

Version have rightly rendered כְּפָלִים in Isaiah by διπλά, but I cannot be dogmatic as to what they meant by it. Yet, on returning to this fact from our examination of the use of the word in the New Testament, I think we can infer with probability that they had caught the right meaning of the word כְּפָלִים and expressed it in Greek by the appropriate word διπλά. But they seem, like King James's translators, to have been over fond of variety of expression. Διπλά sometimes means, like כִּשְׁנַיִה, the doubling of a thing or process, and is used to represent this meaning in the Septuagint on more than one occasion. But in such cases it means, not a double equivalence of recompense, but, like כִּשְׁנַיִה, a repetition of the same thing; as when, for example, Joseph's brethren take double money in their sacks. In this proclamation in the 40th chapter of Isaiah, therefore, the natural and unstrained meaning of διπλά is the same as that of כְּפָלִים, and may well have been intended by the translators to denote simple adequacy of punishment for the sin.

The use of this key in the passage we have marked out in the book of Job leads to some interesting results, but these must be reserved for another paper.

JOHN THOMAS.

ASIDE FROM THE MULTITUDE.

A STUDY IN ST. MARK VII. 33.

IF the parables of Christ are miracles for the wisdom with which they were spoken, His miracles are no less parables for the directness, the force, and the variety of the lessons conveyed in and through them. Looked at from this point of view, the miracles of our Lord appear separated by a quite immeasurable distance from any wonders wrought by human skill or genius. He taught by His actions. Hence it is the part of the devout student to watch Him at work

with an eye as keen and observant as that of the Pharisee of old, but with an eye inwardly lighted up by faith and love. It would seem as if it were St. Mark's enterprise among the evangelists to insist upon the fact that appropriate teaching is to be drawn from everything that our Lord wrought. The vividness and particularity of his narrative is a commonplace of New Testament criticism. If nothing escapes this evangelist, if to him nothing is unimportant in all that the Lord did, if everywhere the action is suited to the word, and the word to the action, then the like keen and quick attention is reasonable in the Christian student, and only so will the second Gospel become truly luminous and profitable.

Yet here this particular miracle wrought upon the deaf-mute may bid us pause. Nowhere are the autoptic touches so plainly discernible, nowhere within the narrative's brief space are so many details found in such picturesque compression. But are each and all significant? that is the immediate question. In answer, the devout inquirer seems bound to maintain that a lesson verily underlies all that is told through the movement of the inspiration of God, whether here or elsewhere. How far each particular lesson is discernible is another issue, and must depend upon the equipment of the inquirer, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. Such lessons lie there, often out of sight, and so out of mind, like the "gems of purest ray serene" of which the poet Gray sings. And the Holy Scriptures are as a mine of knowledge, yielding most to those who dig the deepest. It does not follow that there is no truth because it is not at once recognised, nor any lesson because we cannot for the moment draw it. Some day all will be made plain, and those who have here loved to read, mark, and learn, and inwardly digest the word, will be, perchance, the first to perceive hereafter all the wondrous things therein contained with eyes unpeclouded by the earthly mists of

imperfection, ignorance, and sin. For now we see in a mirror, in a riddle; much is obscure, there is that which confuses and distresses us because it is obscure; now we know in part, hereafter we shall know fully, even as also we have been known fully,¹ for love is the key of knowledge. It has been said that writers like Sophocles or Virgil would be amazed if they could read the commentaries upon their works to-day, as they perceived meanings attached to phrase and passage of which themselves never dreamt. Be it so, yet it is surely more respectful to a work of genius to perceive more than less in it of what is written. But once grant inspiration, or, indeed, any theory of it, and the argument becomes an *à fortiori* one forthwith. There is far greater danger for the student in putting too little than in putting too much significance into the text of holy Scripture, and he may boldly take the typical narrative of this miracle, and search in each and all these mysterious actions, prompted by Christ's love, for lessons for heart and life. It will be sufficient to take but one for present consideration; an incident preliminary to the work of mercy itself. But here it is to be observed that neither time nor place appeared congenial to a miracle from Christ. He would have preferred to pass incognito through the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, but it was out of the question; His fame was too great, He could not lie hid; but as the miracle so recent upon the Syro-Phœnician woman was clearly a yielding to the pressure of her faith, so pressure must again be put upon Him if the deaf-mute was to be cured. Hence the strong appeal² of his friends. To such entreaty the great Physician never could Himself be deaf. He who could open men's ears had His own ever open to their cry. He means to grant their request, He is ready for His own task, but it shall be done after His own way, with wisdom, as in love. Thus, before He would heal him,

