of my sermon to draw some soul to Christ. In his name and for his glory I have spoken. And he says, “Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me.”

IX.

THE TWOFOLD MINISTRY OF CHRIST.

“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.”
—Ps. ciii: 3.

WE have in these words a striking instance of what is known as the Hebrew parallelism. It is one of the most rhythmical and beautifully balanced sentences in the whole book of Psalms. But we see in the words something more than the rhythm and cadence of poetic measure. There is a parallelism of thought and doctrine here. Forth from the divine fountain flow two streams of blessing — forgiveness and health; recovery for the soul and restoration for the body. And these are not merely consecutive in God’s plan, forgiveness now and healing hereafter, — they are parallel; they move side by side as a double manifestation of the same divine power. They are not two facts even, but the twofold expression of one fact — the life of God communicated to man, and invigorating and repairing by the same energy both his spirit and his flesh, — “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.”
forth from the Redeemer's life, even as the water and the blood flowed from his dying heart,—the one for cleansing the soul, the other for reanimating the body; and God never meant they should cease to flow till the entire man had been redeemed and perfected.

III. Christ's twofold ministry at his second coming.

The return of the Lord from heaven will put the climax and seal of completion upon both elements of this ministry. Then the soul will be "presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy;" and "the body of our humiliation" will be transformed and "fashioned like unto the body of his glory." Sanctification, the final perfection of the spirit, and resurrection, the final perfection of the body,—these are the two events which will signalize the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some, indeed, are accustomed to speak of sanctification as taking place at death. It is enough for us to note how invariably the Scriptures connect the event with our Lord's second advent. "To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," is the apostle's language. And again, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Does the spirit drop from the body at death like the ripened grain from the husk, needing its support and protection no longer now that it has come to maturity? And does the body, like a dead and sapless husk, now fall into the grave, since it has served its purpose of bearing and ripening the soul? Nay! these two factors of our being are not so related. The perfection of each is to be found in its sanctified reunion with the other,—the soul cleansed from its sins and the body healed of its sicknesses, and the two dwelling together at last in harmonious unity. Whatever holiness and bliss the soul may attain out of the body and in the presence of the Lord, it is yet in an imperfect state. It lacks the vehicle of action and the organs of life, and is therefore imperfect; and whatever is imperfect is as yet un Sanctified. For holiness is not a dead white purity, the perfection of the faultless marble statue. Life, as well as pureness, enters into the idea of holiness. They who are "without fault before the throne" are they who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,"—holy activity attending and expressing their holy state.

And for the highest life and activity the soul must have a body; we can no more conceive of the spirit's truest, most exalted life apart from the body than of the body's life as continuing at all
without the soul. We do well to study the wondrous mystery of the union of the flesh and spirit. It is a prophecy as well as an enigma,—emotion reporting itself in smiles and tears; the soul hanging out its storm-signals in the face, so that we can see the coming anger in the look before it breaks forth in words; and the body, on the other hand, clouding the soul with its humors or lightening it with its health. Can it be that this marvellous union and interplay of mind and matter is only temporary and provisional? I believe, on the contrary, that all this is but an imperfect foreshadowing of what shall be when the discord which sin has brought in between soul and body shall be ended, and when the redeemed body shall become at last the perfect organ and instrument of the redeemed soul. Perfection of relation, as well as perfection of the parts of our nature, is the end of God’s purposes. It is not enough that the disembodied soul shall be completely cleansed from sin and perfected in holiness. God will give to it a body perfectly fitted to its needs,—a body capable of expressing all its exalted emotions, of bearing it on in its swift and tireless ministries, and of executing without impediment its holy affections and desires.

Here, then, is where the lines of Christ’s twofold ministry terminate,—in sanctification, the perfection of the spirit’s holiness, and in resurrection, the perfection of the body’s health.

