Here, then, as indeed Greek writers have used it, this word would seem expressly intended to mean soundness of mind, and not soundness or safety of body⁵. From all this it will appear that the word under consideration ought to be regarded as expressing perfect soundness of the individual; that sometimes this soundness had special reference to the body; sometimes to the mind; and sometimes, as in the present instance, to an abnormal or unhealthy condition of the individual in which both were or might be affected; mental injury in paralysis being closely connected with, or following from, cerebral or nervous lesion. The "soundness" in a case such as this, when cured, is analogous to the soundness of a recruit, who, after physical and mental examination by a military surgeon, has been pronounced thoroughly fit for service.

⁴ "In se autem reversus."—*Vulgate*.

⁵ See under *ὑγιαίνω* in Liddell and Scott's Lexicon; and also in the 1851 edition of Rose's Parkhurst's Lexicon to the New Testament. In this latter book Kypke is quoted as referring the word principally to the mind in St. Luke xv. 27.

THE HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA.

St. John v. 2—9.

2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole ?

7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked : and on the same day was the sabbath.

This man also is generally believed to have been afflicted with a severe form of paralysis—to have been a paralytic, like the two preceding examples, of which see pp. 39, 54. The same descriptive language is used as to his condition, which we find used in cases plainly called paralytic, e. g. the man sick of the palsy in St. Mark ii. 4, and the case of Eneas in Acts ix. 33; and his cure is accompanied with the like direction, “Take up thy bed, and walk.”

And, indeed, the fact of his having been diseased for so long a time as thirty-eight years, and of his inability to walk into the pool of Bethesda as quickly as others, leads to a like conclusion. That his case was not as bad as the first of the two preceding cases, we may conclude from the fact that he usually made some attempt to walk into the pool or bath: “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.” He was not, then, totally unable to move; he could shuffle along as paralytics often do; but he could not get along as fast as those who stepped down before him. He was not so bad as “the man sick of the palsy” above referred to—for *he* could not move at all—he was “borne of four;” but he was worse than his fellow-sufferers. And that he might have been worse than he was, is evident from what the Saviour said to him: “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

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Moreover, that his case was paralytic, may be concluded from what the narrative says of those who waited for healing at this pool or bath of Bethesda: "In these lay a great multitude of sick, blind, halt, withered"⁶—that is, of persons affected with all kinds of disease of the nervous system: the word translated "sick," in the authorized version "impotent folk" [ἀσθενούντων], meaning "infirm sick," those whose diseases were chiefly connected with general failure of nervous power; and the words translated "blind, halt, withered" [τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν] point in the same direction, to disease from infirmity, or failure of nervous power, rather than to the results of epidemics or of mechanical injury. And the fact that they did resort to a bath for cure also shows this, for it is well known that the ancients had great confidence in the curative powers of baths, animal and mineral, in diseases like these. Celsus already quoted, who was then living, recommends bathing in the sea in paralytic cases, and where it cannot be had, he advises the use of artificial salt water⁷; and the learned Dr. Mead, in commenting on this very case⁸, observes that medicated baths were then much used in the Holy Land; and refers to the accounts of them collected by Hadrian Reland⁹. It is not exactly within the scope of

⁶ Archbishop Trench's translation.

⁷ Lib. ii. cap. xxvii.

⁸ Medica Sacra, cap. viii.

⁹ Palæstina ex Monument. Vet. illustr.

these remarks, to consider some questions which are generally discussed in connexion with this miracle, such, e. g., as whether the closing words of verse 3, "waiting for the moving of the water," and the whole of verse 4, about the angel troubling the water at a stated season, and the cure of *any* disease of the first bather—whether these portions are interpolated or not.

Nor is it essential to our purpose to consider whether by an angel troubling the water, is meant a messenger of the Sanhedrim; or simply the expression of popular belief as to supernatural agency in the case. Nor, again, need we pause to ask whether the cures there effected were medicinal or miraculous. All this is beside the Saviour's cure of this impotent man. The Lord interfered in no way with the cures effected at the pool of Bethesda; His act consisted in healing *there*, and immediately, and perfectly, one who had been so paralyzed for many years as not to be able to shuffle first into the bath on any one occasion during a great part of his lifetime.

It may be well, however, not to pass over these points altogether, and therefore for information on the first mentioned—the question as to the authenticity of the last clause of verse 3, and the whole of verse 4—the intelligent student may be referred to p. 157 of the 2nd edition of Barrett's Companion to the Greek Testament (Bell and Daldy, 1867), where all that has been advanced by our best scholars is put in a small

compass; and when it is mentioned that Dean Alford rejects these passages as spurious, while Bishop Wordsworth does not, and Archbishop Trench agrees with Alford, it will be seen that there is important authority on both sides. In any case, the facts are not affected, for verse 7 by itself would imply what is said in verse 4. In it (verse 7) the impotent man mentions the well-known phenomena that the water was at times, and at times only, troubled; that this troubling was due to some extraordinary influence; and that whoever first stepped in—and that person only—was cured of whatsoever disease he had, i. e. of whatsoever variety of disease peculiar to those who lay in the five porches—nervous diseases, as I have already suggested. It is not stated that *any* disease was cured. We do not find that lepers, e. g., resorted there, nor those *born* blind; who are elsewhere carefully distinguished from those whose blindness was caused by *disease*¹. Nor need we take any trouble to water down the meaning of the word “angel” into a mere human messenger. Some think they are removing one of the difficulties of reve-

¹ The learned Bartholini, in his Essay “De Paralyticis in Nov. Test.,” to be found in Ugolini’s “Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum” (vol. xxx. pp. 1505, &c.), gives a list, and particulars, of several places in which is, or was, an abnormal condition of baths, or waters, analogous to the “troubling” of the pool of Bethesda at certain seasons. He also says, respecting the diseases of the persons who lay in the five porches, and the curative nature of the waters, “Nervosi generis sunt morbi omnes, et aquis medicatis solent expugnari” (p. 1513).

lation by thus arguing; but are they? is not the whole question whether or not there is a world of spirits; a supernatural power which we see not, save by its effects? "He maketh His angels spirits (or winds), and His ministers a flaming fire." God carries on the course of nature in many things that we see—e. g. in the cultivation of the ground—by the visible agency of man; and there is nothing unreasonable in believing that tempest and epidemic, even though recurring in cycles, according to what are called natural laws, are set in motion by the direct agency of angelic ministration.

If not, do they send or launch forth themselves? "The wind bloweth where it listeth: and thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." Look at the immeasurable superiority in wonder-working power of man over the lower creation, amongst whom we move, but of whom we know so little; and then see how very probable it is, that above us there is a higher and unseen order of beings, whose senses, and intelligence, and power, may be to ours as ours are to those of the microscopic millions who exist around, yea, within us—even within our organs of vision—within the food we eat and the water we drink, but who are as invisible and as unreal to the greatness of men as any immaterial being can possibly be. In man, and among brutes, it is the spirit which produces motion; but what moves the

natural world to perform its ordinary duties? In fact, Scripture in many places teaches us that the course of nature is carried on by the ministry of angels; and let those who think this an effete superstition explain how else it is carried on. And to the same cause we may fairly ascribe many natural paradoxes, or extraordinary phenomena, which we know to be true, but which we cannot possibly explain on any scientific theory. Where there is a law there must be an executive; and there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that medicinal springs, even in England, are made effective by the ministry of angels; yea, medical treatment itself is probably made effective in like manner, though the human ministers of it often see it not. Thus we see that, even supposing this pool of Bethesda to have been an animal bath, a place into which the exuvæ of the temple sacrifices were drained, or a mineral bath, such as some of those in Germany and in England, or a combination of both (and there are weighty authorities in favour of all these views), there is nothing inconsistent with such fact, or facts, in the statement that an angel—a Divine and unseen messenger—did so act as to “trouble” the water and so make it curative. But then, while we can well understand that it was only at a stated time of the year, and by reason of the stirring up of the water, that its sanative property was made effective, how was it that one only was healed—cured on the spot—and not only so, but

“made perfectly whole”? This is not to be explained on any medical theory. Were the bath an instance of merely medical treatment, even by angelic ministry, we can understand how it could *mainly* benefit the first-comer, who would get the best of the salts or animal matters held in temporary solution by the stirring of the water. And as there may have been room for one only to get in at a time, we can understand why the second-comer would be much less benefitted than the first. On no medical theory, however, can we explain how any one, be he first or last comer, affected with such a chronic disease of long standing as any of those adverted to by St. John, and for which baths were useful—how he could be “made perfectly whole” at once, and at the first bathing. And this difficulty is increased if we take the words, “of whatsoever disease he had,” to apply not to any disease found in the class of patients there usually assembled, but to any disease in the long catalogue of ills to which the flesh is heir. The result is not, as stated by Dr. Mead (“*Medica Sacra*,” loc. cit.), “he who first stepped in *experienced the virtue of the water*,” but he who first stepped in was made “perfectly whole,” and this even in cases where such baths were of little if of any benefit.

Not one disease of this kind can be made “perfectly whole” by one bath. Most of them cannot be made “perfectly whole” by any amount or repetition of such bathing. The benefit derived from baths in chronic

diseases is so well known by the public to be slowly gained, that no further remarks need be made about it. Even supposing the cures ordinarily effected at the pool of Bethesda to have been medicinal—that is, accompanied or preceded by the outward use of medical agents, just as the growth of corn is preceded by sowing of the grain—yet it is fair to conclude that this pool or bath was at that time a standing token of God's abiding presence with His chosen people; that the cure was effected by Him who "created medicines out of the earth" (Ecclus. xxxviii. 4); and that, lest the power should be ascribed to the creatures of His mercy, He restricted His benefits, and yet extended them so fully to the one case healed, that men should visibly appreciate the fact that it was God who redeemed their lives from destruction.

Here we see the true dignity of the Physician. We *see* the means used, but we also feel that there is an invisible power which, after all, directs the cure². In two like cases in an hospital, treated alike, why is it that one often recovers and the other dies?

And in this miracle the Saviour asserts His claim to be head and Lord over the healing art. He says, in effect, to the impotent man, "I, who would have made thee perfectly whole hadst thou been first in the bath, yet can make thee whole without it; and I will show how perfectly whole thou art—Rise, take up thy bed,

² Wordsworth, in loc.

and walk. Do that which thou hast not been able to do for thirty-eight years; and let people see that thy cure is as complete and as immediate as that which may have been ascribed to the waters of Bethesda.”

It has been said that Christ did not heal this man at all, but only detected an impostor!

But this objection, which, with others of the same kind, was published in 1800 by Dr. Paulus³, is too absurd to need any examination, much less refutation. To say nothing of the utter denial of the plain words of the Gospel, which this Rationalistic suggestion implies, the morality of it is not such as would commend itself to any one. Christ would then be set forth as blessing fraud and imposture, and professing to do good to one who was only worthy of punishment. Nor would the others, who lay within the five porches, have been likely to countenance one who was mocking their infirmities by feigning disease.

THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND.

St. Matt. xii. 9—13.	St. Mark iii. 1—5.	St. Luke vi. 6—11.
9. And when He was departed thence, He went into their synagogue:	1. And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.	6. And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue, and taught; and there was a man whose
10. And, behold, there was a man which	2. And they watched	

³ In his Commentary, particularly described by Archbishop Trench, *Op. cit.* p. 78.

had *his* hand withered. And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse Him.

11. And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12. How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

13. Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

Him, whether He would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him.

3. And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4. And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

right hand was withered.

7. And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against Him.

8. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose, and stood forth.

9. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy *it*?

10. And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other

11. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

The description of the disease in this case is the same in these three accounts. St. Matthew says this man had his hand "withered" [ξηράν]: St. Mark says that the man had "a withered [ἐξηραμμένην] hand:" while St. Luke uses the same word as St. Matthew, with the additional statement that it was the *right* hand which was so affected; and the Apocryphal Gospel of the Nazarenes states that the man in question was a mason by trade, and on that account implored Christ to have mercy on his destitute and helpless condition.

St. Matthew, whose object, as before observed, seems to have been to record chiefly the sayings of Christ, presents this case before us mainly in that light; while St. Mark, with that vividness of description which distinguishes an eye-witness, describes here, as elsewhere, the very looks and demeanour of the Saviour—so important an element in carrying conviction of miraculous power to the mind of a beholder: "and when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored, whole as the other." There is a most remarkable identity, even to verbal agreement, in the three accounts of the *working* of this miracle⁴, and St. Luke's noting the *right* hand is all but technical.

⁴ As to the apparent variation in the accounts of the questions which preceded it, see Archbishop Trench, *Op. cit.* p. 364.

This is just such a fact as a medical reporter would not fail to remark, as it would give important hints respecting the history and cause of the disease: whether, e. g., it had been caused by his trade, or had been even indirectly due to it. To take a similar case among ourselves: there is the familiar withered or palsied hand of the house-painter, the effect of lead poisoning. An ordinary man passes another in the street, or sees him at home. He observes that he has one hand drooping from the wrist, powerless and wasted; that he, in fact, is “a man with a withered hand.” The physician, however, sees at a glance that it is the right or working hand which droops—then the thought comes, why *that* hand? because he uses it most. What trade does he follow? house-painting. What is there in that trade likely to bring about such a result? lead poisoning, which, although it acts on the system generally, yet specially acts on the hand—yea, on the particular parts of the hand which hold the painter’s brush.