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

² πασακαλοῦσιν αὐτὸν, v. 32.

He takes the sufferer aside from the multitude privately.¹ The evangelist's expressions are markedly emphatic. There must be some underlying meaning in an action so significant, to which but one parallel is furnished, and that also by St. Mark, in the miracle wrought upon the blind man of Bethsaida.² Why, then, this "taking aside"? Here commentators diverge; the ancients look one way for a meaning, moderns another, and yet in no serious or vital contradiction. Was it for His own sake that Christ acted thus? Certainly, as Bengel remarks, with that fine, practical instinct of interpretation which rarely deserts him, "Jesus ubique vitavit strepitum." Yet this is hardly enough to explain the action. Every interpretation of Christ's deeds which lays more stress upon Himself and His own wishes rather than upon others and their relief and happiness is bound to miss the mark. It is, therefore, all the more important to observe precisely what the Lord was about to do. He was about to restore to this sufferer the sense of hearing and the power of speech. Of these two he had wholly lost the one, and, since there lies a mysterious physical affinity between them, had partly become bereft of the other.³ No wonder if, at a later moment, the Master sighed; no wonder if He sighed, who knew the awful responsibility of the possession of such gifts, and their cruel misuse amongst men. Hence the sigh and the taking aside are correlative and mutually explanatory. There is no necessity for narrowing down the interpretation of the latter sign. Commentators are not wholly upon a false track, if one suggests as its reason the avoidance of all ostentation; another, the desire of retirement for its own sake; another, that the action was symbolic of a complete separation from heathen surroundings; for all these may be

¹ ἀπολαβόμενος αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου κατ' ἰδίαν.

² St. Mark viii. 23.

³ κωφὸν καὶ μογιγᾶλον, v. 32.

contributory factors to the sign given. But, as a moral dealing was the ultimate end of all Christ's cures, so it is with all the details of them. This was kept in view by the Saviour not only in the miracle as a whole, but in its several parts. Hence, before He would heal this man He would deal with him alone, as later with the blind man of Bethsaida, and thus He takes the man aside from the multitude privately. He meant to concentrate the man's attention upon His own Divine Person, and so quicken his faith and his love. From the nature of the circumstances it is not known what here passed between the great Healer and the healed. But who can doubt that the golden opportunity of privacy was employed by the Saviour for some special act of illumination, and that the sufferer was told of sin as worse than any physical defect, of Himself as the great Physician of the soul, and that, before the awful interview was closed, he too was bidden to "go and sin no more"? An awful interview—yes, assuredly so. It requires but little effort of imagination to suppose the deaf-mute, with his eyesight all the quicker from the loss or inertness of other powers, shrinking somewhat even from the loving glance and gracious guidance of Jesus as He looked upon him, and led him forth and away from his fellows. If the action seems insignificant to any now, it could hardly have been so to the patient then. The Prophet of Nazareth was surely like other wonder-workers of whom he had heard, and would welcome the presence of spectators. For himself, he had placed himself in the hands of his friends. Why, then, in a crisis of tremulous embarrassment, should he be deprived of their company? for he could not know that they were a hindrance to his cure. Should he take the proffered grasp, or decline it? It may be that the acceptance came as much out of regard to his friends as from a full belief in the Lord, but the germ of faith was accepted, and the sufferer was healed.