If we carry ourselves forward to the state immediately succeeding the first resurrection, as it is described in the closing chapters of the Apocalypse, we find it to be a state of perfect healthfulness. The body has not been discarded, but resumed in glory. The corruptible has put on incorruption, and the mortal has put on immortality; and a state has been reached where not only sin has been abolished, but sickness also. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; neither sorrow nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” No more pain,—the nerves retuned at last from the discord which sin had introduced, and henceforth conveying only sensations of delight and comfort; and no more death,—the wages of sin no longer exacted, because the service of sin is no longer pursued. What is all this but God’s final, perfect healing of these bodies? And what glory does it shed upon Christ’s redemption! This marvellous mechanism of the human frame, so disordered by transgressions, so deranged with disease, “Throw it away, as beyond the possibility of repair,” says the man of little faith; “give me happiness by effecting my release from the body of this death.”—
"He shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you," is the triumphant assurance of the Scripture. What God made he can repair; what sin has marred he can restore; and while man in despair would abandon this mortal frame to the grave, he teaches us to "wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Oh, blessed hope! In a world smitten with pestilence, where death reigns over all and "the mourners go about the streets," we are summoned to look towards a city whose "inhabitants shall not say I am sick, and the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

And now "take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." I summon you to believe not what I have seen, or heard, or proved, but only what God has spoken. Do not deceive yourselves by going beyond what is written; but do not, I entreat you, defraud yourselves by coming short of what is written. God has not called you to a partial redemption, but to a full and eternal recovery both from the curse and from the consequences of sin. If you are struggling and battling with a rebellious and evil heart, wondering if God can ever forgive and make holy such a one as you, hear what he saith: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." And are you sick in body, compassed with infirmity, or burdened with some inherited malady from which you expect no relief except in the grave, hear again what God saith: "I am the Lord that healeth thee."—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Considering Jesus Christ now as the manifestation of God's life and grace, let us see how this twofold blessing comes to man through him. Observe, then,—

I. Christ's twofold ministry while on earth.

You have to take only the most casual glance at his life to discover how constantly he exercised a double ministration to men. He healed the sick and forgave the sinner. He fed the hungry with bread for their bodies, and he fed the penitent with bread for their souls. He said to one suffering woman, "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity," and he said to another sinning woman, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." From the day he began his earthly ministry till the day he finished it by entering into glory, two things could be said of him, and the one just as truly as the other: "Himself took on our infirmities, and bear our sicknesses," and, "Who himself bear our sins in his own body on the tree."

And the reason why he carried on for us this double service is obvious. Man is a double being, and Christ could only be a perfect Saviour by meeting and ministering to him in both elements of his nature. There is a wonderful pith and force in that Saxon word *whole*, as applied to man—"Thou art made whole." Sin has halved us; it has so divided this house of our tabernacle against itself that it must fall. The forgiven soul in a sick body is but half a man; the well body enclosing an unforgiven soul is but half a man. And this dreadful schism in our nature Christ came to heal; not by widening the breach, putting the soul into heaven, and the body in the grave, and dooming them to eternal separation. In that case all the Saviour could say would be, "Thou art made half"; one fragment of thy dual nature has been rescued and made immortal, but the other half has perished. Strictly speaking, man can never be made whole till he has been made holy—till his sanctified soul has had prepared for it a sanctified body and the two have been remarried forever in the land of Beulah.

How blended and interdependent are these two elements of our life!—so one that it is almost inaccurate to speak of them even as a duality. The blush on the cheek is but the tide of the soul's emotion breaking upon this outward shore; the smile was on the spirit before it was on the face, and the frown was on the soul before its shadow crept across the outward visage. So truly a unit is man as to his inner and outer being, that none has been able to fix the boundary between the spirit and the body. The coast-line of flesh and blood is so flooded and overflowed by the waves of feeling and emotion which are constantly
rolling in from the deeps of the soul, and the deeps of the soul are so perpetually stirred by the sensations and impressions of the body, that none can exactly define the bounds of either. And so Christ’s action upon man was of that twofold nature which touched his whole life. There went out from him “saving health” as well as saving grace.