The man with the withered hand was evidently affected with paralysis, with atrophy, or wasting of the hand; and probably of the forearm also. It may have resulted from some accident occurring in the following of his trade, whereby a principal nerve and, perhaps, a blood-vessel in the forearm were injured, and the nervous or nutrimental telegraphy, so to speak, interrupted, or permanently stopped. In such case there

would be absence of nervous power, and of nutriment, and from these causes, as well as from disuse, the limb or member would wither and waste away. The phrase "withered hand" in such case is, in fact, not only forcibly expressive, but literally true; because there is no more possibility of recovery in such a case than there is in a withered branch of a tree when the supply of sap has been cut off from it. Atrophy of any limb can be artificially produced by obstructing the flow of blood by ligatures; and atrophy, withering, or wasting, is one of the most marked symptoms in many cases of paralysis. That there may be a local paralysis from injury of a nerve supplying the part, without any lesion of the nervous centres, is a well ascertained scientific fact⁵.

Moreover, the word [ξηράν] used in describing this case is used in enumerating the "blind, halt, and withered [ξηρῶν] who filled the porches at the pool of Bethesda; and it has already been noted that all those sick persons were cases in which general failure of nervous power was what physicians would call the pathognomonic sign (see p. 63).

It has been conjectured by so good an authority as Jahn⁶ that this was a case of catalepsy; and he classes

⁵ Graves's Clinical Lectures (Dublin, 1864), Lecture xxxiii. See also Todd's Clinical Lectures (p. 611) for withered hand from lead palsy.

⁶ Archæologia Biblica, Op. cit. p. 218.

it with the hand of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii. 4), which “dried up” [ἐξηράνθη, LXX. “exaruit,” *Vulgate*], “so that he could not pull it in again to him;” and with the arm of the idol shepherd, which “shall be clean dried up” [ξηραινόμενος ξηρανθήσεται, LXX. “ariditate siccatbitur,” *Vulgate*]. But none of these cases could have been cases of catalepsy, even in the ancient sense of the term; unless, indeed, Jeroboam’s miraculous punishment were such in some degree, for when he put forth his hand, we read “that he could not pull it in again to him.” Cataleptics retain the limbs in the position in which the fit overtakes them; but the disease itself is only temporary, though recurrent; and is accompanied by unconsciousness. The man with the withered hand was perfectly conscious; he heard the Saviour’s command, “Stretch forth thy hand;” that hand which drooped feebly at his side, and was not already extended like Jeroboam’s. He did stretch it forth; and we are told that it was restored “whole as the other.”

This miracle is one of those which some have attempted to explain away on the grounds of ordinary medical or surgical treatment. “A withered hand” has been explained as *a dislocated arm*; and the act of stretching it out, we are told, restored the bone to its place at once.

But no serious refutation need be given to such a theory. Even supposing that “a withered hand”

might by any perversion of language be made to mean an arm out of joint—and no modern surgeon would admit this—how could the patient extend his dislocated arm? This very loss of the power of extension is *the* symptom which mostly tells a man that he has dislocated an arm; and every one who has seen a dislocated arm, or who has seen a dislocation reduced, knows perfectly well that the luxated member is powerless, and is so for the most simple mechanical reasons. But let us suppose that the effort to stretch out the hand did reduce the dislocation. What, then, of the restoration “whole as the other”? When an arm has been atrophied and made powerless by long-standing dislocation, is it made “whole as the other” at once? Never. Remembering, then, in the three preceding instances the general remarks made on paralysis, and undesigned coincidence of statement, and the selection of cases the instantaneous cure of which could not be attributed to human skill, and the technical accuracy of St. Luke, we must see in this narrative a strong confirmation of the truth that a superhuman work was wrought on the man with the withered hand.

THE WOMAN WITH A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY.

St. Luke xiii. 10—17.

10. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11. And, behold, there was a woman which had a

spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

12. And when Jesus saw her, He called *her to Him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13. And He laid *His* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15. The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou hypocrite*, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

16. And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

17. And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

This miracle is related only by St. Luke, and it is worthy of note how he, a physician, mentions the Saviour's words, ascribing the origin of the disease to Satan: "This woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound." We should not look on

this as a cure of a case of demoniacal possession (of which see more particularly in Chapter V.), but as one in which Satan and his agents, evil angels, are set forth as the direct authors of moral and physical evil: such indeed, there is no absurdity in supposing to be the case in many, perhaps in all, cases of bodily and mental disease. Just as we see illustrated in the case of Job.

Delitzsch⁸ notes here that St. Luke expressly distinguishes between two words [*πνεύματα πονηρά* and *ἀσθενεῖαι*]. Compare chap. viii. 2 with v. 15. In the former chapter he writes of certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities [*πνευμάτων πονηρῶν καὶ ἀσθενειῶν*]; and, by way of illustration of what is signified by the first of these terms [*πνεύματα πονηρά*], compare Ezek. x. 17 and Zech. v. 9, where a certain Divine and miraculous power whereby inanimate things become capable of motion is indicated in the word *ruach* [רוח⁹].

It is plain from St. Luke's account, that he uses the same word which St. John uses in the case of the man at Bethesda who had an "infirmity" (see p. 62). It is plain that this woman was paralyzed; the seat of the disease lying chiefly in the spine, or in the dorsal muscles, which probably were relaxed, while those in front of the body, by reason of the equilibrium between the two sets of muscles being destroyed, would incline

⁸ "Natural and Demoniacal Sickness," in *Biblical Psychology*, p. 347, Clark's edition.

⁹ Compare Gesenius, s. v.

the body forward, and gradually contract, so as to keep it bowed down or bent.

We see this in paralysis of one side of the face, where the side towards which the nose and mouth are pulled is not the diseased but the sound side. The muscles at the diseased side being powerless, those at the sound side pull without any compensating power.

“This infirmity” (wrote Dr. Mead in his *Medica Sacra*) “often befalls those who have been very long afflicted with a disorder of the loins; whence the muscular fibres of that part become contracted and rigid. Wherefore it is very probable that this tedious disease proceeded from that very cause, and was curable by the Divine assistance only.”

On Ascension Day, 1871, when walking along the Strand, I saw a very remarkable case, which apparently resembled that of the poor woman whose cure is recorded in the Gospel. She was literally bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, and could in no wise lift up herself. Her head was so bowed down as at least to be on a level with her knees; and the shape which her body presented was somewhat like the letter U turned upside down, with the right hand arm of the inverted letter slightly shortened.

But in the case recorded by St. Luke the disease possibly had a mental origin¹. The impotent man

¹ She was present at the Synagogue worship, which would not have been permitted had she been demoniacally possessed, in the Evangelical sense of that expression.

at Bethesda had an "infirmity." She had "a spirit of infirmity" [πνεῦμα ἀσθενείας]; and do we not often see men whose bodies have actually become bowed down by mental distress? At any rate, this woman's case was one which is never perfectly cured, and seldom ameliorated. Its tendency is to get gradually worse, as hers probably had done, until, all hope being gone, she became a case for the Great Physician, who "loosed" her from the contraction of her infirmity wherewith she was "bound;" "and immediately she was made straight." St. Luke's words [παραχρῆμα ἀνωρθώθη] are those of a medical observer. Contrary to medical experience, she was *immediately* healed; and that healing was at once the consummation and evidence of the cure. She "was made straight:" no better medical test of perfect cure of paralytic contraction.

CHAPTER IV.

LEPROSY.

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

St. Matt. viii. 2—4.

2. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

3. And Jesus put forth *His* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer

St. Mark i. 40—45.

40. And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *His* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42. And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him,

St. Luke v. 12—16.

12. And it came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus, fell on *his* face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

13. And He put forth *His* hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14. And He charged him to tell no man:

the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

and he was cleansed.

43. And He straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away ;

44. And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man : but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter. insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places ; and they came to Him from every quarter.

but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him : and great multitudes came together, to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.

16. And He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

THERE are two instances of the miraculous cure of leprosy recorded in the Gospels—that now under consideration, and the cleansing of the ten lepers, narrated by St. Luke only (xvii. 11—19). The three Evangelists describe the first of these two cures in almost identical words. The disease is called by the one name by all ; and the kind of cure—a purifying cleansing—is expressed by the same Greek word in each Gospel.

St. Luke only adds to the description of the other two, that the man was not only a leper, but “full of leprosy;” this expression not having reference to the great superficial extent of the disease, for then he would not have been a leper at all in the Levitical sense¹, but having reference to the gravity of the case. In fact it was the language of a medical observer, and is a striking coincidence in favour of the truth of the story, when taken in connexion with the narratives of the other two Evangelists.

And, in accordance with this statement, we find that the man was legally a leper; for Christ commands him to show himself to the priest, “and offer the gift that Moses commanded” (St. Matt. viii. 4). This he would not have been required to do had his disease been of that kind which, as free from ulceration, was known to be mild, and so was exempted from the rigorous provisions of the Levitical law.

Moreover, the expression “full of leprosy” shows that not only was he in a hopeless state of what, as a matter of fact, was an incurable disease, but that there were aggravating circumstances in his case—circumstances which made him a peculiarly fit subject for the power of the Great Physician; for, while the Jewish law did contemplate and provide for restoration to

¹ When the disease overspread the whole surface of the body, the patient was entitled to be pronounced “clean” by the law of Moses. See Lev. xiii. 12, 13, 16, 17.

health in some cases, yet they were few and far between; and grave cases of the disease were not then, nor are they now, amenable to medical treatment, so far as *thorough* cleansing, and certainly not so far as *immediate* cure, is concerned.

This man, then, had leprosy, Jewish or Hebrew leprosy; that disease which, in regard to its symbolism, is perhaps more important than any other mentioned in Holy Scripture. What was the nature of *lepra Hebræorum*?

In the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus we have three varieties of "leprosy" clearly described. To all of them the generic term *Bahereth*, or bright spot, is applied; the varieties being respectively named *Bohak*, or dull white, and two varieties of *Tsorat*, or malignant disease, viz. *Bahereth Kehe*, or dusky Bahereth, and *Bahereth lebhana*, or bright white Bahereth.

Bohak was not seriously regarded by the Jewish law. "If a man also or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots (*Bahereth*), *even* bright white spots; then the priest shall look: and, behold, *if* the bright white spots (*Bahereth*) in the skin of their flesh *be* darkish white, *it is* a freckled spot (*Bohak*) *that* groweth in the skin; *he* is clean (Lev. xiii. 38, 39).

The second variety, *Bahereth Kehe*, nigrescent or shadowed ["*umbræ similis*"—Celsus] leprosy, was more serious than *Bohak*.

But the third variety, *Bahereth lebhana*, or bright

white leprosy, was the most serious of all. The pathognomonic characteristics of this disease were—a glossy, white, and spreading scale on an elevated base, the elevation depressed into the middle, but without change of colour; the hair participating in the whiteness, and the patches themselves perpetually widening their outline.

When any one of these appeared on a person he was brought before the priest; and if, in connexion with such a blemish, the specific marks of a *tsorat*, or malignant leprosy, were found, he was declared unclean, or, in case of doubt, he was remanded for further examination. The disease, particularly the bright white variety, terminated either favourably or unfavourably. In the former case, it spread over the body without ulcerating, and, having run through its course, exhausted itself. In such case, while the scales were yet dry on him, the leper was declared clean, and restored to society. If the case terminated unfavourably, the patches ulcerated, producing quick and fungous flesh, and the patient was pronounced unclean for life. He was clothed and otherwise treated as one dead, while the Hebrew theocracy compelled him to forsake the haunts of men, proclaiming to all passers-by the hopeless and irrevocable sentence, “Unclean, unclean.”

Rhenferdus, an old medical writer, in his treatise “*De Leprâ Cutis Hebræorum*” (to be found in Meuschen’s *Nov. Test. ex Talm. illustr.* pp. 1057, &c.), plainly proves from ancient authors, Talmudists and

others, that Hebrew leprosy was a *scaly* disease denoted by every name implying cuticular eruption. He asserts that one pathognomonic sign, præternatural whiteness [albedo præternaturalis], was common to all the species of it; and, quoting from Maimonides, he states that white hair, spreading, and tenaciousness of life [pilus albus, diffusio, et vivacitas] were the distinguishing signs observed by all Jews to mark the different varieties.

To the same effect writes Schilling in his Comments on Leprosy (De Leprâ Commentationes, Leyden, 1778), in which he reprints a discussion of Ouseelius on the same subject (Phillippi Ouseelii, M.D., De Leprâ Cutis Hebræorum). In this last treatise, the *whiteness* is expressly maintained to be the distinguishing sign of Hebrew leprosy, and it is shown that in the different varieties it varied as the whiteness of snow varies from that of gypsum, which varies from that of wool, which, again, varies from the whiteness of a sheep's fleece.