This action of the Saviour appears thus to be luminous

the moment it is regarded as a preliminary to a spiritual process. What is here writ so small by the Evangelist is writ large in the sphere of religious experience; it has its counterpart in the stories of countless human lives whose moral diseases have been arrested by the working of Divine grace. The Gospel narrative reveals two main drifts of this gracious process. It is seen in action among multitudes, it is seen in influence upon individuals; but if one looks for lessons of the deepest spiritual import, it is assuredly most easy and plain to discern them in Christ's recorded dealings with this and that person in particular. How clearly these are read when at some crisis He is seen to deal with the Baptist, with Nicodemus, with Mary Magdalene, with Pilate, with the Woman of Samaria, with St. Paul, or in training the several members of the Apostolic College! It is then that what He said or did to each of these as individuals appeals most directly to heart and conscience.

It is so here. The deaf-mute appears on the scene only to disappear. A few graphic touches picture the miracle; but had it only been recorded that the Lord took him aside from the multitude privately, it would at least declare to opening eye and listening ear the chief mode of His dealing with men, whom, with all their imperfections and faults strong upon them, He would enlist into His high service. For as often as He deals with the souls of men in mercy to some spiritual defect or disease, or when He has some special act of love in design, or when He must needs brace them for some greater enterprise, or when He will fill them with a fuller measure of the virtue that passes out from Himself, then He takes them aside, apart from the multitude, privately.

If God always treated men as they wished, this process of His mercy would not be as frequent as it is, for He sometimes seems to take men aside all unwilling. They

do not like this singling out, they prefer the shelter of the multitude,—to be one of a company, a society, a congregation, a church, but not to be alone, not to be taken in hand alone by God Himself.

Here physical disease and ill-health occur as apt illustrations of the Divine method of taking aside. A man lies sick; it may be a sickness unto death. His body is full of pain and distress. But with this, by common experience, his mind is not only unimpaired, but more alert than ever. Sickness has brought with it new conditions, strange, unwelcome surroundings. It is not merely that doing is exchanged for suffering, but exchanged for contemplation. And as his mind works one thought is dominant, and presses for an expression which is rarely permitted to it. The sick man discovers a new sense of loneliness. Friends and attendants may pass in and out of the chamber, but their whisperings convince him that he is no longer quite one of them. They seem to be slipping away from him and he from them. The horror of a great desolation is upon him, he feels like one deserted. He is at last alone, alone yet not alone, for He who has taken the sufferer aside is beside him still.

There have been sick folk tended by a devoted ministry who have felt so intensely this sense of being thus alone, in other words, their own individuality in the presence of their Maker, as scarcely to be able to endure it. Yet these have learnt before God called them into the nearer Presence to take from this very truth and fact a strong and eternal consolation, and man's necessity has thus become the Divine opportunity.

But if sickness and suffering appear from this to be blessings in disguise, they are not the only methods at God's disposal. Those whose faith and love are equal to the venture of a nearer and closer walk with God, will find their reward at any and every turn of life. The monastic

life, with all its historical failures and errors, still stands as a sign through the ages of the true value set upon retirement from the world; the best and most characteristic features of Puritanism indicate the like view, the mind and temper of the fast vanishing body of the Quakers point the same way. In the present day, an age not worse but certainly more restless than the past, Lenten or some equivalent for such a season, retreats, quiet days and the like have come to be looked upon no longer as symbols of party, but as serious helps to all who desire to attain to a higher standard of the religious life. Another generation will probably witness the establishment of a further point of re-union in this issue. For the beauty and the blessing of the corporate life of Christians will not only not be forgotten, but vastly enhanced by the discipline of silence and retirement, by the happy, fruitful training of meditation and communion with God alone. For in lonely meditation, in the quiet, calm contemplation of every high and holy theme of our common salvation, in the deliberate abandonment, it may be of common society, and ordinary conversation, is often found the unexpected blessing of the presence of the Master. His eye is then specially upon us, and it is His hand which is leading us aside. It is no new thought, it is as true now as in the days of Austin.

“Qui intendit ad interiora et spiritualia pervenire
Oportet eum cum Jesu declinare a turba.”

B. WHITEFOORD.