Now, we dwell much on the sinlessness of Christ, and the power which he thereby possessed of redeeming men from their sins; but have we thought also that he was the only being, so far as we know, who had perfect healthfulness? It must have been so. Sickness is the fruit and consequence of sin, either actual or ancestral. But Christ had neither personal nor hereditary taint. If he knew pain and suffering of body, it was imputed, not original; it was ours, not his. “In him was life,”—that divine, unfallen life in which no seed or germ of sickness could be present. Hence those who came in believing contact with him received healing as inevitably as they received pardon. “And as many as touched him were made perfectly whole,” says the evangelist. Man in his fallen state can impart disease, but not health. It is the most pathetic comment on our corrupt condition by nature, that sickness is the only thing we have that is contagious. We can give out an infectious
disease from our very breath, or through the slightest touch of the body; but who has been able to communicate health to another? This is the solitary glory of the Virgin’s Son. Here, for once in our poor world, is contagious life. Here is a being in whom an abounding, infectious health is present, so that it only needs the contact of a finger-tip, that it may leap like the electric current to thrill and vitalize the sickly body. This spontaneity, this outgushing fulness of the divine healing from the person of Jesus Christ, is, to me, a fact of the greatest significance. Whatever help man imparts to his brother is through medicine and the vital agencies of nature. If he attempts at all to cure by transmitting his own vitality he does it only by the most strained and laborious effort,—as though the life currents in him were so low and feeble that they must be forced before they can be made to yield even the smallest assistance to another. But not so with the Son of Man. His healing was an overflow, not an effort. Witness the marvellous miracle of the recovery of the woman with an issue of blood. It is a work so unconscious and so utterly passive that it seems like a miracle split over from the fulness of his divine life, rather than a miracle put forth. She came behind him in the crowd and touched the hem of his garment, “and immediately...
he perceived that virtue had gone out of him," we are told. No effort at healing here; no gathering up of the powers of his divine manhood for the mighty miracle! Where human skill had exhausted itself only to fail, this heavenly man succeeded without even an effort of the will,—as though it were an accident of his omnipotence, a spontaneous overflow from him "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Have you run through the list of Christ's miracles to notice how often the word "touch" occurs in connection with them?

Sometimes it is Christ touching the sufferer, and sometimes it is the sufferer touching Christ. But nothing more energetic or vigorous seems necessary. And that is a striking tribute to the lifegiving power of Christ.

Great forces need but small conductors to transmit them. The surcharged battery requires only a finger-tip to unlace its mighty energy. An engine needs but a single coupling to transmit all its prodigious force and momentum. And Christ, because he is mighty to save, needs nothing of us but our consenting faith, and, because he is mighty to heal, needs only the touch of our faith that all his "saving health" may become ours. Touch, indeed, is but the gesture of faith. It is the visible confession of confidence in the power of Christ to

make whole. Hence it is all one, whether it is said of the ministry of Christ that "as many as believed on him were made whole," or "as many as touched him were made whole." In either case saving virtue went forth from him.

You see, then, how all through his life the double ministry of Jesus was in exercise. Men believed on him, and were forgiven; men touched him, and were healed. His abounding grace made instant response to the sinner's faith. His abounding life gave instant answer to the sick man's touch. And so blended and interlaced are these two elements in the ministry of our Lord that they are constantly crossing,—healing emerging in forgiveness, and forgiveness in healing. It is because sin and sickness are so related that grace must take such direction in pursuing them. Like two converging lines of an angle, each of which when followed leads to the other, so with transgression and disease. Follow sickness back to its remotest cause, and you will find sin; follow sin to its last effect, and you will find disease. Blessed be God, then, that in Christ we have the double man, who could confront and master the double problem. He was the sin-pardoner, who could cleanse transgression back to its original fountain. He was the life-giver, who could reach disease in the last and remotest
cause, but only the effect, that could not see that pardon is healing in its utmost springs, he adds, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine own house." It is the twofold grace of Christ which we discover running through all his earthly life. He is the second Adam come to repair the ruin of the first. And in order to accomplish this he will follow the lines of man's transgression back to their origin, and forward to their remotest issue. He will pursue the serpent trail of sin, dispensing his forgiveness and compassion as he goes, till at last he finds the wages of sin, and dies its death on the cross; and he will follow the wretched track of disease with his healing and recovery till in his resurrection he shall exhibit to the world the first fruits of these redeemed bodies, in which "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality."

II. Christ's twofold ministry in heaven.

We are never to forget that our Lord is simply carrying on in glory what he began on earth. His ministry has not changed as to its character and offices. The only essential difference is that he exercises that ministry now by the Holy Ghost, and through the church, instead of by his own personal and visible agency. All the character-
istics of his ministry remain unaltered. Hence we find that when he had ascended up on high, and committed the preaching of the gospel to apostles and evangelists, the same traits marked their work which distinguished his own. The twofold ministry goes on just as it did while Christ was on the earth. Indeed, it must be so, or the Master’s word has not been kept. Just before his ascension he had breathed the Holy Ghost upon his disciples and said, “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;” and he had said also “These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” No question can there be as to the promise, and none as to the fulfilment. Read Peter’s words in the opening pages of the Acts. In one chapter we hear him saying, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;” in the next we hear him saying to the lame man, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” It is Christ’s ministry still prolonged,—the same twofold grace, the same double blessing, to the sinner and to the sufferer. And the whole apostolic age is stamped with similar marks. By the same authority with which Paul says to the jailer of Philippi, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” he says to the cripple of Lystra, “perceiving that he had faith to be healed,” “Stand upright upon thy feet.”

And how is it that this twofold cord of our ministry has been unbraided, leaving us but a single strand? How is it that we still preach the remission of sins, but dare not, on the pain of being deemed enthusiasts and fanatics, hold out the hope that sickness can be remitted by faith in Jesus Christ? O Church of the ascended Christ, carrying still in thy hands thy Master’s commission, with no clause annulled and no vestige of authority revoked, what has happened to thee, that the lame must lie at thy doors, and none can take him by the hand and lift him up; that the sick must pine on his couch, and never a cure must be expected through the prayer of faith? Hast thou ceased to walk in the light of the Sun of righteousness that thou hast no longer any healing shadow to throw upon the sick and dying? And how is it that, instead of mourning and being humbled at the loss of these apostolic gifts, thou art lifted up with self-complacency, speaking reproachfully of such as seek for their revival, and visiting them with cold rebukes? Is it an occasion for pride that
“thou hast no healing medicines for the sick,” and that thou must say to the lame and leprous, “Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wounds are grievous; there is none to plead thy cause that thou mayest be bound up”? My brethren, we cannot ask these questions too earnestly or repeatedly. There is a cautious reserve of faith which may carry one very near the perilous edge of scepticism; and to let go our confidence in what is highest and hardest to credit in the promises of God may be a token of our wilful choice of what is lowest and most superficial in Christian consecration. I am weary, for one, of the excuses which Christians have framed for their impotence; telling the world that the age of miracles has passed, and that the gifts of healing have been withdrawn. The age of miracles has passed indeed, and perhaps the only reason is, that the age of faith has passed. Christ has given no intimation on the pages of Scripture that the age of miracles is passed with him. He has not grown old, that the fountains of his saving health must run dry. He who healed the withered hand has not lost the use of his own right hand through infirmity of age. “His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear.” I feel as sure as I am of anything that the loss of a healing ministry is due to a change in the church, and not to a change in Christ. It is because we have backslidden from the foundation of apostles and prophets, and not that Christ has retreated from his ground. Because we know not how to rise to the height of this great privilege, we bring down the promises of God to our level; and what we cannot do, we hold that God does not allow. Would it not be better to keep the standard of power and privilege where the Lord put it, if it served no other purpose than to humble and condemn us for our unbelief. There is no evidence that since the day that Christ entered into heaven, and through the Holy Ghost gave gifts to men, “to one, the word of wisdom, and to another, the word of knowledge, by the same spirit; and to another, faith, by the same spirit; and to another, the gift of healing, by the same spirit,” there has been any change in the Lord’s order for his Church. There has been a change in the Church’s attitude towards these gifts.

