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THE  
CHURCHMAN

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OCTOBER, 1889.

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ART. I.—LEPROSY AND LEPERS.

IT is indeed a great thing when the heart of a nation is touched by hearing of a great and noble life and of a greater and self-sacrificing death, and I do not wish to diminish the legitimate praise which has been conferred upon Father Damien<sup>d</sup> by Protestants and Romanists indiscriminately, because it is a tribute to the great corner-stone of our faith, Christ our Saviour. More than that, where in Mahometan and Pagan annals I come upon similar instances of devotion to suffering fellow-creatures (and they are not wanting), I rejoice that God has put it into the hearts of His poor creatures to do Christ-like actions, even without knowing Christ, or being aware that it is His Holy Spirit working upon their unregenerate nature that has led them to do such good things. But I do protest against the exclusive praises heaped by an ill-instructed public and sensational press upon one man, forgetting the long and patient services of an army of men and women who were faithful unto death. We must not forget that these services have been rendered by Christian men alone upon the highest grounds of Christian love and duty, the desire being not only to minister to the material wants of the poor objects of our Father's chastening love, but to minister to the needs of their souls, and bring home to the sufferers that they ought not to be angry with the Lord for the bitter trial to which He has subjected them, though not more sinful than their brethren, but should rejoice at the blessed prospect, sometimes near, sometimes in a remote future, of being free from the, in their case, specially "vile" body, and being forever with the Lord in a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

It is no new idea, this service of the lepers, for we read how the great Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, founded a hospital for lepers, and himself attended upon them personally with sedulous and

self-denying devotion. He is described by Gregory Nazianzen as the man who embraced lepers to show his humility. Later on we find it recorded of Louis IX., King of France (commonly called St. Louis), that he made it part of his religious life to wait upon and eat with lepers, who at his epoch were abundant in Europe, and were one of the special objects of his charity.

I propose to make some few remarks on the ancient and modern history of this exceptional disease. I am assured by medical men of large experience that it is not incurable. This fact is self-evident to anyone who reads the Old and New Testament; nor is it contagious in the sense in which contagion is ordinarily used, for notoriously women have been the wives of two lepers in succession, and have never been affected. On the other hand, those who shut themselves up to the exclusive care of lepers sooner or later succumb to the disease; some after the lapse of twenty or more years. As regards the heredity of the disease, it is to be feared that the children of parents who have themselves become leprous have a tendency to the same disease, though born before the parent became a leper.

To anyone reading the Bible it is obvious that leprosy is the first disease that is mentioned. Miriam was struck with leprosy by the order of Moses. Chapters in the Book of Leviticus are devoted to the subject, proving that it was one of the leading features of Hebrew life, just as scarlet fever, or typhoid, or gout are features of modern European life. How came this about? We have no reason to suppose that Jacob with his party of seventy took the disease into Egypt. We have no proof that the Egyptians were excessively liable to this disease. It is not stated so in the Old Testament, nor have we evidence of it in old Egyptian papyri or inscriptions until the year 1500 B.C., which is after the exodus, and neither in classical nor modern time has Egypt been credited with this disease. It was not one of the ten plagues. The Roman poets do not spare the Egyptians, but, with the exception of Lucretius, they do not lay this sin at their door. During the last forty-seven years I have been repeatedly in Egypt, but never remarked leprosy as a feature of the streets or city gates. In Syria it cannot escape the observation of the most casual observer. In India it has at all times forced itself upon notice. How, then, can we explain the promulgation in the desert, before the occupation of Canaan, and while there were only three or four priests in existence, of such elaborate laws? No doubt in after-ages, down to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, these rules became of extreme importance.

