

An Unparalleled Cure

(No. 2482)

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1896.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD'S-DAY
EVENING, AUGUST 8, 1886.

"As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the mute spoke: and the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never seen like this in Israel" [Matthew 9:32,33](#).

As we read the chapter we noticed the rapidity with which the cures worked by the Savior followed each other, how much of mercy was compressed into a short space of time. He has no sooner healed the paralytic than, straightway, we find Him curing the woman who had an issue of blood, then raising to life the ruler's dead daughter and next giving sight to two blind men, then quickly after that, healing this poor man who was deaf and dumb—and possessed with a devil. Matthew seems to call attention to this succession of cures—"As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil." The blind men disposed of, here is a dumb demoniac ready for the great Physician's hands. No sooner is one act of mercy done than there is another person needing an equal display of Grace and power—and the Savior at once goes to the task and heals again, again, again and yet again! What an inexhaustible fullness there is in Christ! He can bless and bless, and bless, and bless and still remain as full of blessing as ever.

I think that this ought to encourage us who have heard of revivals of religion. There is no time in which anyone is so likely to be converted as when many others are being brought to the Lord. When the Savior seems to rouse Himself up to an extraordinary display of power, it is well to be present and to put in our plea that we may share in those waves of mercy which follow so quickly, one upon the other! Have you heard of any who have been saved of late? Have your own friends been converted? Has the Lord been gracious to any of your old companions? Come, then, and put your case before the Lord Jesus Christ, feeling that you will not weary Him, that He will not need to pause till He has gathered fresh strength, but that He can continue to bless without cessation! Say to Him, as we have many times sung—

"Lord, I hear of showers of blessing You are scattering, full and free. Showers, the thirsty land refreshing— Let some drops fall on me."

And you need not be so modest as to say, "Let some drops fall on me," for when the Lord blesses, He delights to give showers of blessing—showers in one place and then showers in another. He can still act in this glorious fashion, blessing one after another without a pause.

Then observe, dear Friends—for it lies at the very door of our subject—the wonderful readiness of the Lord thus to bless men. You do not often find them kneeling down and importuning Him to bless them. It does occur, sometimes, when there is great faith and He means to try and prove it, but, as a rule, and especially in this chapter, you can see how ready the Lord was to bless. A paralyzed man is dropped through the ceiling by four friends and the Savior at once sees their faith before a word is spoken—and He bestows both forgiveness of sin and healing of sickness. In another case, the child lies dead and the father asks Christ to come and He comes. He was as willing to come as the father was that He should come. Then, next, a woman comes behind Him and touches the hem of His garment and the virtue flows out even from the blue fringe of the seamless robe which He wore! Then the blind men asked for sight and Jesus gave it to them!

But here was one who could not ask, for he was dumb. I do not suppose that he even went the length of a desire, for he was possessed of a devil—and that devil mastered the poor creature who was both deaf and dumb, for the Greek word means that he was a mute. He could not speak and he could not hear others speak, so the Savior, though He perceived no faith in him, and no prayer could come from him, yet noticed and honored the faith of those who brought him—and swiftly and spontaneously did His mercy flow out to this poor deaf and dumb demoniac!

Let us admire this readiness of Christ to bless and put our admiration to a practical use. Come, dear Heart, you have not to plead with Him to make Him merciful, for He loves you better than you love yourself! You have not to persuade Him to be gracious—Christ is no churl, holding His blessings with a tight hand as though He would rather hoard than bestow them on the needy. No, as freely as the sun scatters his light. As freely as the clouds dispense rain, so does Christ bless where He sees that there is need of blessing! Then let us put our friends in Christ's way by breathing a secret silent prayer for them. And let us also put ourselves in Christ's way—and may the great Master speedily heal us to the praise of the Glory of His Grace!

So I think we see very clearly in our Lord's working these two things, rapidity and readiness.

Then, once more, observe the great ease with which the Savior moved in every case. I do not know whether it strikes you, but it seems to me that Matthew, in the text before us, intimates the remarkable ease of the Savior. I will read it to you again. "As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the mute spoke." The Evangelist does not say that Jesus Christ cast out the devil—it was done so much as a matter of course by the Savior that Matthew takes it for granted that it was done! When you have to get into the swing of such a narrative as this and you have some five or six different cures to relate, you seem to arrive at the feeling, "Well, they have only to come to Christ and the cure is worked at once."