The learned Dr. Mead, in his *Medica Sacra*; that well-known Bible scholar and physician, Dr. Mason Good², and many other writers of note, all agree in the above account of this disease. The original word used in the New Testament, and by the LXX. [λέπρα from λέπω, to peel or scale off], also confirms the preceding remarks. Because of the *white* scales, it was likened to snow; and this where the disease was distinctly *penal*, and therefore, it may be presumed, of the severest and

² In his work in 5 vols., 8vo, entitled the "Study of Medicine."

most typical kind. Hence it is recorded that the hand of Moses was leprous *as snow* (Exod. iv. 6) ; that Miriam became "leprous (white) *as snow*" (Num. xii. 10) ; and Gehazi went out from Elisha's presence "a leper as (white as) *snow*" (2 Kings v. 27).

The above is intended as a concise account—suited to the educated general reader—of this celebrated disease of which so many divines and physicians have written ; and on the exact nature of which, even now, there is much difference of opinion. That the leprosy of the middle ages, elephantiasis Græcorum (the elephant skin disease of the Greeks), and not the disease above described, was the "*lepra Hebræorum*," is maintained by moderns of note³ ; but after much consideration of the subject—one to which I have given some attention⁴—I am persuaded that the opinion just men-

³ E. g. Mr. Erasmus Wilson, F.R.S., is of this opinion. See his "*Diseases of the Skin*," from an old (4th) edition of which much of the matter concerning leprosy (including the assumption of the identity of these distinct affections) in the recently published "*Speaker's Commentary*" appears to have been taken.

⁴ I may refer the reader to the Article on the "*Leprosy of the Hebrews*," on pages 329, &c., of my enlarged and revised edition of Neligan on *Diseases of the Skin* (Dublin and London, 1866) ; and to the following tractates and reviews of mine :—

The Hebrew, Mediæval, and Modern Leprosies compared, "*Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science*," May, 1864.

Remarks on the Hebrew Catalogue of Skin Diseases, Ibid. Nov. 1864.

Review of the Royal Coll. of Physicians' Report on Leprosy, Ibid. 1868.

Notes on the Mediæval Leper Hospitals of Ireland, Ibid. 1868.

Review of Recent Works on Dermatology, Ibid. 1868.

tioned, although maintained by some great names, is Scripturally, historically, and medically untenable, and I must refer the reader, and especially the medical reader, who desires more full information, and references to books ancient and modern, to what I have previously written on the subject. The question is an intricate one; and the confusion about it in books arises in great measure from not clearly defining terms before discussing the subject. Between Greek elephantiasis and Hebrew leprosy, there is literally as much difference as between black and white, between hypertrophy and atrophy⁵. The confusion of writers, just referred

⁵ The writer of the article in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible advocates what I conceive to be the correct view; but he does not refer to the most modern medical treatises; nor does he prove his case, as he might have done, from Schilling and others whom he quotes. Dr. Mead's reference, alluded to in a foot-note in that article, was to Fracastorius, and not to Avicenna, "De Morbis Contagiosis." On the other hand, the "Preliminary Notes" on leprosy, and the comments on Lev. xiii. and xiv. in the recently published "Speaker's Commentary," show how natural it is for a non-medical commentator to accept a medical authority which, to him, appears conclusive, forgetting that "doctors differ." With all respect for the learned writer of these notes, I must observe, that in my opinion one mistake runs through all his remarks on leprosy, and it is this: the assumption that the elephantiasis of the Greeks was identical with the leprosy of the Hebrews. This view, I respectfully maintain, is contrary to medical antiquity. Hippocrates, Galen, and especially Celsus, and Rabbinical writers, such as Maimonides, can be alleged against it.

The view assumed without argument in the Commentary just referred to, to the utter exclusion of the older opinion, is indeed advocated by one modern medical writer of note, who has thought fit to

to, in great part accounts for the opinion against which I contend, and the fact of the elephant skin disease (by Dr. Mead believed to have been the disease of Job) being anciently supposed to follow the leprous affection, and both being endemic in the East, would further tend to confusion in the minds of readers and writers.

How far the idea of Galen—that they were both kindred diseases—may be found true, it is not easy to say; but, like most remarks of the ancient keen observers, there is probably much truth in it; and Dr. Carter's recent researches point in that direction⁶. Although *lepra Hebræorum* and *elephantiasis Græcorum* were different in their appearances, symptoms, and effects, yet if—as is now the received opinion—

use some apparent “free-handling” with the sacred text, and to express himself thus, in the very book which is quoted, and seems to have furnished the basis of the leprosy literature above referred to:—“The sacred writings, usually exact and accurate in their description of events, are so confused on the subject of elephantiasis as to require to be put out of the pale of reference when treating on this subject; and the pages of the Greek and Arabian authors are equally uncertain.” “Now [to quote my own words published in 1866] it is not Moses who is ‘confused,’ but his modern critics, who very illogically assume the truth of their own position, and then try by that standard the great Hebrew lawgiver and the fathers of medicine who wrote of another disease altogether.”

Assuming my view to be correct, the text of Lev. xiii. is simple in meaning, and pathologically true. In any other case, it must be “accommodated” to “modern thought.”

⁶ On Leprosy as seen in India, Trans. Bombay Med. and Phys. Soc. 1862.

both be constitutional maladies, directly resulting in some cases from exposure to conditions unfavourable to health, there is nothing impossible or improbable in the opinion that elephantiasis may have found an easier victim in the Hebrew leper than in any one of sound constitution. Both diseases now exist side-by-side in the East⁷; and I have mentioned in another work that at Tangiers in Africa, at the present day, the two diseases are to be found, the leprosy proper prevailing chiefly among the Jewish residents, and presenting exactly the symptoms described in Leviticus⁸. Moreover, on p. 562 of the "Speaker's Commentary" it is stated, as a remarkable fact, that in Syria elephantiasis is unknown among the Jews. In India also, and to a great extent in Egypt, they appear to enjoy the same immunity.

Among the Jews and other Eastern nations lepers occupied positions quite incompatible with the existence in them of the symptoms and results of the mediæval disease, or elephantiasis⁹, which so unfitted the subject of it for active life, that he was shut up in a

⁷ Report on Leprosy (R. Coll. Phys. Lond.), Lond. 1867. Respecting Palestine and Syria, this report states (pp. xi and xii) that the two forms of the disease recognized in that district are—1. Baras el Israîly, or Israelitish leprosy, which consists of whitish scales on the skin; and—2. Jezâm, or Da el Ased, or the lion-like disease.

⁸ Diseases of the Skin, Op. cit. p. 320.

⁹ See a description of elephantiasis in any ancient or modern medical work; verify it by comparison with some coloured plate; and then compare both with Lev. xiii.

leper hospital ; had a burial service performed over him on his admission ; and was treated as legally dead.

Josephus describes leprosy in a man as “a misfortune in the colour of his skin,” and says, “There are lepers in many nations who are yet in honour, and not only free from reproach and avoidance, but who have been great captains of armies, and been entrusted with high offices in the commonwealth, and have had the privilege of entering into holy places and temples¹.”

We find Naaman, a leper, commanding the Syrian armies (2 Kings v.) ; Gehazi was conversed with by the King of Israel² (2 Kings viii. 4, 5). The leper was not excluded from the synagogue [Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebr.* i. 513] ; nor from the Christian Church [Suicer, *Thesaurus Patrum*, under λέπρος].

Also, the leper, in the very case now before us, followed our Lord among “great multitudes ;” and besought him “to make clean,” what Josephus calls, “the misfortune in the colour of his skin ;” and that this was the Levitical leprosy the context shows, for he was directed to go to the priest and comply with the directions of the Mosaic law.

Was the Hebrew leprosy contagious ? This is a practical question, for on the answer to it depends much of its fitness as a special type of sin.

¹ *Antiq.* iii. c. 11, sec. 4.

² But the Chronology of the Kings is so little understood that this may have occurred *before* his punishment.

Many learned men have argued that it was *not* contagious. Dean Alford, e. g., says, in commenting on this miracle, "The whole ordinances relating to leprosy were symbolical and typical. The disease was *not* contagious ; so that view which makes them mere sanitary regulations is out of the question." He then proceeds to urge that the cases of Naaman and Gehazi, already referred to, and the fact that the priests had to handle and examine lepers, were decisive against the contagion theory, as was also the fact that if, in the examination of a leper, the man was found to be entirely covered by the disease, he was pronounced clean. He states, on the authorities already quoted, that the leper was not excluded from the synagogue, nor from the Christian Church ; and that analogies in other cases—as, e. g., touching the dead, and having an issue, which are joined with leprosy in Num. v. 2—show that sanitary caution was not the motive. He further observes that the law was symbolical, and that only ; that under it a leper was a type of one dead in sin ; and that the same emblems were used in his case as in those of mourning for, and cleansing after contact with the dead, which precautions were never used on other occasions (compare Num. xix. 6. 13. 18, with Lev. xiv. 4—7).

Archbishop Trench (Notes on the Miracles, p. 210) agrees with the views propounded in Robinson's *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, and seems to think, with

him, that the disease was constitutional and hereditary, but contagious only from man to wife. He is further of opinion, that "it was not in any respect a sanitary regulation;" and remarks that "where the law of Moses was not observed, no exclusion took place; and where the law was in force, the stranger and sojourner were expressly exempted from its provisions." Rhenferdius, the old medical writer already quoted, thinks it was not contagious, because the priest who examined and handled the leper did not get it; because up to the time of decision the patient was suffered at large; because universal lepra was pronounced clean; because, if there were any well-founded suspicion, it is highly probable [sit verisimile] that Moses would have called *every* species unclean. He quotes from the Talmudists to show that the examination could not, and did not, take place either in the morning or in the evening, or on a cloudy day, or at noon; but at the third, fourth, fifth, eighth and ninth hours of the day. Neither did it occur at various festival seasons, nor at nuptials, when, in case of suspicion, a set time [septem duum] was given to the married person before examination; and in the case of Jews only did it occur at all. He also remarks on the case of Naaman; and concludes that leprosy was not contagious, because, if it were, nothing would have occurred to defer the immediate separation of the infected person.

The objections of the three learned personages

above set before us, are so placed as to put the non-contagion theory in the strongest and most probable light. Rhenferdus, in fact, gives nearly all that has been advanced on one side of the question.

With great diffidence, then, would I presume to differ from such learned names; but I think that the non-contagion view is stretched too far. It is not clearly stated what is meant by *contagion*; and if, on the one side, it be alleged that the Mosaic enactments regarding leprosy were sanitary only, there is no logical necessity for the direct contrary view that they were symbolical, and in no respect sanitary. While, if it can be shown that they were sanitary, as well as symbolical, this miracle will teach the same analogy between sin and disease as the others. The man with an infirmity was really helpless, showing the real spiritual infirmity caused by sin. The leper, if not contagious, could scarcely symbolize one dead in sin who defiled every soul with whom he came in contact. Would he not, in such a case, teach that evil communications do *not* corrupt good manners? Whether there be such a thing as *contagion* at all is still a medical question; and it is well known that physicians of the highest eminence differ as to whether certain diseases, e. g. fever, scarlatina, and idiopathic erysipelas, are contagious in any sense. Strictly speaking, the term *contagion* may be applied to a disease communicable from one person to another by personal contact; and

the term *infection* to a disease communicable from person to person by other means, e. g. by breathing infected air. However, as in point of fact—or, rather, as in general opinion—some diseases, such as small-pox, are believed to be communicable by both means, we may extend the meaning of *contagious* to any disease which one person may take from another by personal contact, by touching or wearing the clothes of a sick person, or the furniture of a sick room, or by breathing the infected atmosphere of an apartment. If an animal poison enter the body of a healthy person, it is pretty much alike whether that entrance be effected through the lungs, or through the skin, or even through strong impressions on the nervous system. In many such case a disease may be said to be contagious, because, as has been remarked ³, it is literally *catching*.

In this sense, then, shall the term *contagious* be regarded in the following observations.

Now, with reference to the non-contagion view of Hebrew leprosy, it must be said that the direct contrary opinion was that generally, if not universally, entertained by ancient writers. We have those who meet the statement that the Mosaic law of leprosy was symbolical only by a counter-statement, that it was sanitary only; and we have those who hold a middle course. They follow the presumed principle of the

³ Sir T. Watson's Lectures on the Principles and Practice of Physic, ii. 778 (4th edit.).

Jewish theocratic government, and neither ignore the symbolical law on the one hand, nor the sanitary law on the other ; but combine both. Thus, considering the Jewish Church and State to be co-extensive, they look on this part, as well as many others, of the Levitical code as both symbolical and sanitary.

Any question of the contagious nature of a disease resolves itself into a question of observation, both in daily life and in books ; and no medical fact is more patent in the present day than that the old medical writers were as acute observers of nature as we are, with all our boasted knowledge. And, passing by the ancients, we may just mention Mead and Mason Good as men who, by their learning, lived in the old world, while, by their observation and experience, they lived, and lived to purpose, in their own times. Now, Mason Good says of the “tsorat,” or typical leprosy, “There is no doubt of its having proved contagious ;” and Mead, while accounting for the apparent difficulties of the case, is of a like opinion.