The evidence seems to be incontestable that the signs promised in the great commission, to those who should believe (Mark xvi: 17) and fulfilled under the ministry of the apostles, continued in unbroken succession into the third century after Christ. “Witnieses who are above suspicion,” says Ullhorn, “leave no room for doubt that the miraculous powers of the apostolic age continued to operate at least into the third century.” (Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism, p. 199.) Mosheim, Miller, Dodsley, and Tillotson bear equally strong testimony. (See references to the Fathers, in notes to work above cited, p. 486.) If these gifts remained to the third century, why might they not continue into the nineteenth?
She has learned to discredit what she has forgotten how to use. She has come to condemn as fanatical what she once rejoiced in as divine. But her divine right and charter remain unchanged, and only wait for her resumption when she gets back her ancient faith. Do I say this in criticism, speaking of others as one who has himself attained? Indeed not. Nor is personal attainment the indispensable condition to strong faith and positive assertion. Have you never read the saying of a Christian father, "Certum est quia imposibile," —It is true because it is impossible? It seems like an audacious paradox; but it was learned from the Master himself: "The things which are impossible with man are possible with God," says Jesus. And faith has to do with God, not with man. It takes the measure of its creed from the power and promise of the Almighty, not from the experience of the creature. Hence, with the revelation, "All things are possible with God," Christ has taught us to join the confession, "All things are possible to him that believeth." What, then, has God written of his power and will concerning us? This is the one question for us to settle. We are not to level down God's words to the grade of our own experiences. "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." And it is not for us to modify and

condition them to every various shade of faith or or feeling. What has the Lord declared concerning the great matter which we are discussing? This question must be held supreme. Tell me, then, what these words mean: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." Here is a double promise, bearing the distinctest impress and seal of that double ministry of which I am speaking. The latter half of it you have no doubt about. With the fullest assurance you fall upon your knees to pray for a friend that his sins may be forgiven him, and if you see that he has faith to be forgiven, you do not hesitate, on the strength of God's word, to declare his absolution. But of the first part of the passage you say, this does not apply to present times; this was for the apostles and primitive believers. And who gave you warrant for cleaving this text in twain, and using one-half of the promise and remanding the other to an outgrown age of miracles and wonders?¹ Let

¹ Oh, happy simplicity," exclaims Bengel, commenting on this text, "interrupted or lost through unbelief." Thomas Erskine declares his conviction that the gifts of healing were intended to be "the permanent endowment of the Church," and that "had the faith of the Church continued pure and full these gifts of the Spirit would never have disappeared." (Braun Serpent, p. 303. See also Dr. Bushnell's powerful defence of the proposition, "Miracles and spiritual gifts not discontinued," Nature and the Supernatural, chap. XIV.)
us beware. To a true Christian the very life of a text is in its undivided wholeness, and, like the true mother in the judgment of Solomon, he would rather surrender it entire than have it sundered by the sword. I have said all this in the revolt which I feel at the arbitrary license which so many are exercising, in setting aside as impossible what the Scriptures promise without reserve. And I am glad to believe that in many parts of the world, and in many branches of the Church, God is signally reviving these ancient gifts. The great soul of Edward Irving burned to see the fires of prophecy and miracle breaking forth once more from the smouldering embers of modern faith. For this he prayed and pleaded, exhorting his flock, as he says, “to live by faith continually on Jesus, for the body as well as the soul.” And I know of no sublimer exhibition of faith than that which appears in the story of his own mastery of disease through prayer. Prostrate in the pangs of deathly sickness, he yet asked God to give proof of his promise by healing him, and letting him stand in his place on Sunday morning before his flock. Sabbath morning came, and still his request was unanswered. He was carried to his church in spite of the entreaties of his friends; he was helped into his place, and there stood the pallid, pain-racked preacher, holding on to the sides of the pulpit, and pleading silently with God to have respect unto his word, in which he had caused his servant to hope. And then he tells us how, as he opened his Bible, the bands of disease were loosed, and the power of the Holy Ghost came upon him, and how he preached with an unctuous and impressiveness never surpassed in his history, and then walked joyfully home at the close of the service, praising God for his faithfulness. Many Christians will explain the incident on the same natural principles with which the sceptic explains the miracles of our Lord. But why should it be thought a thing incredible?

And such instances, resting on incontestable evidence, are crowding upon us in these days. I believe in their possibility, because I believe in God’s word. Not that we are to suppose that the sick will always be raised at our asking. The same question of the limitations of prayer and its subjection to God’s will comes in here as elsewhere. But the Scripture cannot be broken, “The prayer of faith shall save the sick.”¹ It has been so in multitudes of instances. It is doing so to-day. Two tides of blessing and life flowed

¹Luther assents to this promise with his usual hearthiness and frankness. He says, “How often has it happened, and still does, that devils have been driven out in the name of Christ, also by the calling on his name and prayer, that the sick have been healed.”