



SUNDAY READING

SERMON.

The Withered Hand.

By REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered... Then saith he to the man, stretch forth thine hand.

shall be saved; his name is called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.

Who Spoke to Him.

II. Secondly I want to speak a little upon the person who gave the command. It was Jesus who gave it. He said, 'Stretch forth thine hand.'

Patience Welcome.

And to-night, dear friends, it matters very little to the preacher or the congregation that you are here, if you are some person of note or consequence; for we make no note of dignitaries here, and attach no special consequence to any one in this place.

The Crippled Man.

I. First, we will say a little about the person to whom the command in our text is addressed. 'Then said Jesus to the man, stretch forth thine hand.'

But, mark you, it came to one who was perfectly willing, for this man was quite prepared to do whatever Jesus bade him do.

Do not want to be healed. As soon as a man truly longs for salvation, then has salvation already come to him; but the most of you do not wish to be saved.

The man who is seeking Christ can do nothing, and yet, if he believeth on Christ, he can do everything, and his withered hand is stretched out.

The Initial Step is Taken. The parallel holds in the spiritual world. The character I have in my mind's eye is the case of a soul desiring to be what it cannot be, and to do what it cannot do, and yet desiring it.

Christ's Way of Doing His Work? His way is this,—first, to give the command, then to help the heart to turn the command into a prayer, and then to answer that prayer by a promise.

An Auspicious Moment. A great thing shall surely be done unto thee. Believe thou now. Thou hast said alforetime, 'I never can believe.'

The Result. Of this stretching out of the man's hand in obedience to the command. He was healed. I have already tried to set before you the fact that the healing was manifest; it was also immediate.

A Momentary Cure. and so the word "momentary" was changed for the word "instantaneous," which was a great improvement. I am afraid that some people's salvation is a momentary salvation. They get a sort of grace, and they lose it again.

This Man's Obedience. We are told that he stretched forth his hand. Christ said, "Stretch forth thine hand." Mark says "And he did so."

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but instead of that we will attend the means of grace regularly." Do that by all means, but as a substitute for faith, or it will become a vain confidence.

Where the Life Is.—in Christ; not in searching scripture, good as the searching of scripture is.

Notice, that he did not raise any questions. Now this man had a fair opportunity of raising questions.

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In the present Parliament there are thirteen baptized Christians and several others who profess that faith, and have not yet received the rite of baptism. This number, out of a total of 300 composing the Parliament, is a very good showing for the Christians. If this average is preserved throughout Japan it would show that Christianity now numbers over 1,500,000 converts among a people who, twenty years since, had hardly a Christian within their country.

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