Sometimes the Master healed with a word. At other times with a touch. Occasionally, it was not His touch, but the touch of the person healed. And here we are not told whether it was by a word, or a look, or how it was that the healing act was done. Let Christ, Himself, once meet the devil and that is an end to Satan's dominion! I may stand here and preach my very soul away—and effect nothing by the most earnest labor. But when the Master comes into the field, what is there that can stand before Him? The devil must flee even out of a deaf and dumb man who cannot plead for himself! He must depart when once the Master puts forth His Divine Power.

O Sirs, this is my hope for the salvation of the unsaved! If it depended upon my preaching, or upon your pleading, I would have scant hopes! But as it depends upon Him who has risen from the dead and who always lives at the right hand of God. As it depends upon Him who has pledged us His Presence wherever two or three are met together in His name and who has promised to be with His people wherever the Gospel is preached, then we expect to see wonders of Grace worked by Christ the mighty Miracle-Worker! May we see some of them worked in our midst this very hour!

This will suffice by way of introducing the subject and now let me call your careful attention to this special case as an encouragement to any who are seeking mercy from the Lord.

I. The multitudes said, "It was never seen like this in Israel" and the multitudes spoke the truth, for, first, IT WAS A VERY EXTRAORDINARY CASE. Here was a man deaf and dumb and possessed by a devil—and probably deaf and dumb because possessed by a devil.

The parallel of this poor man's case, if we take the miracle and spiritualize it, can be found in some sinners who are dumb so that they cannot express their needs. They cannot pray. I do not say that they desire to do so, but they are honest when they say that they cannot even describe themselves, or cannot so plead for themselves as to cry to God for mercy. They have the conviction that they would be hypocrites if they did. They feel as if it would be an insult to God if they were to attempt to pray. All this is a mistake, but yet such is their feeling. This poor man's dumbness came of the possession of the devil and so does this inability to pray—it is often the work of Satan upon the heart of sinners when they cannot speak. If anyone were to ask them about their soul's affairs, they could not say anything. They have often, perhaps, been addressed by earnest Evangelists who have tried to find out what was wrong with them, but they could never give an answer. There are such spiritually dumb persons who have long come to this Tabernacle. I often wonder that they continue to come, yet they do, and Brothers and Sisters have tried in all manner of ways to get at them, but they cannot. These people seem to be shut in by impenetrable barriers of ice, so that they cannot be reached by any ordinary means. They cannot reply to a question, for they are dumb. It must be a dreadful thing to feel as if you could not tell even the Lord about your case!

But then, perhaps, it is worse to be deaf, and this dumb man was also deaf so that he could not hear Jesus speak. It is a great deprivation to be unable to tell the Master our trouble, but it is a greater deprivation not to be able to hear that dear Voice which can wake the dead, which can heal the sick, which can change the nature, which can speak Grace into the soul! There are some in our midst who seem as if they could not hear. They come to the place of worship, but they say—

"I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel.
If anything is felt, 'tis only pain
To find I cannot feel."

I am glad when they get as far as that last line, but they are deaf until the voice of God goes with the voice of the ministry. If they read the Bible, it does not have that effect upon their conscience and their heart which it does when it is accompanied by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit.

Then there are persons who appear to be like this demoniac, not even desiring good. They feel as if they were under the influence of Satan. I know a well-educated man in a good position in society who might be a comfort to his wife and family. You would like to speak to him if you could see him just now, but I would not like you to see him at anytime when he is drunk—then he is a curse to his poor family and to the whole district! Oh, what a life a man leads when once the demon of drunkenness has gained the mastery over him! I do not wonder that such a man is both deaf and dumb to the Gospel!

Some are in the grip of that foul and loathsome demon of licentiousness—they seem as if they went after their lust greedily, they cannot be kept back from it and, of course, they cannot pray—they cannot hear the Word with any right realization of its power. Satan has such a mastery over them that theirs is a terrible case, like that of this deaf and dumb demoniac. I do not wonder that the multitudes said, when Christ had cured him, "It was never seen like this in Israel."

II. So, next, it was not only an extraordinary case that was brought to Christ, but IT WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY CURE that He worked, for we read that the devil was cast out and the mute spoke!

Note, first, that the devil was cast out Whenever he goes out of himself, he always comes back again. But when he is cast out, He that threw him out keeps him out. There are some men that reform, though they hardly know why, and then, by-and-by, they go back to their old sin and they are worse than ever. But whenever Christ comes to deal with this strong-armed man, He ejects him with a Divine Violence and never permits him to return, for the stronger Man who drove him out keeps that house in peace. This casting out of the devil is a very wonderful work. May the Lord come and perform it in our midst! May the demon

of drunkenness, or lust, or whatever it is, be flung out of the window, never to return to the soul again!

Then, next, the dumb man spoke. That, also, was a wonderful thing. Deaf and dumb, how did he know the meaning and value of different sounds? Ordinarily we would have to explain to such a person what was the force of such a vowel, or of such a combination of vowels and consonants, but this man at once spoke! Matthew does not record what the man said, though he does tell us what the multitudes said. Curiosity might lead us to want to know what this man said than what the multitudes said, but the Lord knew that it would be more to our edification to know what the multitudes testified concerning the miracle! What is recorded is of much more value than what is omitted, we may be sure of that.

I wonder, however, what the man did say. I do not know, but I can imagine what I would have said if I had been in his place. I would have said, "Blessed be the Lord God who has delivered me from the power of the devil!" I would also have said, "O Lord Jesus, I love You! Let me follow You wherever You go!" I would not have known what I did not want to say under such circumstances, but if there had been some great unusual word to express intense gratitude, I would have wanted to use that—

"Oh, for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Savior's praises speak!"

It is always amazing to me, but I have often seen it—some foul blasphemer, or some other great sinner has been converted and almost immediately he has spoken the language of Canaan as sweetly as if he had been an old saint! I have known a woman rescued from the streets, foul with vice, yet as soon as ever she has been truly penitent at the Savior's feet, the tears with which she has washed those precious feet have been as pure as ever fell from a godly matron's eyes! The Grace of God makes marvelous changes where it comes into the soul, for the devil is cast out and a holy tongue is put in!

Saintly speech is taught—not in 12 lessons, as I hear that some teach the German tongue—but in a single lesson is taught that blessed language of prayer, praise and testimony to the power and love of Christ which, I think, must have been what this man said. "It was never seen like this in Israel," said the multitudes, for they could hardly believe their own ears when this poor deaf-mute commenced talking at such a rate! It was wonderful and I am sure that if some people I know are saved, the world will scarcely believe it!

I saw a Brother this week. I had seen his wife some time ago and I had known how brutally he had treated her. And when I saw him confessing Christ and weeping over his sin, I was ready to weep on his neck to think that he should be among us loving the Savior when once his mouth was full of oaths and cursing and the drunkard's cup seemed to be always at his lips. The Lord does great wonders! If there are any more of these outrageous

sinners here, may He come and deal with you till everybody shall say of Tom, or Harry, or Jack, or Polly, "The Lord has made such a change in that great profligate, it was never so seen in Israel." God be thanked for the very hope that such a miracle of mercy may yet be worked! Thus, first, this was an extraordinary case, and next, it was an extraordinary cure.

III. But, then, it is all accounted for by this fact, IT WAS WROUGHT BY AN EXTRAORDINARY PERSON!

There had been many Prophets in Israel and God had worked miracles by them, but now there stood in Israel the Incarnate God Himself. He who had now come to deal with the sick and with those possessed of devils was "The Mighty God." Omnipotence was in His hands, Omniscience was in His eyes, Infinite Love was in His heart and He had come to deal with the woes and needs of men. Surely, Brothers and Sisters, in such a case we might expect that there would be things done that had never before been seen in Israel! Israel was the land of wonders and yet here was a wonder such as Israel never marveled at before and, if it had never been seen in Israel, you may depend upon it that it had never been seen anywhere else in the whole world! So, if Christ comes and saves great sinners and makes even His people wonder and say, "It was never seen like this among us," then, depend upon it, it was never so seen anywhere else!

If conversion had to be worked by ministers, Evangelists and teachers, we would like to pick out some very tender hearts and gentle spirits—those who had been trained from their youth up in the ways of godliness—but as conversion is always the work of the Lord, Himself, and the new birth is worked by the Holy Spirit, then it does not matter what are the materials with which the Lord has to deal! God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham! He can call Saul of Tarsus from among the Pharisees and Matthew from among the publicans—and the woman who loved much from among the harlots! Christ could save the dying thief, yes, and the very chief of sinners had an open gate of mercy because God, Himself, had assumed human flesh and had come down to save the guilty. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth."