Leprosy has been accepted as the type of sin. Not of any one particular sin, nor with all its foulness can it be credited to indulgence of the evil appetites of man, nor is it handed down

to innocent children by licentious parents, but it is the type of the sinfulness of unregenerate man. "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Such is the cry of the leper and of the awakening sinner. It is a disease of the skin, the flesh, the bone, and the blood; it is painful to the poor sufferer, and disgusting to his friends. If cured, it must be by a cleansing and washing, and the sufferer becomes a new man, and returns glory to God for redemption from the chain in one case of physical and in the other of spiritual bondage. At the sight of a leper each sinner may cry out, "There goes such a one as myself, but for the grace of God!" No tender-hearted Christian can pass by the sufferings of these afflicted ones and not feel himself called upon to do something to alleviate, if not heal, their sickness. I am glad that popular attention has been called to a form of Christian heroism, the very contemplation of which must lift up the heart, and in an age so specially self-seeking and luxurious remind us that even in this world there is a platform higher than that which is built upon political power, dollars, and ephemeral rank.

The essential cause of leprosy is unknown. It is now endemic chiefly among people who inhabit the sea coast or the estuaries of rivers, who live much on fish (often putrid) and who closely intermarry. There are two forms—(1) *Lepra maculosa*, or spotty; (2) *Lepra tuberculosa*, or nodular. The same person can have both, or both can exist in the same population. There is a white form and a black form. Herodotus, the father of history, knew about it in Persia, and it was known in Italy before the Christian era. Horace, in the "De Arte Poeticâ," line 453, alludes to "mala scabies," which may or may not be the disease. Pliny mentions it by name. It is asserted, but proof is not given, that the average life of a leper is only seven years. I fear that it is much longer, and, where comfortable hospitals are supplied, may be extended to the natural limits. Of course, remedies, or palliatives, of various kinds have been recommended. The Roman Catholic missionaries write a good deal about a medicine. Gurjun oil, produced from a fir-tree of the Andaman Islands, is mentioned as a specific. Some doctors suggest and practise a surgical operation.

In Europe it was the greatest disease of mediæval Christendom. The responsibility of having introduced it is laid upon the Crusaders. The existence of lazaretto homes, built specially for them, and the leper windows in churches, built so that the poor sufferer, when not admitted into the church, could see the elevation of the Host from the churchyard, are monuments of this plague. There were ninety-five leper homes in England. The lepers were isolated, obliged to wear a particular dress,

forbidden to enter bakehouses or to touch people. The German word for leper is "Aussätziger," or "outcaste." There was a tax upon butchers and bakers to support them in France. The order of St. Lazarus was founded to look after the leper asylums. They were generally treated with kindness and pity, as few villages could be without some representative, and they never formed a separate caste, like the Jews and Cagots, with both of whom they were sometimes confounded by ignorant people. In times of unreasonable panic false charges were made against them of poisoning the wells, and they then suffered cruelly, and were burnt to death in great numbers. It was a cruel and unreasoning age. The lepers were exempt from all taxation and military service, and had separate places of sepulture, separate portions of the church with separate doors, if admitted to the churches at all. Sometimes there were leper villages and even leper farms. The disease died away in the fifteenth century. The last leper in Scotland died in the Shetlands in 1741 A.D. The disease still survives in Norway, the Baltic provinces of Russia, and on the coasts of France, Sicily, Spain, and Portugal. Numerous leper hospitals are still maintained.

In the Archipelago betwixt Europe and Asia it prevailed in the Greek Islands in the seventeenth century, chiefly among Christians. In the island of Leros was a famous leper asylum on Mount St. Lazarus, and male and female devotees—some in their youth untried by sorrow, some vexed by the world and its cares—consecrated themselves to the management and service. There was no year of probation, but there was a solemn and public ceremony of consecration, and when they had passed the door of the convent, there was no withdrawal, as the institution was maintained by the State, and all the lepers of the region were conveyed thither. They were members of the Greek Church, and I lay stress on this fact and on the date to show that Father Damien was but treading a path which many a saint of God had trod before. His service was not less valuable, his reward will be not less great; but the servants of the Lord are a great army, and it is not just to extol one man, forgetting the rest.