Against the objections brought forward to the contagious nature of Hebrew leprosy, it may be urged—

1. That the assertion that the Mosaic ordinances in this respect are solely symbolical, is an assertion, and no more.
2. That the priests or physicians (for in this latter capacity they are here considered) did not contract it by intercourse with the leper, may be accounted for by the known position of medical men in all ages.

They are exposed to contagion more than any other class, and yet the cases in which diseases are contracted from patients are comparatively rare: even of this small average many are notoriously caused by want of that proper precaution which, even if leprosy be admittedly contagious, would protect the careful physician from injury by contact. Besides, there is nothing to show that the priests did not exercise this proper precaution; nor is there any thing to prove that, without it, they were wholly exempt or protected from the disease.

3. The case of Naaman is beside the question, as he was not a Jew; even as a Syrian, his social position, which plainly was not affected by his disease any more than such would be now in this country, would enable him, by having every personal convenience and accommodation, to avoid communicating his disease to any one. The same remark would apply to the King of Israel conversing with Gehazi, especially as a son of Ahab was not likely to care much about the Mosaic law. Moreover, as before noted, the chronology of the Kings is so unsettled that Gehazi may have talked with the King *before* his punishment.

4. With reference to the admission of lepers to the synagogues and Christian churches, was the disease mentioned by Suicer and Lightfoot "leprosy" at all? If it were, no Christian law was broken in the one case, while the Jewish law certainly was broken in the other.

5. The analogy of the law of leprosy to that respecting one

touching the dead, or having an issue, is also easily explained.

Every physician knows that touching the dead is literally an unclean act, and in some cases a highly contagious and dangerous one also. From want of caution, or from accident, many an anatomical student has contracted diffuse inflammation, and succumbed to a speedy death; nor has the lot of the surgeon operating on the living sometimes been much better. The idea of the uncleanness of the dead is a natural instinct thoroughly rooted in us all. In a short time a dead body becomes intolerable; and if there be any truth in foul air and impurity causing disease and making men *catch* it, then, in this sense of contagion, it would be hard to persuade any one that a dead body was not really unclean. The same remarks apply to the issue; but, as the subject is not one suited for the non-medical reader, reference may be made for particulars about this to a paper already quoted⁴. In either of these cases, cited as analogous to leprosy, there is undoubted uncleanness; and as sanitary science on good grounds reckons uncleanness directly conducive to disease, there is no doubt of the wisdom of separating the healthy from the unclean, as contagious, even on a general sanitary principle.

Thus the analogy between Hebrew leprosy and the

⁴ The Hebrew, Mediæval, and Modern Leprosies compared. Op. cit.

above cases points very strongly to a sanitary view of the Mosaic Code.

6. In the case of the man entirely covered with disease, and yet pronounced clean, the contagion theory is easily supported. I have already noted that the blemish might terminate favourably or unfavourably. It was in the former case that the scale [*λεπίς*] spread over the entire body without producing any ulceration ; gradually it lost its morbid power and exhausted itself ; and *then*, when the scales were yet dry on the patient, he was pronounced clean. This is the view of Mead and of Mason Good ; and it is fully borne out by the authorized text of Lev. xiii., especially when we remember the two senses—generic and specific—in which the word “leprosy” is employed by the translators. On the supposition that it was a more extended and worse kind of the same unclean leprosy, it is impossible to perceive the symbolism of pronouncing that ceremonially clean, which was corporeally the very worst kind of leprous uncleanness.

7. The reference to Robinson’s *Biblical Researches in Palestine* may be explained, by stating that this writer does not clearly show what kind of leprosy he saw. He merely states a few symptoms, which lead one to infer that it was not elephantiasis, as he called it. As to its being hereditary, that is very probable ; and it is also believed that it dies out of a family after three or four generations. Moreover, it evidently was contagious

from man to wife, not only in the sense of taking by contact, but also in the sense of catching from exposure to the same vitiated air and the same conditions unfavourable to health. Just as husband and wife, by living together, often get personally like each other; a young person, in like case, gets constitutionally assimilated to an old one. Even in this sense of contagion, or communication, consumption was in this country long held to be contagious. On the Continent such is still the general opinion; while in Italy, the clothes and effects of any one dead from phthisis pulmonalis, or consumption of the lungs, are burned just as the clothes of any leper were.

8. That no exclusion took place where the law of Moses was not observed, is accounted for on the simple principle that no law is observed except where it is in force. But is it true that "no exclusion" was observed outside the land of the chosen people? Doubtless there was no such exclusion as was rigidly enacted by the law of Moses; but what of leper hospitals all over the East to this very day?

Nor where the law was in force am I able to find any proof of the exemption of the stranger and sojourner from its provisions. On the contrary, it would seem, from Lev. xix. 34, that "the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born among you;" and, provided he was circumcised, he might eat of the Passover, and was in all respects considered as a Jew: "He

shall be as one that is born in the land" (Exod. xii. 48).

9. Some of the objections of Rhenferdus are weighty. Several of them have been already considered, and a few only now remain. They may be all placed in one group thus:—That up to the time of decision the patient was suffered at large, because if there were any good ground for suspicion of contagion, Moses would have pronounced *every* species unclean, because the examination was conducted only at the clearest and brightest hours of the day, and not at all at various festivals, and only after some time in the case of newly-married persons.

The idea set forward in these objections is, that if the disease were really contagious, all haste would have been made to separate the leper from the healthy.

Now, for the sake of argument, let us assume the law of Moses to be a sanitary treatise, and we shall see the great importance of the priest-physician making an accurate diagnosis. This law was written for all time, so far as the Hebrew nation was concerned; and if any error should exist in it, or in the administration of it, the grievance to unborn generations would be immense. Thus all the common and unmistakable signs of leprosy are omitted; and those capable of being misjudged are set down in so clear a way, that the priest had only to follow his instructions and give a judgment which was never resisted as unjust. Every

possible precaution was to be taken ; full time, clear light, and circumstances free from any excitement connected with the public feasts or private rejoicings, were to serve as guides to the physician, that he might in all doubtful cases—as we do still—give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt, and avoid dooming a clean person to the horrors of the unclean leper. We all recognize this principle, even in our imperfect lunacy laws ; for it is a more fearful thing to doom one sane man to a madhouse, than to let loose ten madmen on the public.

It has been said that it must have been a hardship to be shut up seven or fourteen days for every alleged attack of leprosy ; and therefore some of the learned have proposed to translate the words “ shut up ” into “ bind up ; ” inferring that the priest merely covered or bound up the eruption, and not the man who had it. But there is no reason why the translation need be altered to suit this theoretical difficulty. Even in these days of activity and business, it would not be thought a great hardship to shut up for a few days every one in London suspected of having such a serious disease as small-pox. In fact, many regret the absence of some such law in England just at this time (1871), when small-pox is widely prevalent among us.

The leprosy of houses and clothes (Lev. xiv.) has often proved a difficulty to the believer, and a rock of offence to the indifferent. It is not strictly within the

purpose of these remarks to enter fully into this subject⁵; but I do not hesitate to affirm that that difficulty is not real. There are few medical facts better ascertained than that unwholesome clothing can communicate disease; and that not only can houses cause it by their general unfitness for habitation, but that persons going to reside in a house lately tenanted by persons sick of such a disease as scarlatina will readily contract that disease. Moreover the recent microscopic discoveries of diseases called *Dermatophytæ*—parasitic diseases of an animal and of a vegetable or fungus nature—go far to prove the wisdom of the analogy established by Moses between the leprosy in man and unwholesome contagious conditions (or leprosy) of clothing and houses; between the *acarus* which infests the skin, and that which dwells in the garment made of animal or vegetable substance; between the vegetable parasite which attacks man, and the fungus which dwells in the walls of houses. That the leper was clothed and treated like a dead man cannot affect the question of contagion in any way; nor can the admitted contagious nature of the disease in the least destroy its emblematic character. On the contrary, if leprosy was not contagious, then indeed it would lose the most important

⁵ See Mead's "Medica Sacra," on Leprosy; and the article in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible on "Leper." The latter gives such an explanation as will carry much weight with medical men skilled in cutaneous diseases.

part of its typical nature—its resemblance to the contagious nature of sin; and if the law was in “no respect” sanitary, it takes away one proof of the theocratic government of the Jewish state.

I think, then, that there is fair ground for concluding that Hebrew leprosy was not necessarily infectious by contact in every case; but that it was contagious in the wider sense of being communicable by social or family interchange, whereby it deteriorated the health of the sound, and specially predisposed them to leprosy when attacked by the minor skin affections. These were classed with leprosy by Moses; and, as I have elsewhere attempted to show⁶, all taken together form a classification true to nature, and not open to the objections which may be urged against our ever-changing modern classifications. It served to detect disease; to diagnose it; to treat it when curable; and to permanently separate the diseased from the healthy when cure was impossible.

My object in thus discussing leprosy at length in connexion with the miracle now before us, is to show that the most minute investigation on medical grounds tends to confirm the Mosaic account of this disease, as well as the truth of the narrative in the Gospels. That there is thorough agreement as well as undesigned coincidence between the Old Testament and the New in this matter; and that the Mosaic provisions about

⁶ Hebrew Catalogue of Skin Diseases. Op. cit.

leprosy bear the stamp of sound public policy as well as of scientific hygiene. Much more might be added ; but sufficient has been advanced to prove that in this particular thing, the Bible, even as a mere book, is fully entitled to our belief ; and that the less we explain it away and treat it as exploded, the more likely are we to find out how little we ourselves know after all. Some years ago, the statement of the Bible, that "the blood is the life" was deemed unscientific and behind the age. Now, however, it is not deemed an untrue or exploded opinion.

THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS.

St. Luke xvii. 12—19.

12. And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off ;

13. And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14. And when He saw *them*, He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16. And fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks : and he was a Samaritan.

17. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed ? but where *are* the nine ?

18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19. And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

This narrative, peculiar to St. Luke, does not require any minute consideration, as the whole question of leprosy, its character, incurability, and fitness for the exercise of miraculous power, were discussed in the last case,—which see. We find that the ten men here were lepers ; because St. Luke uses the technical word “lepers” [λεπροὶ] ; and we also know that they were affected with the Levitical leprosy ; for they were told to go and show themselves to the priest ; and as they went they were “cleansed.” These words have been considered in the last case ; and St. Luke’s description has been noted as thoroughly agreeing with the medical mind, as we should expect from the prominent place which miracles of healing hold in his Gospel.

CHAPTER V.

DEMONIACAL POSSESSION.

THE DEMONIACS IN THE COUNTRY OF THE GADARENES.

St. Matt. viii. 28—34.

28. And when Hewas come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30. And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

31. So the devils be-

St. Mark v. 1—20.

1. And they came overunto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2. And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.

3. Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: nei-

St. Luke viii. 26—39.

26. And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27. And when He went forth to land, there met Him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs.

28. When he saw Jesus he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, *Thou* Son of God most high? I beseech Thee, torment me not.

29. (For He had com-

sought Him, saying, If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32. And He said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

33. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

34. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts.

ther could any *man* tame him.

5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.

6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him,

7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, *Thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not.

8. For He said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.

9. And He asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many.

10. And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country.

11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great

manded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30. And Jesus asked him, saying, What *is* thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31. And they besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep.

32. And there was an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain; and they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them. And He suffered them.

33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

herd of swine feeding.

12. And all the devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

14. And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

15. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

16. And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the

34. When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country.

35. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36. They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought Him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and He went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought Him that he might be with Him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17. And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts.

18. And when He was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him.

19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.

39. Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

In considering this miracle of healing, we are at once brought face to face with one of the questions of the day—the existence of the supernatural—the agency of unseen spiritual beings. To those, however, who receive the Bible in any sense, there can be no doubt that the existence of good and evil angels is therein explicitly mentioned and taught. It is said—because men cannot as yet see proof of it—that modern natural

science gives us no trace of the supernatural. This may be true ; but natural science gets dark, and really forfeits its right to the name of *knowledge*, or science, when it attempts to deal with the relation of mind to matter. And this relation, which we know does exist, and because of which we live and move and have our being, implies, yea demands for its explanation, the existence of a spiritual agency above and beyond the visible course of nature.

And connected with this question, there seem to have been at all times developments of two different classes of opinions. Connected with, or disconnected from, the early and Mediæval Church, we find the set of principles known in history as Manichæanism—the making evil as eternal as good, and so itself a god. Pantheism, on the other hand, is a fashionable view common in our own day. This theory denies any true reality to evil, or that it is any thing else than good at a lower stage ; the unripe, and therefore the still bitter fruit⁷. Both of these theories are excluded by the Scriptural doctrine concerning the kingdom of evil, and the personality of its head Satan, and the relation in which he stands to the moral evil of our world. Scripture teaches the absolute subordination of evil to good, and its subsequence of order, in the fact that evil roots itself in a creature, and in one created originally pure, while good springs from the Creator. But yet it

⁷ Archbishop Trench.

also teaches that the opposition of this evil to the Divine will is real, and that the end of God's government is the subjugation of this evil; not by force, but by righteousness and truth. And from the central will of Satan the Bible derives all the evil in the universe. He is represented as having a kingdom, with its ministers—"the devil and his angels." They are the principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness of the world, and wicked spirits in heavenly places.

And there are no gaps or chasms in the creation of God. There is one chain of being from an unorganized particle of earth to the highest angel.

Moreover, we find this to be in an ascending scale, many links of which can be but imperfectly observed by us. Yet we can see, in a general way, the ascent from the earth to mineral, vegetable, insect, reptile, fish, beast, man, and angel. Angels, too, are good and evil. The evil kept not their first estate; but yet are, doubtless, endowed with a power and knowledge which, except that they are exercised under the Divine permission, as in the case of Job, we should regard as scarcely inferior to those of God himself. They are principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Now, if we except the Sadducees, the Jews as a nation not only believed in demoniacal possession, but they also believed the fact of the performance of miracles in such cases by Christ. Their error, as we read in Holy Scripture, lay in ascribing such

works to Satan himself; and they were not able to reply to our Lord's question, "If Satan be divided against himself, how then can his kingdom stand⁸?" In St. Matthew's account of this very case (viii. 16) we read that demoniacal possession was then common. "Many that were possessed with devils," he writes; and how this was so, Josephus explains, saying of his own nation at that time—and his account is confirmed by St. Paul's description in Romans i.—"There was not a nation under heaven more wicked than they were."

The strong tendency of the Jews to practise magical arts, like the heathen, has also been adduced as a reason why demoniacal possession was common in our Lord's time. These arts, we know, were condemned by Christianity, as we find from the circumstances connected with the burning of books "of curious arts" recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

But modern objections to the existence or possibility of demoniacal possession are made both by believers and by doubters of Holy Writ. I do not here refer to those who deny miracles of this kind as facts; for, as already observed, they are taking a more unbelieving

⁸ Calmet says ("Sur les Obsessions et Possessions du Démon. Luc. xi. 14"), "Les anciens ennemis de la Religion Chrétienne, convaincus par l'évidence des miracles qu'ils voyoient faire à JESUS CHRIST, aux Apôtres, ou aux premiers Chrétiens, n'osoient en contester, ni la vérité ni la réalité. Ils se contentoient de les attribuer, ou à la magic, ou au Prince des Démons, ou à certaines paroles et à certains secrets naturels."—Nouvelles Dissertations, p. 273, Paris, 4to, 1720.

standpoint than the Jews did, or do now; but I specially refer to those who use more or less "free handling" with the historic statements of the Gospels; and to those who readily and sincerely receive these statements as substantially true, but as presenting difficulties which may be removed by assuming the use of figurative or popular, rather than of literally true, verbiage.

It has been objected—and this by many learned believers in Holy Scripture, such as Dr. Mead⁹—that demoniacal possession was simply lunacy. And such writers urge that the language of the Evangelical narratives must be interpreted figuratively, and that our Lord, in speaking of *possession*, accommodated Himself to the language and ideas of His time: that curing lunacy was a miracle just as much as curing demoniacal possession. Others¹, going farther, urge

⁹ *Medica Sacra*, chap. ix.

¹ Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Demoniacs of the New Testament*, London, 1775. See also *Semler*, *Comm. de Dæmoniis*, &c. Halæ, 1770—1779. An ardent controversy was carried on in the eighteenth century between Dr. Farmer and his opponents. The above opinion as to *direct or commissioned* divine interposition is Dr. Farmer's leading position.

This position is brought forward into Farmer's work above quoted, from another of his previously published, and entitled, "A Dissertation on Miracles, designed to show that they are arguments of a Divine interposition, and absolute proofs of the mission and doctrine of a prophet." The thesis of this latter book is "that all miracles are works appropriate to God." His "Essay on Demoniacs" is not what would now be called a Rationalistic work, quite the contrary;

that we have no miracle in Holy Scripture, save as the result of *direct* or *commissioned* divine interposition. Hence the Egyptian magicians were regarded as jugglers, and the Witch of Endor as a dream; as well as the temptation of Christ by Satan; and it is asserted that the cases of demoniacal possession recorded in the New Testament have all the symptoms of ordinary lunacy.

But *is it true* that extraordinary works have not been performed except by divine interposition? I think not. The power of Satan and his angels, as taught in Holy Scripture, is clearly against this theory. To the historic truth of demoniacal possession the narratives in the Gospels and Christ's own words are distinctly pledged; e. g. in St. Luke, xi. 17—26, where our Lord speaks of an "unclean spirit;" of "casting out devils;" of the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of a man, walking through dry places, &c., and of "seven other spirits more wicked than himself:" in all this there is no trace of any thing but personal possession by spirits—in the plural number—and not by disease. And St. Luke, the physician, plainly distinguishes between it and ordinary diseases². It is every where distinguished

but his principle is the unsafe one of making the Evangelists not to mean what they wrote. It is a very learned treatise; and is a thoroughly reliable compilation of authorities on his own side of the question. He quotes Semler, MacKnight, Lardner, Warburton, and other writers of note.

² See vii. 21.

from mere bodily disease³. The demoniac also is different from the abandoned wicked man: for he was a subject not of punishment, but of pity; his being was so impenetrated by fallen spirits⁴ that there was a double consciousness in him; sometimes the spirit thinking and speaking, sometimes the poor subject himself crying out. In many cases (as has been suggested with regard to this miracle now under consideration⁵)—in many cases probably unchecked indulgence of sensual appetite had afforded an inlet to the powers of evil into the animal soul [$\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$].

When and where Satan had his seat, then and there demoniacal possession seems to have been rife. Thanks to the spread of Christianity, men now point to the general absence of such calamities, and thence argue that they never existed.

But is this so? Rhenius, a Lutheran missionary in India (quoted by Archbishop Trench), gives it as his experience, that among the native Christians there, even though many of them walk not as children of the light, yet there is no such falling under Satanic influence as he traced frequently in the heathen around him. And travellers in India have not failed to notice the fact, that, after making all due and possible allowance for cunning and cleverness, Satan does work by lying

³ Compare St. Matt. ix. 32, with St. Mark vii. 32.

⁴ St. John xiii. 2. Acts v. 3.

⁵ Note on St. Matt. viii. 32, in Dean Alford's *abridged* Greek Testament (1869).

wonders in India now, as did Jannes and Jambres when they withstood Moses in Egypt. But have we really no cases of demoniacal possession among us now? I am not quite so sure of this. It is no answer to the question to say that any cases we may bring forward are cases of insanity. Perhaps they are; but, then, the Gospel narratives tend to prove that, in some instances at any rate, there is a closer connexion between insanity and demoniacal possession than we may wish to believe; and that the ancient doctrine, that all insanity was the more or less direct result of possession, may be founded on an undeniable abstract truth⁶.

Some of the best psychological authorities recognize demoniacs now. Esquirol has been said to have given the weight of his authority in this direction⁷; and let

⁶ In the middle ages there was something like possession. See Hecker's *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, published by the Sydenham Society, 1844.

⁷ Archbishop Trench gives this (*Op. cit.* p. 168) as a report, but does not vouch for it. On looking over Esquirol's work, "*Des Maladies Mentales*," tome i. pp. 482, &c., Paris, 1838, it would seem that he writes not exactly of demoniacs, but of demonomaniacs; and he divides them into persons affected with "*théomanie*," and those affected with "*Caco-démonomanie*." Of the latter, in connexion with the ancient oracles, he says (p. 487), "*Si c'en était ici le lieu, je prouverais que l'on s'est servi des aliénés pour rendre des oracles; que le prêtres savaient leur inspirer un saint délire: je démontrerai plus tard que la possession du démon est un vrai monomanie. Les démons sont devenus muets, dès que le Christianisme eut éclairé le monde; ils ont cessé de lutiner les hommes depuis qu'on les craint moins.* Depuis

any one read Dr. Forbes Winslow's well-known book on "Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind," and say whether there is not some ground for coming to a like opinion?

I once knew a lady whose case was so remarkable that I published it after her death^s; and, in truth, if ever there was a case of possession in the present day, hers was one. She had double consciousness, and several other features similar to those in the miracle now before us. In fact, in almost the same words, she often said, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not."

qu'on ne fait plus brûler les sorciers et les magiciens, l'imagination en repos n'enfante plus ni sorciers ni magiciens." And again, on p. 485: "Le Christianisme, ramenant les idées religieuses à l'unité de Dieu, faisant taire les oracles, en éclairant les hommes, consacra l'opinion de Platon, de Socrate, sur l'existence des démons; il opéra une grande révolution dans les idées. On exagéra les puissances des esprits sur les corps; la crainte de céder aux instigations du diable inspira l'effroi; on se crut, de cette vie, au pouvoir des démons; les démonomaniaques se multiplièrent; c'est ce que prouve l'institution des exorcismes dans la primitive Église." Perhaps it is hardly fair to say that Esquirol in these passages recognizes demoniacal possession as a cause of madness, but he does not oppose it. In fact he gives no decided opinion, except his not opposing it be taken as indicating a leaning towards the "possession" theory. It must be borne in mind that he uses the term "démonomanie," as a received technical expression only.

^s A Short Sketch of a remarkable Case of Insanity (read before the College of Physicians, Dublin, Nov. 25, 1863). No. 3, in *Tractatus Medici*. Dublin, 1864.

And who can tell how many of the diseases which we impute solely to natural causes may not be directly due to those causes, but *finally* due to the work of evil angels?

That the possession in the demoniacs among the Gadarenes was real, and not figurative or accommodated to the language of the day, we learn from the sequel of the possession of the swine. Who ever heard of swine afflicted with madness, or epilepsy, or melancholia? If the devils were mental diseases, how could it be said that they *besought, went out, filled* a herd of swine, rushed down a precipice; or that they were in the plural number, “seven other spirits more wicked than himself.” How could seven other diseases “more wicked than” the first enter into a man? The truth is that the Gospel narrative is pledged to demoniacal possession, and that it cannot be explained away on any theory. It must be taken as true or rejected as false.

If the excessive indulgence in sensual appetites had predisposed the demoniacs mentioned here to the possession of evil spirits, we can conceive how the animal soul, or life, in the swine might be capable of receiving such influences; but with this difference, that whereas there is in man an immortal spirit, a real I, struggling against Satanic oppression; the brute, having no such self-conserving balance, is carried headlong to destruction. Too much attention cannot be given to the well-

weighed assertion of a learned authority⁹ which says—and, as I think, with good foundation—“in many cases of mania and epilepsy there is a condition very analogous to that of the demoniacs.” Certain it is that the early Christian writers accepted these statements of Holy Scripture in their literal sense; and the historical fact, that an order of ministers called “exorcists” long existed in the Church, and that from almost the birth of Christianity—all this testifies to the widespread belief of Christians, from the earliest times, in demoniacal possession¹.

It has often been noted that St. Luke is very particular in marking out cases of possession, and in

⁹ Trench on Miracles, Op. cit. p. 168.

¹ Delitzsch draws a curious analogy thus:—“Nothing makes the condition of demoniacal possession so intelligible as the magnetic *rapport* in artificially produced magnetic states. The magnetized person there appears as the absolutely will-less instrument of the magnetizer; and the contents of the consciousness of the magnetizer are reflected in the consciousness of the person magnetized, so that the individuality of the one is, as it were, merged in that of the other. Pinch the patient, he does not feel it; pinch the operator, the patient feels as if he had been pinched, and complains of the injury to the part affected. Put rhubarb in the patient’s mouth, he has no taste of it; put rhubarb in the operator’s mouth, and the patient tastes and names this drug, under the impression that he has it in his own mouth. Placed on his legs he stands as if nailed to the ground; but following the movements of the magnetizer’s hands, he is put into visibly involuntary and uneasy motion. This sympathetic unity of will is raised even into sympathetic unity of consciousness. The patient understands even the unexpressed thoughts of the operator, and acquiesces in them; or he speaks as if from himself, but in such a way that it is the manner of

describing them minutely. And this, from a physician, is a strong testimony in their favour; especially as Hippocrates, the great medical authority, did not recognize, but repudiated such influences in causing disease. Moreover, as St. Luke otherwise follows Hippocrates, and markedly deviates from him here—it being then a grave thing to deviate from a teacher who was regarded as almost infallible—we may conclude that he did so of set purpose, and from personal conviction. St. Luke seems to have endeavoured to teach the Greek Christians the true doctrine of the origin of evil. Hence, the history of the temptation in chap. iv.;

thought, and the thought of the operator transferred to him which he reproduces. That which is here exhibited to us is an intoxication, a bondage, a possession of one Psyche by the other, accompanied by an extra natural enhancement of the powers by the intrusive co-operation of evil, or even of good, influences of the spiritual world. From this dynamical possession of one human soul by the other, we may form to ourselves an idea of the substantial possession of a human soul by a demon. In the former case the possession is only dynamical, because the human soul is linked to its body; in the latter case it is substantial, although not local, because the demon, by virtue of his purely spiritual nature, can penetrate into the substantial condition of the man, without disintegrating its living unity. But, in both cases, the powers of the soul have reached even to the spiritual roots of the internal life under the unnatural pressure of a foreign power, and have become involuntary forms of a substantial existence obtruded upon them.”—*Biblical Psychology*, p. 356. This quotation must not be understood as implying any connexion between mesmerism and demoniacal possession.

See also Ennemoser's *History of Magic*, vol. i. pp. 334, &c.—Bohn's Series.

and the constant setting forth of Christ as triumphing over Satan in these cases. He is careful to distinguish between ordinary diseases and cases of demoniacal possession, and while he represents Satan as an agent from *without* in the former, he displays his agents as *indwelling* and working from *within* in the latter². In St. Matt. iv., where the first mention of possessions occurs, it is said that our Lord's "fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and He healed them." Here, not only are ordinary diseases distinguished from *possessions*, but the latter are distinguished from lunatics! Thus, although there were cases, as we shall see, in which possession and mental or bodily disease were found together, yet there were numerous cases in which lunacy and possession were distinct. These remarks are intended as notes, and are not exhaustive on the subject. An admirable view of the controversy as to the reality of demoniacal possession will be found in the Oxford Edition of Jahn's "Archæologia Biblica," before quoted; and a well-weighed and elaborate discussion, tending to confirm the literal truth of the Gospel narrative, will be found in a work well known to all Bible students³. In this particular miracle,

² Wordsworth, Introduction to St. Luke's Gospel.

³ Trench, *Op. cit.* p. 154.

recorded by the first three Evangelists, we find St. Matthew speaking of two demoniacs, while SS. Mark and Luke mention but one. This one was probably the more prominent of the two; and so, perhaps, his case only is mentioned by SS. Mark and Luke. At any rate the story told by the three writers is identical, as to the assertion of possession. The violent and mental nature of the affliction is also evident from the three accounts. A lunatic—a raving lunatic—he appears to have been, albeit that his lunacy was the direct result of demoniacal possession. SS. Mark and Luke also state that after his cure he was “clothed, and in his right mind;” the word [σωφρονούντα] “in his right mind,” used by both Evangelists, expressing thorough sanity and soberness as opposed to his former condition. This word also shows that his mind had been affected; and while it does *not* prove that he was a mere lunatic (the context distinctly stating that he was possessed), yet it does prove that in his case insanity was caused by evil influence. It is not necessary to prove that this cure was beyond human power.

THE DEMONIAK IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM.

St. Mark i. 23—26.

23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24. Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou

St. Luke iv. 33—36.

33. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34. Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with Thee, *Thou*

come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.

25. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God.

35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word *is* this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

This miracle, mentioned by SS. Mark and Luke only, has no special feature beyond that just considered, which see.

We have here the same distinct assertion of the individuality or personality of the evil influence, which cannot be explained on any medical theory. It will, perhaps, be said that the throwing down and tearing of the afflicted person was nothing but epilepsy. The outward signs of the possession indeed were not unlike epilepsy, and such they may have been. But if the story be true at all that the man was epileptic, and that he was miraculously cured, then that part of it which expressly ascribes his condition to Satanic influence must be true, as we have shown in the last instance that it is not unlikely. In any case, supposing that it were one of mere mental or bodily disease, a sudden

and complete cure was nothing but miraculous. Epileptics—confirmed epileptics—are humanly incurable.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE SYRO-PHENICIAN WOMAN.

St. Matt. xv. 21—28.

21. Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *Thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me.

26. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* to dogs.

27. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

St. Mark vii. 24—30.

24. And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but He could not be hid.

25. For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet:

26. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

28. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29. And He said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

This case, mentioned by SS. Matthew and Mark only, differs from the two preceding, in that there does not occur any mention of bodily disease accompanying or resulting from the possession; which latter, however, is expressly stated. “My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil;” or, as St. Mark has it, she “had an unclean spirit.”

And the Saviour says, “the devil [not a disease] is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid on the bed.”

Here is no pretended cure. It was instantaneous. “Her daughter was made whole from that very hour,” says St. Matthew.

I cannot see how, accepting the truth of the narrative, this case can be explained away as one of ordinary disease; or, even if so, how its immediate cure can be accounted for. It cannot be so on medical principles.

THE HEALING OF THE LUNATIC CHILD.

St. Matt. xvii. 14—21.

14. And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a *certain* man, kneeling down to Him, and saying,

15. Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vex-

St. Mark ix. 14—29.

14. And when He came to *His* disciples, He saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld Him, were

St. Luke ix. 37—42.

37. And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met Him.

38. And behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Mas-

ed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to Me.

18. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

20. And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21. Howbeit this kind

greatly amazed, and running to *Him* saluted Him.

16. And He asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17. And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18. And wheresoever he taketh him, he tear-eth him: and he foam-eth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto Me.

20. And they brought him unto Him: and when He saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21. And He asked his father, How long is

ter, I beseech Thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

39. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40. And I besought Thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

goeth not out but by it ago since this came
prayer and fasting.

unto him? And he
said, Of a child.

22. And ofttimes
it hath cast him into
the fire, and into the
waters, to destroy him:
but if Thou canst do
any thing, have com-
passion on us, and help
us.

23. Jesus said unto
him, If thou canst be-
lieve, all things *are* pos-
sible to him that be-
lieveth.

24. And straightway
the father of the child
cried out, and said with
tears, Lord, I believe;
help Thou mine unbe-
lief.

25. When Jesus saw
that the people came
running together, He
rebuked the foul spirit,
saying unto him, *Thou*
dumb and deaf spirit,
I charge thee, come
out of him, and enter
no more into him.

26. And *the spirit*
cried, and rent him sore,
and came out of him:
and he was as one
dead; insomuch that
many said, He is dead.

27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28. And when He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29. And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

This case differs in one or two particulars from all the preceding.

St. Matthew calls him a "lunatic," and proceeds to describe his disease as of the epileptic kind; a fact which is much amplified in St. Mark's account, where we have *tearing, foaming at the mouth, pining away*⁴, as well as the tendency to fall into the fire and water (mentioned by St. Matthew also), and the statement of the child's father, that the affliction dated from childhood. St. Luke's description is even more technical than St. Mark's, for he mentions the cry, "he crieth out;" as well as the tearing, foaming, and bruising; all symp-

⁴ Delitzsch here suggests that *ξηραίνεσθαι* rather means numbness or rigidity than "pining away." But it may be added, that in any case the symptom applies to epilepsy. See his *Biblical Psychology*, p. 348, Clark's edition.

toms of epilepsy⁵. But still all the Evangelists describe the case as one of demoniacal possession; and as such, and not as one of bodily disease, did the Saviour cure it. From this record it appears that the child was a *possessed, epileptic lunatic*. St. Matthew says that Christ “rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him, and the child was cured from that very hour.” St. Mark describes how the “dumb and deaf spirit” was charged to come out of him; while St. Luke’s account is concise and unmistakable: “And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child.” He distinctly describes the bodily symptoms, admits the spiritual influence, and uses the word proper for healing [ἰάσατο] in describing the miraculous cure.

Now it must be admitted that St. Luke, as a physician, had in this instance every reason to represent the case as one of epileptic mania. Hence his directly ascribing it to demoniacal possession must be taken as a very strong evidence of his conviction, that although medically it seemed otherwise, yet truth obliged him to put the true cause forward. The instantaneous cure, in any event, would have been miraculous; but St. Luke’s testimony to demoniacal possession *in this case* says much for the honesty of his testimony, and for the truth that God is all-powerful over the Evil One.

⁵ I may perhaps be allowed to refer to an essay of mine, “Epilepsy Real and Feigned,” in vol. xxxiv. of the *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science*.

This case is the only one expressly recorded in the Gospels as that of a *lunatic* [σεληνιαζόμενος], one affected at change of the moon; and whether the word is used in a general sense, as we now use it, or, as is more likely, in the ancient and more restricted sense, there is yet much truth in it. Some think it an exploded notion that lunatics are affected by the moon, but others do not agree with them. In the case which I have before mentioned as coming within my own knowledge, there was an undoubted access of mania at such times; and the treatment adopted was to give the patient grain doses of Tartar emetic, which had the effect of calming her considerably. In St. Matthew iv. 24 also, as before noted, lunatics [σεληνιαζόμενοι] are mentioned as a class. There is no other mention of them in the N. T.

CHAPTER VI.

DROPSY.

THE MAN WITH THE DROPSY.

St. Luke xiv. 1—4.

1. And it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched Him.

2. And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.

3. And Jesus, answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

4. And they held their peace. And He took *him*, and healed him, and let him go.

This miracle is related only by St. Luke; and his account of it is remarkable for the use of the word [ὑδρωπικός] translated, “a man which had the dropsy;” literally, “*a dropsical person.*” It is an adjectival form of the technical word [ὑδρωψ] *dropsy*, used by Hippocrates, which word is by some held to imply the alteration of the countenance [ὤψ], and

from that, the alteration of the outward appearance, by the infiltration of water [$\upsilon\delta\omega\rho$]¹.

Dropsy may be general or local, acute or chronic. It consists in an effusion of serum (a watery fluid), or of serum mixed with flakes of what is technically termed coagulable lymph, or with purulent matter, into the cellular membranes of the extremities, or into cavities of the body lined by what are termed "serous" membranes. The causes of some dropsical effusions are inflammation, febrile action, debility, and venous congestion. The causes of others, and these the most serious, are organic disease leading to congestion, and organic disease leading to an essential alteration in the blood, such, e. g., as disease of the kidney.

When the cause of dropsy does not depend on organic disease, the affection itself is curable; when it does depend on organic disease of long standing and severity, what physicians call the "prognosis" is most unfavourable. And so it appears to have been in this case. From the expression, "if an ass or an ox fall into a pit," used by our Saviour in v. 7, by way of analogy (an expression similar to that of "loosing" the woman who was "bound" with a spirit of infirmity, in St. Luke xiii.), it may be inferred that this man was literally "water-logged;" that his was a grave case of chronic and organic disease; one which we know was

¹ For another, and perhaps better view, see Liddell and Scott, under $\upsilon\delta\rho\omega\psi$.

all but hopeless, and which in any event could not be cured at once, and by a word or touch.

It is to be noted here that the cure could not be ascribed to natural causes, because no disease of this kind was ever cured by strong mental impression, or by any means in a moment; that it was not a trifling affection, for St. Luke describes it by a technical term applied only to a serious disorder; and that there is no evidence of pretended cure, or of accommodation to the prevailing superstitions of the day. We are expressly told that the working of this miracle was watched in a hostile spirit (v. 1); that they were not able to "answer," much less to criticize (vv. 4 and 6) or controvert, the fact; that the man in whom the cure was wrought not only was "healed"—and this in the *medical* language of healing [*ἰάσατο*]*—*but that he went away healed before them all. Christ dismissed him [*ἀπέλυσε*]; or, as the English Version has it, "He let him go."

CHAPTER VII.

MENORRHAGIA.

THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD.

St. Matt. ix. 20—22.

20. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *Him*, and touched the hem of His garment :

21. For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.

22. But Jesus turned *Him* about ; and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort ; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

St. Mark v. 25—34.

25. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26. And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment :

28. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.

29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up ;

St. Luke viii. 43—48.

43. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44. Came behind *Him*, and touched the border of His garment : and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

45. And Jesus said, Who touched Me ? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with *Him*, said, Master, the multitude throng Thee and press *Thee*, and sayest thou, Who touchèd Me ?

46. And Jesus said,

and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

30. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes?

31. And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?

32. And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth.

34. And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.

47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him, before all the people, for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.

48. And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace.

This miracle is narrated with great minuteness by SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Their story is identical;

and the peculiarities of verbiage would supply much matter for interesting comment, tending to confirm the honesty of the Evangelists and the medical accuracy of St. Luke, were not the subject itself one which could not prudently be enlarged on in this treatise. A few general remarks may, however, be made about it.

The expression, "issue of blood," is a Rabbinical one¹, and in Holy Scripture is only applied to the two cases, normal and abnormal, provided for by the law of Moses in Lev. xv. (vv. 19, to the end). The former being a natural function, of course is not a disease; while the latter—that under which this woman laboured—caused a permanent legal uncleanness, and to the sufferer herself was the source of the greatest mental and bodily misery. Moreover, when long continued it was incurable²; and, in any case, the great variety of treatment recommended for it would show that ordinarily it was not amenable to the skill of the physician. Much of the treatment then pursued was what we should now call barbarous or useless; but even

¹ Article, "Blood, Issue of," in Smith's D. B.

² "Non vero ex uteris venis, sed iis quæ in collo uteri et cervicis, aperiuntur, quas hæmorrhoides vocant, sicut illas in ano profluxit." —Bartholini, Op. cit. p. 1555. He also quotes Mercurialis "Doctissimus" as saying, "Fluxus ille mulieris omnino erat incurabilis." Too little is known of his learned work "*De Morbis Biblicis*" (which is also in Ugolini's "*Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum*"); and in which his essays are so minute that he not only includes among *Morbi Biblici* all cases of raising from the dead, but "*De pisce in quo sepultus Jonas.*"

at present a long-continued confirmed case may be said to be incurable, so far as the physician is concerned. St. Matthew (ix. 20) calls this person [*γυνή αἱμορροῦσα*] “a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood”—a case of constant hæmorrhage. St. Mark and St. Luke describe her as [*οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος*], “which had an issue of blood,” “having an issue of blood;” and all agree in the statement that she had suffered for twelve years under her affliction.

As in other cases to which attention has been drawn, St. Matthew’s description is brief; St. Mark’s is more full, evidently that of an eye-witness; while St. Luke’s is such as a physician would be expected to give. St. Matthew briefly records how she came behind the Saviour, and touched the hem of His garment; “for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.” He then tells how the Lord addressed her; and concludes with the statement that she “was made whole from that hour.” St. Mark tells all this in slightly varied words; but he informs us that she “had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.” She had tried all human means to no purpose; and what an amount of trial and patience and expense this involved can scarce be imagined by us³.

³ Lightfoot (“*Horæ Hebraicæ*,” on St. Mark v. 26) gives a wonderful *Pharmacopœia* of the remedies in question. Dr. A. Clarke gives some of them in his note on St. Mark v. 26, and remarks that from some of

But he also tells us that “straightway” [εὐθέως] “the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.” Every physician will testify to the force and truth of the words in this verse. It is perfectly true that the disease flowed from a fountain; and that it was literally a plague. St. Mark further relates the Saviour’s question, “Who touched My clothes?” and adds how the woman “fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth.” Now St. Luke’s honesty is shown by his not omitting the mention of the failure of medical means in this case; while, on the other hand, he is not severe on his own calling; but looks at the facts under another aspect. He does not relate how much she *suffered* from the several physicians, or how she grew worse rather than better under medical treatment. He says only, that she could not be healed by any of them—that her case was beyond medical treatment [οὐκ ἴσχυσεν ὑπ’ οὐδενὸς θεραπευθῆναι]. Also, when he comes to speak of the expense she was at, he uses a word [προσαναλώσασα] which means ordinary or fair expenditure to the utmost⁴,

these she could not be bettered; while from others she must be made worse.

⁴ I take this from Dr. Freind, the inseparable friend of the celebrated Bishop Atterbury. In his “History of Physick” (1725, vol. i. pp. 221, &c.) he compares the word used by St. Mark with that used by St. Luke. The word *προσαναλίσκω* occurs here only in the New Testament; but *ἀναλίσκω*, the meaning of which is not quite the same, occurs in St. Luke ix. 54; Gal. v. 15; and 2 Thess. ii. 8. In Major’s

in contrast to the word [δαπανήσασα] used by St. Mark, and which strictly means *spending riotously or luxuriously*, in which sense St. Luke uses it (ch. xv. 14) in the case of the prodigal son. St. Matthew says of this woman [ἐσώθη], "She was made whole." St. Mark uses a Hebrew figure, and says [ἐξηράνθη ἡ πηγή τῆς αἵματος], "the fountain of her blood was dried up;" while St. Luke uses the technical and more correct phrase [ἔστη ἡ ρύσις], "the issue stopped," "was staunched." St. Luke also notes how the woman confessed "before all the people for what cause she had touched Him,"—a cause which he, as a physician, knew she would utterly shrink from under ordinary circumstances. In fact this story, triply told, teems with undesigned coincidences; with evident truthfulness on the part of the narrators; and with special and honest accuracy on the part of St. Luke, whose account, if loosely worded, would be more open to hostile criticism than either of the others. Modesty forbade this woman to make a public appeal to Christ; and so she but

edition of Rose and Parkhurst's "Lexicon to the New Testament" (1851) the meaning of the former word is given as *to spend entirely*. See, however, Liddell and Scott under both words. Dr. Freind's exact words are: "And you may observe, that when he comes to speak of the charges the woman had been at, he uses a very proper expression (not implying censure on his profession), *προσαναλώσασα*, whereas the word *δαπανήσασα*, used by St. Mark, properly signifies *spending only in a riotous and luxurious manner*; and so St. Luke applies it (xv. 14) in the case of the prodigal son."

touched the hem of His garment. Even this touch would legally make it unclean, were she not healed at once. There was here no delusion. “She *felt in her body* that she was healed of that plague.” No one thus healed could make a mistake as to the fact. It may be noted with reference to St. Matthew’s words [γυνή αίμορροῦσα], “a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood,” that they identify the disease with a similar description of Hippocrates [ῥόον αίματώδη⁵], applied by the father of Greek medicine to the natural function; but which function when exaggerated, or excessive, or long continued—as in this case, for twelve years—or as resulting from internal organic disease, becomes incurable. I know a case at present answering in every particular to that mentioned in the Gospels. So much so indeed, that to describe it would simply be to go over the details of the Gospel narratives afresh.

And is it unworthy of consideration that St. Luke may have had some professional knowledge of this case? The clear distinction between his description of how the woman had been long under medical treatment, and that of St. Mark, already referred to, may throw light on this question.

⁵ “De Morbis,” lib. i. sec. 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

OPHTHALMIC DISEASE.

THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF THE TWO BLIND IN THE
HOUSE.

St. Matt. ix. 27—31.

27. And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on us.

28. And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord.

29. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30. And their eyes were opened: and Jesus straightly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know *it*.

31. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country.

The recovering of sight to the blind was one of the offices of the Messiah foretold in prophecy, and fully expected by the people in a country where blindness

was much more common than it is with us. And, indeed, it is so still in the East. From various causes depending on the nature of the soil, the climate, and the social habits of the people, ophthalmic inflammations are common; and, when neglected, they often end in total blindness. The proportion of blind to those who saw was so great in our Saviour's time¹ as to make this part of the Messiah's office, in fact, that of a national deliverer; and so, while this case is the first miraculous cure of blindness mentioned in the Gospels, and one mentioned by St. Matthew only, we find, what we may call, wholesale cures recorded or alluded to, in addition to the particular instances narrated at length by the Evangelists.

It is not necessary to prove, what every one knows—that cases of blindness caused in one of the ways already referred to, as doubtless was the case with these

¹ “ Their frequent recurrence need not surprise us; for blindness throughout all the East is a far commoner calamity than with us. For this there are many causes. The dust and flying sand, pulverized and reduced to minutest particles, enters the eyes, causing inflammations which, being neglected, end frequently in total loss of sight. The sleeping in the open air, on the roofs of the houses, and the consequent exposure of the eyes to the noxious nightly dews, is another source of this malady. A modern traveller calculates that there are four thousand in Cairo alone; and another, that you may reckon twenty such in every hundred persons. In Syria, it is true, the proportion of blind is not at all so great, yet there also the calamity is far commoner than in western lands; so that we find humane regulations concerning the blind, as concerning a class, in the Law (Lev. xix. 14. Deut. xxvii. 18).”—Trench on Miracles, p. 199.

two men (for they are spoken of as part of the ordinary blind population)—it is not necessary to prove that they were cases which could not be relieved by human means. The profession of the modern surgeon-oculist may be said not to have existed then; but, in any case, a skilled member of that branch of the surgical profession could not do any thing for these men, even in the way of alleviation. The world was one dark night to them, as it is to the large numbers of blind who inhabit our workhouses and asylums for the blind. Nor was this a case in which there could be delusion on the part of the men themselves. A man may fancy himself relieved, or really feel relieved, in some cases of disease; but between seeing and not seeing there is no middle path. The fact or the delusion is one apparent and unmistakable to the public, as well as to the patients themselves.

“Their eyes were opened;” and this after the sacramental rite, or means of touch, referred to more particularly in the remarks on the healing of Simon’s wife’s mother (see chap. ii.). It is not possible, by any amount of explaining away, to make “blind men” to be persons who saw any thing; or to make “opening their eyes” to mean leaving them really just as they were. Nor is it possible to connect any mere medical efficacy with the act of touching the sightless organs of vision; nor, were it possible to regard touching the eyes as a figure for performing some delicate surgical operation, would

this fit the case either, inasmuch as such an operation—e. g. one for cataract—is slowly done, and the good result, if any, is not attained at once. Very far from it indeed. Nor would any surgeon perform such an operation on two eyes of the one person about the same time. He would wait to see the result of the first, before risking his last chance with the second.

THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF ONE BLIND AT BETHSAIDA.

St. Mark viii. 22—26.

22. And He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him.

23. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw ought.

24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25. After that He put *His* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26. And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

This miracle, mentioned by St. Mark only, was performed on one who, doubtless, was made blind from some of the causes referred to in the former part of this chapter, where the fitness of such cases of blindness

for the exercise of miraculous power, and the impossibility of delusion, or of explaining them away on natural or medical causes, has been discussed.

It is to be noted in this instance, that there was no mistake as to the fact of the man being really blind; for we read that Christ "took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town;" and from the minuteness of the story it is almost evident that St. Mark, or St. Mark's immediate informant, must have been an eye-witness of the miracle. His account, moreover, bears on it the stamp of truth, for this was not an *instantaneous* cure; and yet he represents it not to have been immediate, which he would not have done had it been his object merely to relate a wonderful story.

Although some have written as if this man had been born blind, yet I do not think that there is any ground for such an opinion. The language of the man himself rather leads to the opinion that he was blind from disease: "I see men, as trees, walking³;" for such, I suggest, ought to be the mode of reading the passage. Or, as it has been put in a more expanded form—though the Scriptural language is quite natural enough

² "Moreover, from his having no knowledge of the regulation of vision from experience, they (the objects of vision) were of unnatural size like trees, yet known to him as men from their motions."—Williams' "Devotional Commentary on the Gospel Narrative," vol. v. 59. 1870.

³ See a more literal translation towards the close of this section.

in such a case—"I see men. I see them standing still, and dimly *as trees*. *I now see them walking*."⁴

If he had never seen a man until then, he would not know his figure and appearance from that of a tree. In Cheselden's well-known account⁵ of a child congenitally blind, and afterwards restored to sight, we are told that until experience taught him otherwise, he did not know the shape or magnitude of any thing⁶.

The cure here was progressive, not instantaneous; and it is remarkable from the apparent use of human means to expedite or accomplish the restoration to sight. We are told that Christ was "besought" to "touch" the subject of the affliction, the well-known

⁴ Bp. Wordsworth's note on St. Mark viii. 24.

⁵ "Anatomy," p. 300, London, 1784, 12th ed.—This young man was born blind, or had lost his sight so early that he had no remembrance of ever having seen, and was couched when nearly fourteen years of age. In such cases, Cheselden remarks that patients are never so blind but that they can discern day from night, and also colours in a strong light. When this lad first saw he had no judgment of distances, but thought all objects touched his eyes, "as what he felt touched his skin, and thought no objects so agreeable as those which were smooth and regular, though he could form no judgment of their shape, or guess what it was in any object that was pleasing to him: he knew not the shape of any thing, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude." He only gradually learned to know things by sight; and used to help his want by feeling: e.g. by rubbing down a cat, he learned to associate the feeling with sight, and so got to distinguish between a cat and a dog.

⁶ This agrees with Locke's theory ("Essay on the Understanding," b. ii. ch. ix. sec. 8).

power of the Saviour to heal blindness having been observed to be associated with touching. Before touching, however, He "spit on his eyes." It has been supposed that this was done in order to separate the eyelids, which may have been adherent from a morbid discharge, as we often see in cases of ophthalmia. It did not require a miracle to separate the eyelids, and so one was not wrought, but ordinary means were used for this purpose; and human saliva, being at that time deemed a highly curative agent, was probably used to inspire confidence or faith in the man and in those who brought him to Jesus.

The healing itself, however, was miraculous, and began where the human means ended; and the progressive restoration, showing the improvement of the sight, from darkness to light, from dim confusion to perfect clearness, is thoroughly natural, and in such order as would occur in restoration to sight by surgical means. Moreover, the loss of this man's sight may have been in like manner progressive, as it generally is in such cases. The cure, though progressive, was *not gradual*, like human cures; for although the man at first said, "I behold men, for I see them as trees walking" [βλέπω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ὅτι ὡς δένδρα ὁρῶ περιπατοῦντας], yet the context shows that immediately afterwards the Saviour "put His hands

⁷ Dean Alford's revised translation.

again upon his [the man's] eyes, and made him look up, and he was restored [*ἀποκατεστάθη*], and saw every man clearly" [*καὶ ἐνέβλεψε, τηλαυγῶς*]. Here it is plain that he was "restored." The original word means restitution to the state he was in before, and so he could not have been born blind. And he saw every man "clearly." The perfection of the cure is set down in terms which cannot be explained away, or made to mean medical treatment of any kind.

THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF TWO BLIND MEN NEAR
JERICO.

St. Matt. xx. 29—34.

29. And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.

30. And, behold, two blindmen, sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *Thou* Son of David.

31. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on

St. Mark x. 46—52.

46. And they came to Jericho: and as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging.

47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me

48. And many charged him that he should

St. Luke xviii. 35—43.

35. And it came to pass, that as He was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side, begging:

36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38. And he cried, saying, Jesus, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

39. And they which went before rebuked

us, O Lord, *Thou* Son of David.

32. And Jesus stood still, and called them and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

33. They say unto Him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34. So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

49. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee.

50. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

40. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him: and when he was come near, He asked him,

41. Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.

Assuming that the three accounts above referred to relate to the same circumstance, it must be noted that there is considerable apparent discrepancy in the Evangelical histories, both as to the number of persons healed, the place, and other circumstances.