I seem to myself to stutter and stammer over these glorious Truths of God! Oh, that my soul could speak without being hindered by my lips and that I could fully tell how great a Savior this is, to whom nothing is difficult, much less impossible! You greatest sinner, you blackest sinner, you most hardened sinner, the Lord Jesus is able to save you now! Believe it and believe Him and, according to your faith, so shall it be to you! Yes, it shall be so to you this very night before you leave this House of Prayer!

I have now only to speak for just a few minutes to someone who may be saying, "If I were to be saved, Sir, it would be the most extraordinary thing that ever happened! If I were to become washed in the blood of Christ and made a child of God, it would be the greatest novelty that ever was known! I do not think it could be because it was never so seen in Israel."

Now listen to me. You say it was never so seen in Israel—how do you know that? It is highly probable that you are making a great mistake and that there have been some saved who were quite as bad as you are, perhaps some who, in certain respects, were worse than you. What a splendid book might be made out of the records of the conversion of great sinners! The wildest romance is dull compared with the true history and mystery of the salvation of sinners! Whatever you may be, there is someone like you gone to Heaven. Though you are blacker than any other in the circle of your companions, yet there have been some who were blacker than you are who, nevertheless, have been washed whiter than snow and have been eternally saved. Do not persuade yourself into the conviction that it was never so seen in Israel, for great things have been seen in Israel, of which you know nothing.

But suppose that you speak the truth and are correct? Then, if it was never so seen in Israel, that is no reason why it should not be so seen just now. Because a thing has not happened, shall it never happen? The Israelites stood before the

Red Sea and they might have said that a nation had never marched through the sea. Well, then, it was time that they should do so! And when God divided the waters, they went through the sea on foot and there did they rejoice in the might of Jehovah. Is not the Scripture full of the surprises of Grace—and has God changed? No, dear Friend, if this wonder has not happened yet, it is time that it should happen—and if it never has been so seen in Israel, I hope the hour has come when it shall be so seen in our midst! This which the multitudes said Israel had never seen, Israel did see, for the dumb man was delivered from the power of the devil and was enabled to speak the Savior's praise! And you, great sinner as you are, may become an instance of the surprise power of Divine Grace. It is time that it should be so!

Now let me ask you a question which may, perhaps, put an end to your belief that in your case this marvel cannot happen. Are you beyond the limit of Divine Power? Can God's Grace come, like the waves of the sea, right up to your feet and then shall some cruel voice say, "Up to this point shall you come, but no further"? Do you really believe that you are above the high-water mark of Divine Mercy? Will you just ponder this question over and think what a strange kind of man you must be? Neither the wandering Jew, nor any other fictitious character in the world of romance is so strange a creature as you—a man outside the limit of almighty love, one who has sinned beyond the boundary of Infinite Mercy—a sinner whom Christ's blood cannot wash! When you get to Hell, what a parade they will make of you! "Here is a man whom Christ could not save! He was willing to be washed, but Christ's blood could not cleanse him!" I fancy I hear you say, "Do not talk so, Sir—it is almost blasphemy." Why do you think so, then, if I may not say it? Why do you have the impudence to think that, after all, you are going to be master over Christ and that for once He will have to draw back and say, "This man has beaten Me. I cannot touch him. I cannot in any way

soften, renew, or convert him"? You do not believe it—I am sure you do not! Get, then, out of this horrible falsehood of despair which is now upon you. If it was never so seen in Israel, believe that it may be so seen—and this very hour trust yourself with Christ and live!

Again, suppose it never was so seen in Israel. Suppose that you are the hardest sinner to save. Suppose that you are the most unlikely person to be forgiven. Suppose that your sins have well-near reached the limit of forgiving love. Well, now, here is a fine opportunity for Christ to show what He can do—there is all the more room for the Glory of God's Grace to be seen. Let me quote a text—"Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound." Now here is an opportunity for the splendor of Divine Love to be seen in chasing away the midnight darkness of your sin and despair! Where are you, dear Sir, where are you? I am right glad to think that I am speaking to such a person, for, by-and-by, when you sit among the angels and sing to the praise of Free Grace and dying love, surely there will be no voice sweeter than yours!