No one can visit Syria and Palestine without thinking of lepers, and without seeing them. In my first pilgrimage in 1852 I threw coppers to the poor lepers, dwelling at the Zion Gate in straw huts outside the city walls of Jerusalem. In my second pilgrimage in 1865 I found a comfortable leper home, but that has now been abandoned for a still more commodious building, on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, bearing the name of "Jesus, Hille," the cry of the lepers to our Lord. It was founded by a benevolent German couple, who were shocked by the sight that had met my eyes in 1852, and is under the manage-

ment of the Moravian Brotherhood, the funds being supplied from Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland. The number of Mahometans here exceeds that of the Christians. In the report we read of the terrible effluvia as one of the great trials of the nurses in the hot season, of the intellect of the poor sufferers being deadened by the disease, so that they are unable to learn to read; of the care taken to give them spiritual comfort, of happy deaths, and rejoicings to leave the decayed tenement of the flesh and depart. There is an account of four girls admitted in the early stage of the disease, when they had only spots in their fingers. It was sad to watch the change which year by year made, as leprosy cramped their limbs, choked their voices—which were once so musical—and corrupted their bodies. But it was comforting to see how they were “being purified by the fire, and made ready as vessels for their Master’s use.” We read with indignation how a father turned his daughter of tender years, the offspring of a dead mother also leprous, out of his home, to take her chance in the streets, because she was leprous. Will the door be left ajar for such as him at the last day? He seems to have sinned one of the greatest sins and against his own offspring.

In British India, where statistics can be collected, it is admitted that the number of lepers in a population of 250 millions amounts to 135,000. Some are eighty years of age; it is possible that the disease attacked them late in life. There are 17,000 above sixty; some were lepers from their birth. Though up to this time our experience is not complete, yet those who study the subject are distinctly of opinion that it is the same as the disease which met our Lord’s eye, and that was the same one for which Moses legislated. Clearly we cannot hastily presume that it is incurable; if so, of what use was all the Mosaic ritual? We find that marriages take place after the native fashion, and children are born; this statement removes the previously-accepted impression that lepers were always sterile. The disease is distinctly on the increase in British India. After considerable hesitation the Government has decided to deal with the growing evil. A Bill will be shortly introduced giving district magistrates power to order the arrest of any leper found begging or wandering about without means of subsistence. Such lepers may be detained in a retreat for life or until their discharge is sanctioned, and if they escape may be recaptured by the police. No retreat will be sanctioned unless provision is made for the segregation of the sexes. The local Governments may establish retreats with any moneys placed at their disposal for hospitals, dispensaries, and lunatic asylums, and complete religious freedom will be assured to lepers in such

institutions. The local Governments may make rules for the management, discipline, and inspection of retreats.

The missionary societies in India have not been wanting in their duty, and latterly there has been started a special mission to lepers, to organize, advise, and collect funds for the purpose. There are now eighteen stations, and there is a committee and travelling secretary. The extent and usefulness of this organization will no doubt increase year by year, and not only the sympathy but the fears of the British people will be roused, for the contact of India with Great Britain is now very close. If a few Crusaders brought the disease in centuries gone by, what escape will there be now? Who can prevent lepers of the better classes actually coming to London? Naaman the Syrian was a man of great power in Damascus, and still a leper. On July 17 of this very year a European soldier from Madras died of certified leprosy in St. George's Hospital, Hyde Park Corner.

