

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON  
SICKNESS AND SIN.

By Rev. William Evans, D. D. (Director Biblical Department of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago; Official Lecturer of the Cook County (Chicago) Sunday School Association on the International S. S. Lessons.)

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Golden Text: "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."—Mar 2: 10.

Lesson: Mark 2: 1-12.

"And they came unto Him bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 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 whereon the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy: Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts: Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only. And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned with themselves, He said unto them: Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 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? 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) Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all."

Sickness a Type of Sin. Throughout the Scripture there is recognized a very intimate connection between sickness and sin. Leprosy, is typical of sin in its beginning, growth and sin consumption. Palsy, like sin, paralyzes the faculties of man; spiritual blindness caused by sin. In natural sense people may "have eyes and see not; ears and hear not."

The Palsied Man is a Type of the Sinner.

The sinner has certain faculties which cannot be used until he is cured of the disease of sin. Sin blights the hearing; darkens the understanding so that it cannot grasp nor understand divine things. Sin paralyzes the faculties of the soul. The sinner is as helpless to walk in the way of God's commandments as this palsied man nature, said: "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. The good that I would, I do not. What a confession of human inability. Sin and Sickness Closely Connected.

While it is not true that in every case sickness is the direct result of a special sin committed by the one afflicted, yet the Bible distinctly teaches that oftentimes such is the case. Jesus taught His disciples in the case of the man born blind (John 9) that this sore afflicted came not because of any special sin on the part of the blind man. Nevertheless by addressing his spiritual before his physical condition—by saving first. "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and afterward: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk," the Master distinctly taught us that in this case at least (as well as in John 5) the affliction was the result of some particular sin. "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee,"—words like these emphatically set forth the close relation between sin and disease.

Sin is Just as Real as Disease. To deny the existence and reality of sin is pure folly and consummate nonsense. Jesus Christ did not come into the world to die for a mere phantom of the mortal mind, nor was He deceiving this palsied man when He dealt with the question of his sin. We may change the name, but we cannot change the nature of sin; we may deny that it exists, but still its ravages are seen in the experience of the human race. We may call sin an imaginary thing, but oh, how real and deadly is the havoc it creates. To Jesus Christ, who understood all these things, much better than we do, sickness and sin were alike stern realities.

Sin Must Needs Be Forgiveness. Man must be forgiven or else he will be lost. If there is such a thing as sin in the world, then there is such a thing as punishment and condemnation for sin. If there be no sin, then we need have no worry with regard to the thought of punishment. Jesus Christ taught very definitely that sin was real, and if unforgiven was the means of bringing down wrath upon the head of the sinner. He said to the unrepentant Jews: "If ye die in your sins, where I am ye cannot come." Sin is not something to be pitied merely; nor is it a thing to be smoothed over, when or compromised; it is a condition which calls for forgiveness. We must deal definitely with God about it or we shall never dwell where Christ is.

How Can Sin Be Forgiveness? How can punishment for sin be averted? It has been said that there are three ways. First, inasmuch as suffering and punishment is the result of sin, let us stop sinning, and then we shall cease suffering. That sounds well. But it is cold, comfortless logic. Who can stop sinning; where is the man in all the earth that doeth good and sinneth not? This is law without love. Secondly, it is acknowledged that there is sin and there is punishment for sin, but then God is kind, loving, and compassionate that He will say to us at last: "Well, it is true, you have been pretty bad, but I will look over it, come right into Heaven. That is love without law. If this were the real status of the case, Heaven would not be a place long secure from the attacks of sin. Unless holiness and righteousness be the center of

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God's throne, safety and security can never be its circumference. Forgiveness Through Christ. There remains just one other way of forgiveness, and that is the true way. There is sin, and there is punishment and condemnation for sin. But God has laid all our sins on Christ, who bore them in His own body on the tree. Forgiveness then is by faith in the redeeming sacrifice of Christ. We have forgiveness through His shed blood. Here is law and love combined, thus allowing God to be just and the justifier of the sinner who believes in Jesus.

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