I used to think that I should sing among the Saints above as loudly as any, for I owe so much to the Grace of God! And I once said so in a sermon, long ago, quoting those lines—

"Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing, While Heaven's resounding mansions ring With shouts of Sovereign Grace!" I thought that I was the greatest debtor to Divine Grace and would sing the loudest to its praise. But when I came down out of the pulpit there was a venerable woman who said to me, "You made a blunder in your sermon this evening." I said, "I daresay I made a dozen, good Soul, but what was that particular one?" "Why, you said that you would sing the loudest because you owed most to Divine Grace. You are but a lad, you do not owe half as much to Grace as I do at 80 years of age! I owe more to Grace than you and I will not let you sing the loudest." I found that there was a general conspiracy among the friends, that night, to put me in the background. And that is where I meant to be and wished to be—that is where those who sing the loudest long to be—to take the lowest place and praise most the Grace of God in so doing!

Brother, if you are the biggest sinner out of Hell, there will be the more music in Heaven when they get you there and, at this moment, if you believe in Jesus, angels shall re-string their harps and new hallelujahs shall sound through the streets of Heaven when they see such a sinner as you washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb! "It was never so seen in Israel," well then, let it be so seen now to the praise of God's glorious Grace! "Ah," says one, "I do not think I shall ever be saved, for the very devil is in me." Yes, but the devil's Master has come to turn him out. Only believe in Jesus and He will cast him out of you. "But he will not go out." Never you mind what the devil says about that matter! His Master can make him go out. The Omnipotent Jehovah knows of no power which is capable of standing against Him—

"When He makes bare His arm,
What shall His work withstand?"

When He His people's cause defends

Who, who shall stop His hand?" Almighty Grace can cast Satan out and keep him out, too. "Oh, but Sir, I do not feel as if I could pray. Oh, that I could pray!" But you have prayed—that was a prayer that you uttered. "I cannot pray, Sir, I wish I could." You have prayed, already, that very wish is a prayer. "Sir, I cannot pray. I scarcely dare look up to Heaven." That confession that you dare not look up has in it the very essence of prayer! "But I cannot pray." Well then, groan. "But I can scarcely groan." Then, desire. "But I can hardly get to a desire." Then be wretched because you cannot desire! I do not exhort you to act like that—I only want to lead you away from your feelings or lack of feelings. If you wish to be saved, look to Jesus Christ right now, whatever you feel or do not feel! Whether you can groan, or pray, or do anything else, or cannot do anything else, look to Jesus! The only hope of a poor sinner is in Christ Jesus and Him crucified. As I have said already, He is the devil's Master and He, alone, can be your Savior. Cast yourself at His feet and He will not let you go! Lie before Him just as you are, in all the horror of your condition, and say, "Lord, look on me, for I look alone to You." Look, look, look to Jesus! Look and live!—

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One!

There is life at this moment for you."

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: MATTHEW 9.

Verse 1. And He entered into a ship and passed over, and came into His own city. Our Lord had given these Gergesenes an opportunity of becoming His disciples. The Kingdom of God had come very near to them, but as they accounted themselves unworthy of it and urged Him to depart out of their coasts, He did not force Himself upon them. Take heed, dear Friends, if you do but hear the Gospel, once, that you do not reject it, for you may never have the opportunity of hearing it again!

2. And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you. He saw the faith of the one man who was brought to Him and also the faith of the four bearers who had let him down through the roof.

3, 4. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This Man blasphemeth! And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? His knowledge of the thoughts of their hearts ought to have convinced them that He was Divine and that, therefore, He had the right to forgive sins. They were not, however, in a condition to learn anything, for they thought that they already knew everything.

5. For what is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven you; or to say, Arise, and walk? Each of these actions needed Divine Power, but Divinity being present, there was no difference as to the manifestation of this power between the forgiveness of sins and the healing of sickness.

6, 7. But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, (then He said to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house. And he arose and departed to his house. Carrying the mattress on which he had lain. Would he keep that bed sacred, do you think, for a memorial? Or if he used it in the future to sleep upon, would he not, by night, upon his bed wake up and praise the Lord for what He had done for him? I think that we should treasure up in our memory the deeds of Christ on our behalf, if, indeed, we know His great salvation. I should not wonder if there is a mattress that you have somewhere at home—a bed, or a book—or something with which there is connected the remembrance of some deed of Infinite Love and Almighty Grace.

8. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power to men. They did not think deeply enough and go really to the bottom of the matter, but they concluded that it was a wonderful thing that any man—that any men, as they put it—should have such power given to them.

9. And as Jesus passed forth from there, He saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom. Notice how Matthew describes himself—"As Jesus passed forth from there, He saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom."

9. And He said to him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. See how everything is obedient to Christ? Paralysis leaves the palsied man and hardness of heart departs from the tax-gatherer.

10. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. Note the modesty of these early recorders—Matthew does not say that it was his own house where this gathering took place, nor that he was the giver of the feast. Mark and Luke supply this information.

11-13. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, He said to them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." God prefers the doing of good to all outward ritual and ordinances, even the best of them—"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice:"

13-22. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, but your disciples fast not? So Jesus said to them, Can the children of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them and then shall they fast. No man puts a piece of new cloth to an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up takes from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break and the wine runs out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. While He spoke these things to them, behold there came a certain ruler and worshipped Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Your hand upon her, and she shall live.

And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did His disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; your faith has made you whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. See how He scatters mercy all around? He is charged to the full with the Divine electricity of health and whoever comes in His way gets a blessing! Oh, for the Presence of that full and overflowing Christ in the midst of every worshipping assembly, for there are still many sick folk who need a Savior as much as these people did in the days of Jesus!

23. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise. They were gathered together for the funeral of this young girl.

24. He said to them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleeps. And they laughed Him to scorn. They did not yet understand His expression—apparently sleep only differs from death in this respect—that the sleeper wakes, again, and returns to consciousness. The Lord Jesus Christ did not mean that the maiden was not dead—He meant that, as she was soon coming to life, again, it was, as it were, only like the image of death. To her, death was not a cul-de-sac, a dark cave without an opening at the further end—it was rather a tunnel through which she was passing back again into life.

25. 26. But when the people were put forth, He went in and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And His fame hereof went abroad into all that land. And well it might! This was the marvel of marvels that He could even raise the dead!

27. And when Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, You Son of David, have mercy on us. See, my Brothers and Sisters, how miracle follows upon miracle, how the way of Christ is, as it were, paved with mercy upon mercy?

28. And when He had come into the house, the blindmen came to Him and Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? It is a great thing to have faith about the particular point that most concerns us—"Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Some can believe everything except the one thing for which faith is most needed,

28. They said to Him, Yes, Lord. Can you, dear Friend, say, "Yes, Lord," about yourself?

29-31. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it to you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus charged them, saying, See that no man knows it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country. This was very wrong of them, for they ought to have obeyed Christ's orders. They were doing much mischief, although, no doubt, they thought they were doing good. The Savior, first of all, was modest and did not wish His cures reported. In the next place, He wanted to have an opportunity of doing more good, but the reporting of this cure brought Him immense crowds who encumbered Him and also excited the animosity of the Pharisees who would the more persecute Him. Moreover, our Lord did not wish the Pharisees to think that He cured people that they

might simply advertise Him. I think that we often err in imagining that making known every little thing that happens, and even every great thing, is the best course to pursue. There is a way of walking in wisdom toward them that are without—and Christ knew that way. And these blind man whose eyes He had opened should not have disobeyed Him.

32. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil ' 'As they went out." Do notice what a succession of mercies Christ dispersed! It was a sort of tempest of blessing, peal upon peal, following almost without intermission!

33, 34. And when the devil was cast out, the mute spoke: and the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never seen like this in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casts out devils through the prince of the devils. How does Christ answer this wicked taunt?

35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. That is the best answer to give to quibblers— do more good than ever! There is no stopping the barking of dogs, so go on your way, as the moon shines, let the hounds bay as they may. Oh, the glory of the Master! Like a cloud that dispenses showers of blessing wherever it moves, so did He continue to do His life-work.

36-38. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then said He to His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray you, therefore, to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest. Or, "that He will thrust forth laborers into His harvest." He who does the most is always the one who needs to see more done. This blessed Christ, with His hands so full of holy work, is the One who bows His knee and cries to the great Lord of the harvest to thrust forth laborers into His harvest. Let us imitate Him both in the working and in the praying!