I read of the disease in Ceylon, in China and Japan, and hospitals started by missionaries. In South Africa the Government have had the subject forced upon them. In the year 1818, fearing the spread of leprosy, they erected a temporary asylum in a valley called Hemel-en-Aazde, far removed, and hemmed in by rocks, and Mr. Leitner, a Moravian missionary, in 1822 removed to it to dwell amongst the lepers. In 1829 he died, but other missionaries took his place. In 1846 the asylum was moved to Robben Island in Table Bay, seven miles from Cape Town. The number of lepers was 300. In 1867 the Colonial Government appointed a chaplain, and the Moravian missionaries were relieved of the duty, which, impelled by love of Christ and pity for their suffering fellow-creatures, both men and women had discharged for forty years. There was no flourish of drum and trumpets when these good men died and were buried in the leper cemetery, but they gave up their lives joyfully.

In Madagascar the missionaries, Roman Catholic and Protestant, rendered the same services. In the West Indies the Moravians found similar employment in Surinam and elsewhere. In other parts of the world the same zeal has been shown, but it is unnecessary to go into further details. I have described the arrangements at Jerusalem, in India, and in South Africa to show at once and for ever how far the laudation of Father Damien exceeded the necessities of the case.

In Oceania, one of the islands of the Marquesas group, under French protection, is set aside for lepers. This is a rough and ready way of disposing of them, and may mean starvation. In the Sandwich Islands, on the little peninsula of Kolowao, on the Island of Morokai, the Government opened an establishment in 1864 after a great outburst of leprosy. In 1873 Father

Damien, a Belgian, went to it, and died in 1889. In 1881 the Princess Like Like, regent of the islands, visited the asylum. In 1886 Father Conradi, a young American priest from Oregon, joined him. Buildings were erected in the settlement. Later on a third priest and three Franciscan Sisters joined the party. Absolute segregation and refusal to allow anyone to leave the asylum was enforced by the State; there was no option in the matter. There were 1,030 lepers. The number of lepers in British India exceeds the whole population of the Sandwich Islands. The example of devotion to these poor creatures had been set by other Churches, Greek and Protestant, and practised by Roman Catholics elsewhere. Other individuals, male and female, shared Father Damien's lot, and are still at work, undergoing the same peril, and awaiting the same fate. All virtue did not perish with one man. There was also a Protestant missionary on the island sharing the danger. After the above statements the sneer of the editor of the "Missions" (1880, page 294) seems out of place, and outside the facts, and reflects little credit upon the Christianity of the priest who writes from Morokai as follows (I trust that it was not Father Damien himself who penned the letter):

*Les Catholiques forment le majorité de mes enfants : nous ne rencontrons pas ici beaucoup d'opposition du côté des Protestants : ils se soucient fort peu de leur adopter lepreux.*

I must make one more quotation, because I read in the newspapers that it is proposed for Protestants to subscribe to the erection of a Roman Catholic Church.

At Madagascar the lepers were admitted to receive the Sacrament, and came up *first* in the Roman Catholic Chapel.

*C'était l'unique distinction, qu'on peut leur accorder. Dieu fort heureusement regarde le cœur, et non le visage, et il descend sans répugnance, il se repose même avec bonheur, si l'âme est pur, dans ces bouches à demi-patrilés, sur cette langue qui le mal a déjà dévorée à moitié.*

It would be wiser to devote Protestant alms to the erection of hospitals rather than of churches, where such doctrines as the above are taught, and transubstantiation affirmed in such gross material terms.

I close with a few remarks on the legal aspect of some of the measures proposed. It is suggested that lepers be immediately arrested like mad dogs, hurried off to leper-prisons, separated from their husbands or wives for fear of their having children, and from their children already born, for fear of their society and contact developing the seeds of the disease presumed to be already in their constitution. No wonder that the Legislative Council hesitates. These poor creatures are not criminals; we may well ask the question, "Who did sin—this man or his parents, that he is a leper?" In the Panjab, in India, when we