It is not, however, within the scope of these remarks to show that the discrepancy is rather apparent than real, for students will elsewhere get the clearest information regarding it⁸. But it may be added that it has been concluded that not one, but three miracles, are here enumerated. The argument which leads to this conclusion is ingenious and deserves consideration⁹; but in either case, or, rather, in *any* case, we have here a miraculous cure, or cures, which, as noted in the former sections of this chapter, cannot be explained away on any medical or figurative hypothesis.

⁸ Trench's "Miracles," p. 428, *Op. cit.*; Williams's "Devotional Commentary on the Gospel Narrative," vol. v. 474 (1870).

⁹ See Pound's "Story of the Gospels," vol. ii. 321, London, 1869.

CHAPTER IX.

ORGANIC DEFECTS OF ORGANS OF SENSE.

THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF ONE BORN BLIND.

St. John ix.

1. And as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

2. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7. And said unto Him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9. Some said, This is he : others *said*, He is like him : *but* he said, I am *he*.

10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11. He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12. Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said, I know not.

13. They brought to the Pharisees him that afore-time was blind.

14. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that

he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20. His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21. But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22. These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25. He answered and said, Whether He be a sinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26. Then said they to him again, What did He to thee? how opened He thine eyes?

27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be His disciples?

28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art His disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

29. We know that God spake unto Moses : *as for this fellow*, we know not from whence He is.

30. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and *yet* He hath opened mine eyes.

31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners : but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth.

32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing.

34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us ? And they cast him out.

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out ; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God ?

36. He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him ?

37. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.

38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.

39. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see ; and that they which see might be made blind.

40. And *some* of the Pharisees which were with Him

heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also?

41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

This miracle, related by St. John only, differs from the preceding miraculous cures of blindness in several particulars. The blindness is expressly stated to have been congenital, and therefore quite hopeless as to recovery by human skill¹. It was not cured with the outward accompaniment of touch, nor with the outward application of saliva, as in the case recorded by St. Mark only (viii. 22—26). See previous remarks on this. Nor was this cure *progressive*, in the same way as that was; nor yet instantaneous, as in the cases recorded by St. Matthew only (ix. 27—31). And still it bore some analogy to all of them. Here was *touch*, as in St. Matthew's cases; for Christ "anointed the eyes of the blind man," and this implied touch. Here was the use of saliva, as in St. Mark's case; but over and above this, He not only spat on the ground, but "He made clay of the spittle;" not the same use as that adopted in the former case. Nor was the cure yet complete. Christ commanded him to go and wash—that is, wash the parts affected—in the pool of Siloam: and

¹ "Incurabile enim et nativam cæcitatem ipse per lutum et divinam potestatem abolevit."—Bartholini, Op. cit. p. 1514.

we read how "he went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." It is also plain from the rest of the chapter that the case was well-known, and the cure most signally marked. It was not one of the numerous blind persons before referred to, but some one whose cure produced a powerful effect on public opinion at the time. "The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this he which sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him; but he said, I am he." The opening of his eyes had so taken away that sad, pensive cast of countenance peculiar to blind persons, that his neighbours could not be positive as to his identity, judging from his mere look.

This is the only miracle recorded in the Gospels of which we learn that there was any thing like a judicial inquiry into its truth; and it has been concluded that it is recorded because there may have been some question as to the reality of Christ's miracles at the comparatively late period at which St. John's Gospel was written, and also because his general object seems to have been to prove the Divinity of Christ. Indeed, as we read throughout this chapter ix., such was the very doctrine questioned by the Pharisees in that particular instance. With regard to all the other miracles, it is noteworthy that there is no record of any real popular doubt as to the facts having occurred. The Jews believed that the miracles did occur, but they ascribed

them to Satan. They admitted that "this man doeth many miracles;" and even in the case before us the question as to the fact shows the captiousness of hostile judicial inquiry, rather than real doubt. There was no answer to be made to the poor man's statement, which they themselves had called for, and to which he resolutely adhered under cross-examination; so "they cast him out."

It has already been stated that the Easterns believed in the medicinal efficacy of saliva; and it may be added that they did use it as an eye-salve; nor are we without examples of the medicinal use of clay²; although in this case, perhaps, it had a symbolical meaning, and not a medicinal one, inasmuch as it was the dust itself which was a principal cause of Oriental blindness. And so its use may have been intended to guard against what might have been a popular delusion: that the blindness was cured by medical means. Thus the clay was mixed with the saliva, to show that the cure was not to be due to *it*, which the Jews used with some accompanying charms; and yet, at the same time, to inspire faith in the subject, and in the bystanders, by the use of some external means which the blind man could appreciate. He could not see the spitting, but he did *feel and chiefly noticed* the anointing with the clay (verse 11). And the washing was doubtless intended to show that there was

² See Trench, *Op. cit.* p. 297.

no pretence at cure by any anointing or other human means. The clay was evidently put on the eyes, and washed off in the pool of Siloam, whence "he came seeing."

It has been objected that Christ did not here perform a miracle at all; that He did not cure blindness otherwise than any skilful oculist might do it. The reason given for this assertion, that Christ said He needed light (ix. 4), is a very curious one; but a perusal of the text will show that our Lord's words, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day," had no reference whatever to His requiring natural light.

As to the miracle being in any sense the operation of a skilful oculist, the objection is based on complete ignorance of the history of the treatment of ophthalmic diseases, for it assumes that there were skilful oculists in the East in our Lord's time, and that they were so skilful as to be able to restore sight in a few minutes to a man born blind. It has been suggested that mesmeric or magnetic influence may have had something, or a great deal, to do with this case. But even granting, for the sake of argument, that clay or saliva may have been magnetized, or that mesmeric passes may have been used with the hand, yet it remains to be proved that by this means ordinary blindness could be cured. Whereas all will admit that cure of *congenital* blindness could not be effected in that or any other way. I do not know that any one has ever professed to have cured

congenital blindness by mesmerism or magnetism; but a good modern authority, who has discussed the question, states that "a sudden cure, an evident act of sovereignty, has nowhere been witnessed³." The same writer believes that the effects of these magnetic forces, "in the great generality of cases, are purely natural."

THE HEALING OF ONE DEAF AND DUMB.

St. Mark vii. 31—37.

31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32. And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put His hand upon him.

33. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue;

34. And looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36. And He charged them that they should tell no man: but the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

37. And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He

³ Lacordaire's "Conferences," p. 66, 2nd ed. London, 1869.

hath done all things well : He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

This miracle, related by St Mark only, was performed on a deaf and stammering person, who was not dumb in the ordinary sense of the word, but whose speech was so indistinct from deafness and from stammering as to be unintelligible. We find here the use of external means, as in the former case, but of means varied to suit the circumstances. It is not necessary to prove that this was a case past medical treatment, inasmuch as it arose from defect in an organ of sense; defect of long standing, or it would not have affected the power of speech. Mutes are mute mostly because their hearing has failed, and thus they have lost the power of imitating, which is the way whereby we learn to speak. And, even where there is no failure in hearing, shut off a man from the civilized world for a long time, and let him have no one to speak to, and it will be found that he gradually loses the power of articulating intelligible language. And so we find in the healing of this man. Christ first put His finger into his ears; symbolical perforators of the obstacle which prevented his hearing, and therefore his speech. Next He spit and touched his tongue, the secondary subject of defect; and then, looked up to heaven, sighed, and said, "Be opened." And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he

spake plain." A most correct description, for the hearing was first set right, and then the stammering; and any one who has heard a bad stammerer knows how he does appear to be literally tongue-tied. It will be said that stammering has been cured. It has: but after what time? and after the exercise of how great patience and exertion? Suppose a man whose inability to speak arose from deafness, and that this deafness were removed at once, would he be able to "straightway" "speak plain"? No; he should learn to speak over again: first hear others, and then imitate them, as children imitate their seniors, and as pupils learning a strange language imitate their teachers.

This miracle is important, because in it we have a clear distinction between the case of one possessed with an evil spirit (see Chapter V. on Demoniactal Possession), and one whose condition resulted from congenital deformity or from disease.

Christ does not here recognize the direct evil influence by saying, "I charge thee, thou deaf and dumb spirit, come out of him." On the contrary, the manual and other acts of our Lord, in connexion with this act of healing, distinctly point the other way; and there is the plainest distinction between the terms in which St. Mark narrates this miracle, and those in which he details others more particularly referred to in the Chapter on Demoniactal Possession.

CHAPTER X.

SURGICAL INJURY.

THE HEALING OF MALCHUS'S EAR.

St. Luke xxii. 49—51.

49. When they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50. And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him.

This miracle is related by St. Luke only; although the circumstance which led to it—the cutting off of Malchus's ear by the sword of St. Peter—is narrated by the four Evangelists.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the healing of Malchus's ear cannot be accounted for on any surgical theory. The ear may have been clean cut off, or it may have hung by a portion of skin. In any case it could not be healed at once, and on the spot; especially when we consider the barbarous nature of the surgery in those times.

It is well known to non-medical persons, that when once a member of the body is cut off, and continuity of tissue completely destroyed, reunion is out of the question. Yet, as there have been some apparent exceptions to this, it may be well to give a case which fell within my own knowledge.

A young man at work in a dockyard missed his downward stroke with an adze, and cut across the toes and instep of his right foot. A surgeon who was looking on at the time, and who published an account of it¹, found that the second toe was literally amputated. "The thinnest bridle of skin from the sole of the foot prevented its complete separation." This connecting medium was so thin that it did not include a muscular fibre. "It was in fact nothing more than a thin shaving of the thickened cuticle of the sole." By dint, however, of well-applied surgical apparatus and constant care, reunion was established in the fifth week after the accident.

This case, which is a rare one, will serve to prove that the healing of Malchus's ear cannot have been effected by surgical means. If clean cut off, the part separated was dead, and vital reunion by human means was impossible. If, however, the injury in any respect resembled that in the case quoted, as it may

¹ "On the curious Reunion of an Amputated Toe."—Transactions of the County and City of Cork Medical and Surgical Society, 1862-63, p. 42.

have done, from our not being told that the Saviour touched any thing but "his ear"—he is not said to have reset a part of it which fell off—yet, even here, the cure was miraculous. Any piece of skin, as in the case above, would have contained that vitality, and those vessels, microscopic though they be, which would render reunion barely possible. But such reunion could not be accomplished at once by any man. The injury itself was accompanied no doubt by profuse bleeding, and even if reunited, *that* could not be stopped at once; and so there would not be "healing." This is one of those miracles which defy all attempts at explaining away on medical grounds, or on popular fallacy; so that they who admit the truth of the Gospel narrative in any sense can do nothing but accept this story as true. A man who got his ear cut off in a popular tumult might not feel it in the excitement of the moment, but he could not know it was cut off, and then fancy it was healed, when, in truth, it lay on the ground, or hung dangling by his cheek. Nor were the angry people who witnessed this miracle in any mood for credulity. The accident was a common one in those days of hand-to-hand sword warfare; but the cure was previously unknown and so remarkable, that St. Peter could not have escaped the vengeance of the High Priest, had not he been protected by that Master whom he thrice denied, and for whom he afterwards thrice confessed his love.

CONCLUSION.

I have attempted to prove the following points in the preceding pages :—

1. That the diseases healed by our Lord were such as either were not curable by human means, or
2. That they were such as were, or are, only imperfectly cured by man, or
3. That they were such as were, or are, never cured immediately :
4. Therefore, that they were well chosen cases, the healing of which, under the circumstances peculiar to each, could not be ascribed to human skill.
5. That they were, in several instances, such diseases as were common in the East at the time.
6. That the denial of the fact of these cures, and
7. That the explaining of them away, are modern objections, or at least such as were not made at the time of their occurrence.
8. That the difference between the Jewish and Heathen unbelief in the Christian religion in connexion with miracles on the one hand, and

modern unbelief on the other, is the vital question of the supernatural, which Jew and Heathen believed, while modern unbelievers doubt or deny it :

9. Hence, that to prove the language of the Gospel narratives to be such as might fairly have been expected, it has been shown that
10. SS. Matthew, Mark, and John write of disease from a popular or common-sense point of view, while St. Luke largely uses the technical language of a physician ;
11. That all agree as to statements of facts ;
12. That these cures were not such as could be mistaken for cures by human skill ;
13. That their cure was but the restoration of the primitive order, health ;
14. That *how* this was effected, is not more inexplicable than some notoriously inexplicable truths of medical and physical science in the present day ;
15. That the undesigned coincidences in the several narratives, and the use of peculiar words by the different Evangelists, confirm the truth of their story in several instances ; and
16. So furnish a strong proof of the authenticity of the Gospels.

This I have endeavoured to do in such a way as will appeal to the educated man, to the theological in-

structor, and to the teacher of, and practitioner in medicine. Candour, and tolerable freedom from prejudice, are assumed in the case of every reader; and I trust that if these pages should fall into the hands of the typical young man of this enlightened age, he will study them with the most necessary, but often disregarded, acknowledgment that he is not, and never can be, wise above what is written.

Praise to Him "who doeth all things well;" "who healeth all our diseases; and redeemeth our life from destruction."

THE END.

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