occupied it in 1846, we assembled the leading landholders, and I called out to those of my own district that they must no longer burn their widows, kill their daughters, or *bury alive their lepers*, which was their universal practice. It is proposed to arrive at the same end by a process of law. More than this, I read that in one asylum a young man was cured, but when he expressed a desire to marry the missionaries dissuaded him. We must think this problem carefully out. A lunatic, who endangers the lives of others and his own, is arrested and confined in an asylum with his or her own sex. A criminal has the same fate in prison. A pauper, who voluntarily seeks relief in the workhouse, undergoes the same restrictions, but he may leave the workhouse at his own pleasure. The leper is scarcely worse than the confirmed inebriate, the sufferer from loathsome disease the result of sin, the sufferer from consumption or other hereditary complaints. He is not so dangerous as the hydrophobiate. Are we to imprison them, and separate them from their families, and add to the horrors of their already grievous misfortunes? In a free country it would not be possible to pass such a law, and India possesses all the substantial privileges of freedom in civil matters. Surely this is a matter for the exercise of benevolent principles of private societies, aided financially by the State. If these poor sufferers are kindly treated they probably will remain willingly; they can with propriety be forbidden by law to enter crowded cities, or touch passers-by, but they cannot without contempt of the law of morality and human kindness be separated from their families, if the families are willing to share their unhappy society. In the event of a leper making his escape he can scarcely be shot down. We must reflect upon the frightful scene which would be exhibited in the streets where lepers were forcibly led along, like mad beasts, no one daring to touch them, and thrust into asylums, which will have to be erected at enormous expense if intended for forcible restraint. India has large open spaces, great sheets of water, and flowing rivers. In some secluded spots the retreats must be made, and the poor sufferers induced by free food and kind treatment to remain there, special taxes being levied on the large cities to maintain them and provide medical superintendence. If the State undertakes the control of such establishments, the missionaries must be excluded, as, under the unwritten law of British India, the State is prohibited from any act of direct or indirect proselytism, and the very *raison d'être* of the missionary is to proselytize. It is all very well for the Government of the Cape Colony to lay hold of poor debased Hottentots, and convey them to an island under the charge of missionaries. A few hundred is the total. In India we are dealing with tens of thousands, Hindu and Mahometan,

and the great Central Government cannot afford to move one inch from the grand position which it has always occupied, as the impartial protector of each one of its meanest subjects in the observance of such religious duties and feelings as he or she may please to practise or adopt, being of sufficient age to be a judge of the matter. This is the very mainspring of our power in India, and any attempt to depart from it on the solicitation of short-sighted missionaries and ignorant philanthropists should be sternly resisted.

ROBERT CUST.

P.S.—Opinion of an Indian medical officer, dated August 20th, 1889 :

“I have seen a good deal of leprosy in India, and have had abundant opportunities of observing the disease :

“I have tried Gurjun oil and carbolic acid, but I have only found two things at all effectual :

“(1.) Application of strong carbolic acid to the ulcer.

“(2.) Stretching the sciatic and other nerves.

“This last has cured several cases, and the cure seemed to be permanent. I have done this in sixty or seventy cases, and my successor in a greater number.”

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ART. II.—HEBREWS VI. 4-6.

*Ἄδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας, γευσάμενους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου, καὶ μετόχους γεννηθέντας Πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ καλὸν γευσάμενους Θεοῦ ῥῆμα, δυνάμεις τε μελλοντοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ παραπεσόντας, πάλιν ἀνακαταίξαι εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοὺς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.*

THIS passage has always been reckoned among the greatest difficulties in the Epistle to the Hebrews, if not in the whole of the Scriptures of the New Covenant, and has never yet been explained or elucidated in such a manner as to yield a thoroughly satisfactory analysis, either grammatical or logical. I propose to endeavour to disentangle it upon a grammatical principle, which does not seem to have occurred to anyone but myself; but which, if accepted in this particular case—as it unquestionably is theoretically in general by the best grammarians—appears to reduce it to absolute clearness and simplicity.

I will first give the translations of the Authorized and Revised Versions, the former of which seems to embody the view of the ancient, and the latter that of most of the more modern commentators.

In the Authorized Version it runs :

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted