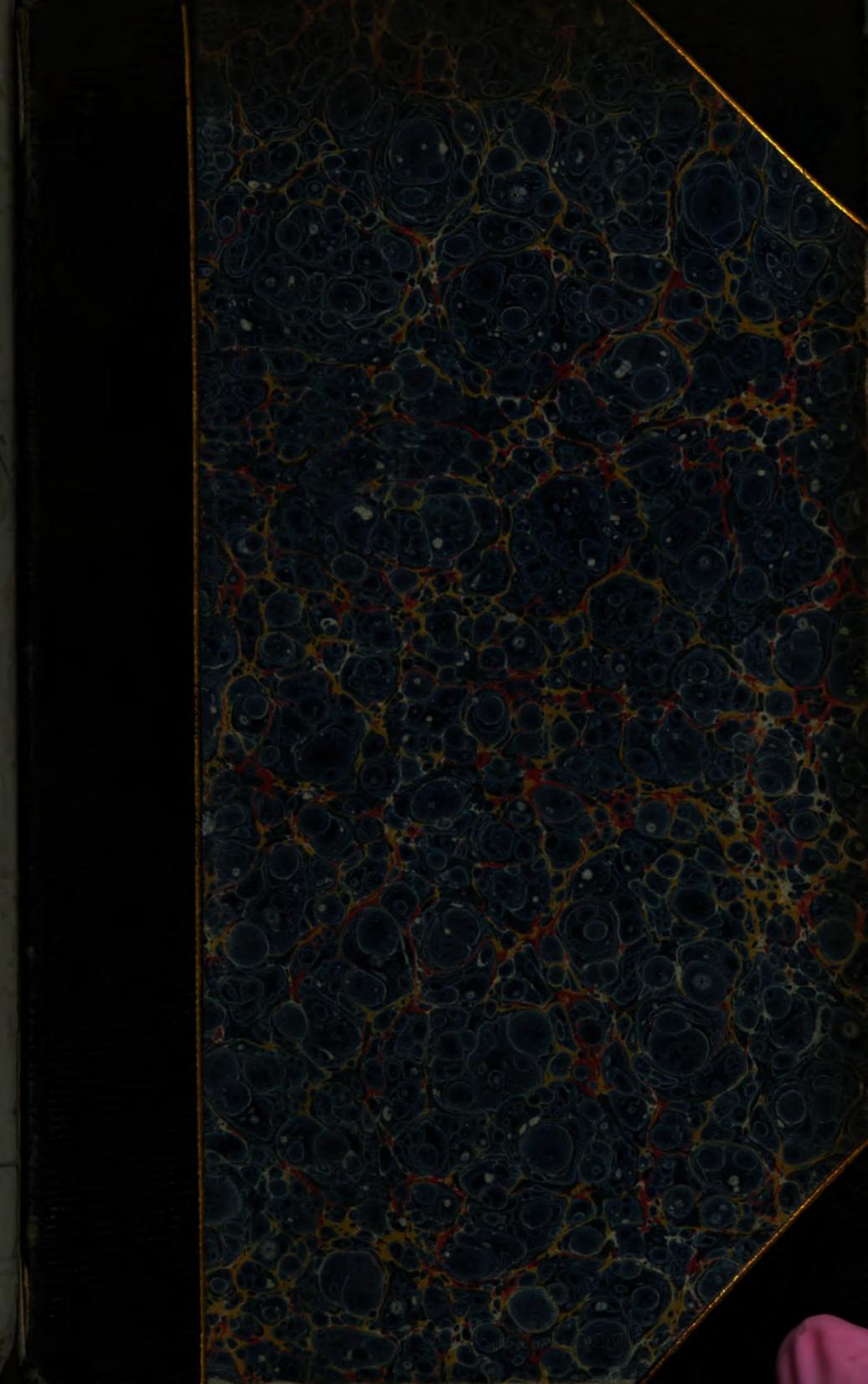

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1924. 9. 57.

THE

of Jesus Christ

SAVIOUR'S ERRAND.

BEING

Notes of a Lecture on Luke xviii. to xix. 10.



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THE SAVIOUR'S ERRAND.

THESE last words—"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"—disclose the only hope of any poor soul to whom God discovers its true condition. The fact they announce constitutes, moreover, the joy, and song, and rejoicing of all who, for ever so great a length of time, have known this blessed One. May they not, then, be regarded as a kind of key-note of the whole group of narratives that has now been read?

Assuredly, the Spirit of God in inditing Scripture had an object, not only in what was inserted, but in the order in which the matter is presented; and this Gospel is remarkable, as is familiar to all here, for the grouping together, because of their moral connection, of things that may even have occurred at different times. But whatever other secret there may be, as to the why and wherefore of the order in which these narratives are arranged, may not this be one reason—the illustration which each and all afford of this grand, central, all-important foundation fact—"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"? In the parable of the Pharisee

and publican, you have a lost one sought, and found, and saved. In the case of the little children, you have lost ones received and blessed; he had come to save even them. In the young man, the ruler, you have one who refuses submission to God's estimate of what he was—one who refuses to take the place of being lost; and he is the one who goes empty and sorrowful away. As to the blind man, all is plain enough. He was lost, and Jesus was passing by; he is brought to him, and mercy triumphs in his case too. And as for Zaccheus, it is his salvation which affords the immediate occasion for the words—words uttered by the lips of incarnate love, vindicating its own right to be what it is, and do what it does. It is the Son of Man come to seek and to save that which was lost. This is the explanation the Lord gives to those who were not only rejecting him, but quarrelling with the grace that received the lost—"This day is salvation come to this house," &c. "For the Son of Man is come," &c. Now it is often of all importance to get back to the very foundation truths of all. There is no real progress if these be forgotten—left out of sight and mind. And if there be one snare of the enemy with which he is permitted to beguile the Lord's own beloved ones more than another, it is in putting out of sight and memory God's estimate of what they are.

We use even the Lord's own grace, and what it gives and does, to put honour upon ourselves, and think highly about ourselves on account of it; and then we have to find, in one way or another, that whatever grace has given and done, *it is grace*, and

that grace has for its object such as were lost. "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was *lost*."

But there is one part of chapter xviii. of which we have taken no notice in this rapid recapitulation. It has been omitted, however, not because of its having no bearing upon the point before us, but because we would reserve it, as the grand central point of all, for distinct and full consideration. It is related in the most simple language, such as the mere child can understand; yet the disciples themselves, who had been for three years and upwards the companions of the Lord Jesus Christ, did not apprehend what he thus spake. The words are in the 31st and following verses of chapter xviii:—"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." It is at this cost, and oh! how the heart feels that no heart can estimate it—no heart, but his who went through it all, and his to whom it was all presented, and whose blessed provision it was for the salvation of such as are lost. If there be a demonstration that we are lost, it is in the fact that we could be saved at no less a cost than the endurance of all possible shame and suffering by him who was God manifest in the flesh—the only-begotten of the Father, by whom the worlds were made, and without whom was not anything

made that was made—the Man that was Jehovah's fellow. He it was, that was to be “delivered to the Gentiles,” mocked, spitefully entreated and spitted on, scourged, and put to death. And if the indignities from man's hand be what, to a considerable extent, are here dwelt upon, these are not the whole.

No doubt it is in harmony with the whole drift of this part of God's Word, that Christ's sufferings *at the hands of men* should be thus presented. But they are not the whole of what the passage sets forth, nor are they even the first subject it presents. He had all this to suffer at the hands of man, and man expressed in it what he is—he showed there that hatred to God which constitutes the most serious part of his being lost. But he was *to be delivered* to the Gentiles. And if *by man's wicked hands* he was crucified and slain, who is there here that does not know that he was “*delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,*” to be thus crucified, thus slain?

Now, on the soul's perception and reception of what God intended in that transaction, depends the solemn question—and that as to each one here—whether the object for which the Son of Man came, “to seek and to save that which was lost,” has yet been accomplished. If, through the Divine teaching, we, in simple faith, understand the why and wherefore of the transaction that the Lord Jesus here predicted—if, in the secret of our hearts, we know, not as a question of head-knowledge gathered up from books, but as a question between God and our souls, why and wherefore Christ was delivered up to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and

spitted on—then we know it to be a transaction of which our sin was the sad, solemn occasion. It was for this that the Blessed One, who knew no sin—who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners—was delivered up to die a cursed death—to be hanged upon a tree! Do *our* hearts know the secret of this? Can *you* tell why it was that the Christ of God had thus to suffer? You cannot, unless you have been brought to the conviction that you are *lost*; unless you have been taught of God what you are—utterly, completely lost.

Unless this has been really known in the light of God's presence, it is impossible to tell why the Christ of God should thus suffer and die. But where the conscience has been really enlightened, and the heart made to bow to the conviction that we are *lost*, then—to see by faith the Son of Man nailed to the accursed tree, delivered to the Gentiles, and put to death,—the soul can adoringly account for it all, and see its own rescue, its own salvation, wrapped up in that by which God has been so glorified. Each can thus say, “It was for *my* sin—to retrieve *me* from the ruin in which sin and Satan had involved me—that his blood was shed.” Can your heart, in simple, happy confidence, say this? Oh! happy they who have thus been taught of God!

All will return to this, when we are at home in the presence of God and the Lamb. Our song even then will be, “Thou art worthy, for thou *wast slain*, and hast redeemed us to God by *thy blood*.” Oh! yes. Redeeming mercy, atoning blood, will be heaven's song throughout eternity.

But let us look a little more closely at some of

these narratives before us. The first is one that may well come home to each of us. It is one with which every one in the present day, in a country like this, is familiar. Numbers speak about the Pharisee and publican, who know nothing of the truth that is here revealed. But how is it with ourselves as to this? Have we been brought to take the publican's place before God? And is that the ground on which we now stand before him? I do not ask whether we are still saying, God be merciful to me a sinner; the publican would not say that when he had gone down to his house *justified*. But he would still be upon the same ground as that he took when, not daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, he stood, and smote upon his breast, and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The Pharisee took the ground of what *he was*. He does not take to himself openly the credit of what he was and did. He does not say, I thank myself that I am this, or that, or the other. He was quite as orthodox in this respect as numbers in the present day, who are looking within for their grounds of peace, and who say, "We give God the glory of all that we hope He has wrought in us, and own Him as the One who has produced it all." But if He has produced anything in our souls, it is not for us to rest upon, or to glory in, or find peace in. We are upon the Pharisee's ground, if we found our peace upon anything that we may suppose grace to have wrought in us. He thanked God, but it was for what he was, what he did, and what he did not; these considerations formed the ground on which his soul sought to stand before God. And he thought

he did stand; he was self-deceived; he was on perfectly good terms with himself—"God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are," &c. And there are numbers in the present day bearing the name of Christ, professing in words to have no confidence but Christ—numbers who would be shocked at the idea of attributing salvation to any but Christ—who are yet practically and really taking the Pharisee's ground before God. Where such persons have any real work of God in their souls they are destitute of peace. Where there is thorough self-deception, men may thank God that they are not as other men. But supposing there is any idea of what man is before God, and yet the attempt to take this ground, misery must be the result.

Such may be the case with some here, who, if asked, "Do you take the ground of the Pharisee?" would say, "Oh! no." Then what ground do you take? What are you wishing to stand upon before God? Is not this the reason you allege for not having peace, that you do not find in yourselves such fruits as would be certain marks of your being God's children? Or, if sometimes you hope that you see some such marks, you cannot always find them, and therefore you are so cast down and desponding. Is not this the way in which you explain your own state? Or, perhaps, with some examples of rare devotedness before your eyes, you say, "If I were but such an one!" And what if you were? Would it do *then* to say, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men"? What are you wishing and seeking? You are seeking and wishing to be something better than you are, in order to

stand before God. And if you could have your wish and be that, would you stand upon it? *Then* you would be the Pharisee outright.

What was the publican's ground? There was the deepest sense of what he was—a sinner; and he was not even asking to be somewhat better. No doubt he did desire deliverance. He would not have been so troubled about his state if he had been content to be a sinner. He had the deepest sense of what he was; but what was his hope—his resource—the only open door before him? It was *what God is*, and what God is to what he knew himself to be. It was, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” When the soul is once brought there, there is no doubt as to the issue. The Word of God now contains an answer to this state of soul, such as was not found even while our Lord was living upon the earth. God's perfect, blessed answer, is in the fulfilment of the Saviour's own prediction of his sufferings and blood-shedding on the cross. There was the answer, on Christ's part, to God, for all the sin, let it be what it may, upon your conscience. There is also God's answer, on His own part, in the love that gave Christ to take the sinner's place, and stand in the sinner's stead, and die the sinner's death—the answer on God's part to the cry, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” Oh! that some here may, through God's own teaching, be led to see how mercy has interposed—how mercy has triumphed! May you see something of the height, and length, and depth, and breadth of mercy—God's mercy—the sinner's only refuge, his only resource. It is not mercy without atonement, without sacrifice,

without the full vindication of God's holiness and righteousness. It is not mercy at the expense of these. But as sin has reigned unto death, even so grace now reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But, passing on, the next scene is one of the deepest interest. It is that in which infants are brought by their mothers to Jesus. They are not children that are brought to him to be taught, but infants, whom their mothers bring that he might *touch* them. What faith! What an acknowledgment, both as to what the infants were, and as to there being that in Jesus which met their need. The new-born babe needs Jesus. And while the testimony of God is most blessed, that all dying in infancy are saved, it is not without blood—not without the Saviour—that they are saved. These mothers owned this. Partaking of their parents' sinful nature, these infants needed salvation, and their mothers knew that none but Jesus would suffice for them. So they brought them to him that he might touch them—owning thus that there was in him a virtue, a power, which by his touch would be communicated to the objects of their affection.

Oh! that there were more of such faith amongst us!—faith that would bring even our infants to Jesus the moment they are given to us, and never cease presenting them to him, that he would touch them.

But there were those present, who thought that Christ had a more important mission into the world than to bless infants; so they rebuked those that brought them. But Jesus called them unto him.

He showed where his heart was, and that there was no part of the work that he had undertaken, for which he was not constantly prepared. He says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." And he not only vindicates thus these mothers, but takes occasion from their act to read us all a lesson of the deepest importance. "Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." It was not only that there was a hearty welcome for little children with Jesus, but that we must all in spirit become little children. The wisest man on earth—the man of keenest intellectual perceptions—the man of highest attainments—must become a little child to have to do with Jesus. We must become fools in order to be wise. It may be that some one here, looking at such a passage as this, may be perplexed, and say, "How is this? Are we not often told that salvation is by faith—that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has salvation and eternal life? How, then, is it that these blessings are here made to depend upon my becoming as a little child?" They are but two different ways, my friends, of presenting the same thing. Faith is this child-like spirit, that each must have if he is to enter the kingdom of God. It is not that little children are good, and that we have to become good like them, in order to get blessing from God. It is not that at all. Children are sinners, and need the Saviour; and he came to save children as well as up-grown people. What, then, is the meaning of the passage? Let me ask in reply, Is there one

characteristic of childhood so prominent as this, the unhesitating simplicity with which the child trusts those with whom he has to do? Try a child. Offer him something that he can value and desire—something suited to him—an apple, a toy. What does he say? Does he begin to make excuses, and say he does not deserve it? that he is not good enough, that he must behave better, feel differently, or the like, before he can expect such a boon? Is this the way he treats your offer? No! His hand is out at once. He gives you credit for being as good as you seem to be, and profess to be, in holding out to him the gift. So, in the whole matter of receiving Christ, eternal life, salvation, it is the simple faith that accredits God to be as good as He says He is—as good as He has shown Himself to be with which all these blessings are connected. Has He not said that He “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”? And yet, with such statements throughout God’s Word, the soul, instead of believing God when He declares how good He is—instead of receiving Christ—stands reasoning, and seeking to evade the love which still pursues us with the needed, indispensable good. Ah! the heart must be bowed to this: to receive God’s Word in true, child-like simplicity; just as a child accepts unhesitatingly what it is very glad to get. “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.”

The next narrative, in the group before us, presents a thorough contrast to this child-like spirit;

not in what you would call a wicked man, but in one of the fairest specimens of human nature that could be conceived. And, indeed, if anything is to be fairly tested, it must be that thing in its best state. Suppose the case of testing merchandise—it is upon the best sample that the merchant would wish to be tried. Well, the man who is here brought to the test, is one of the fairest specimens of humanity that could be produced. “A certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He is not one of the careless throng, who, without a thought of God and eternity, are saying, “What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?” Eternal life is the object before him; and the question of questions with him is, how it is to be obtained. This is what he is pursuing. He has a certain position in the world; holding this place, he pursues eternal life as an ulterior object. He seeks a happy eternity, as a sequel to a well-spent life; and the question is, what he must do to inherit eternal life.

How remarkable, too, the perception he had of Jesus, in the perfection of his ways as a man. His eyes have evidently been upon Jesus; and he thinks he has now met with one so perfect as to be able to teach him the way of perfection—teach him how to be good enough to inherit eternal life. Hence he says, “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Oh! are there any here (under other terms, perhaps, and with other associated ideas which have been gleaned from the Gospel) in this young man’s state of soul? Perhaps your dream of satis-

faction and contentment in the world has been broken in upon, and you see plainly that there is an eternity to face, and a God before whom you must shortly stand; and the question has been raised, how you are to stand before Him; and you have an idea that in order to be right there, you must be right here, and you have been seeking to be so; and you would fain have further instruction as to how far you must go, and what you must do, to have this question of eternity settled in your souls. But let us look a little further. Our Lord cuts short this ruler. It was not that he did not feel for him. We are told in Mark's Gospel, that, "Jesus beholding him, loved him." It could not be with the love of complacency, with which he regards his people; nor was it with the mere compassion that cares for sinners. No; there was a perception by our blessed Lord of that which for *time*, and for *this world*, is in itself fair and lovely, and he could give its full place to that. His affections go out. His heart is attracted towards the young man. Beholding him, he loved him; but only the more unsparingly would he demonstrate, that however he might appreciate the attractions of this young man's amiable character *for time*, as to any link with God *for eternity*, there was none! He was as completely lost as the vilest wretch, that ever tremblingly clung to the garments of Jesus. Accordingly, he at once lays the axe to the root of all that the young man had wished to depend upon. "Good Master," he had said, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He looked upon Jesus as the best man he had ever met with; a man so good and so perfect, that even with the estimate

he had of himself, he would wish to be his scholar. And what is the Lord's answer? "Why callest thou me good?" None is good, save one, that is, God." It is, in other words—"You are on the wrong track altogether. You are seeking and wishing to be good enough for God. But the fact is, God is good enough for you, however bad you may be." And it was to take him clean off the one ground, and put him on the other, that he thus met his question in this unsparing way.

But let us proceed with the details. "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not steal," &c. God had instituted the law, which showed what His claims upon man were. The ruler was under it, and the Lord refers him to it—

* It can scarcely be necessary to remark, that our Lord answers the young man on his own ground. He had addressed him *as a man*—the best of men, in his estimate, no doubt, but still as *a mere man*—and it is *as man* that our Lord replies, "Why callest thou me good?" Had it been with any thought of his being more than man—of his Godhead—that the ruler called him "good," there would have been no fitness or meaning in the reply. He was, blessed be his name, the perfect expression of God's goodness to the vilest and worst. He was "God manifest in the flesh." In lowly grace he spake of himself as the "Son of Man;" but even thus, he had come "to seek and to save that which was lost." On what other errand could he come? "God over all, blessed for ever," yet shrined in flesh, "found in fashion as a man"—yea, the lowliest of men—what could solve this "mystery of godliness," except the grace in which he had come to seek and save the lost? It was to the need of this grace, that the ruler's conscience required to be awakened. How perfect, how blessed, the answer to this need in the humiliation of Jesus, and his atoning death upon the cross! And how sweetly suited to this need are both these wonders felt to be, where the sense of need exists. The Lord produce it in many a heart!

“Thou knowest the commandments,” &c. The young man was impervious to all this. He said, “All these have I kept from my youth up.” Still, be it remembered, he was not satisfied. Still, he was asking, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” It is so where the conscience is at all awakened. Where any measure of sensitiveness as to God’s claims exists, the soul never can get rest upon this ground. The ruler was *not* satisfied, and this is the only hopeful thing about him. But, whatever God might afterwards work in his soul, as yet he was not ready to take the ground of being lost, and to welcome to his heart the One who had come to die upon the cross, that the lost might be saved, and have everlasting life. As yet, he had no heart for the Saviour, and this was to be proved. The law was not sufficient as a test for him. He could say, “All these things have I kept;” as St. Paul afterwards could say, “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” There had been a time, when nobody, by the law, could have convinced Saul of Tarsus of sin. That was the case with the young man here. What, then, was to be done? The only test that unfailingly shows out what man is, was now to be applied to him. He had subjected himself to the unsparing application of this test, by the very way in which he had come to Jesus. He had said, “Good Master,” owning him thus as a teacher competent to teach him how to inherit eternal life. Subjection to Christ’s teaching, he had thus already confessed to be his place. And what does our Lord say? “Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou

shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." He puts the world in one scale; himself and heaven in the other. He offers him the assurance of that after which he had inquired—"Thou shalt have treasure in heaven;" but he offers it, on condition of his leaving all to follow Christ on earth. Christ on earth, and treasure in heaven; these are in one scale, and in the other, the world. Not the world in its wretchedness, but in its fairest and most attractive form.

And, now, what is the issue? The young man—this ruler, this amiable, excellent man—is shown to have a heart *as alien from heaven and God*, as that of *the vilest and most abandoned sinner on earth*. What is the mind of heaven? How has God expressed His mind? What is God's estimate of the One with whom this ruler was conversing? He has set him at His own right hand. He has "given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." No place too high to enthrone, no glory too bright, in which to enshrine, the One who on earth glorified God, and died for lost sinners. 'This is God's estimate of Jesus; but what was the ruler's? Alas! his riches are more to him than all the peerless excellence of Jesus. He could have them but for a little while; but when put in the balance with Jesus, he grasps them more eagerly than ever, and turns his back on Jesus and eternal life. "When he heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich."

A word or two on what the disciples say. Jesus takes occasion from what had occurred to exclaim—“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.” Jesus had not been showing to the ruler the way of salvation. To put it as the way of salvation, that he was to sell all and follow Jesus, would have been to propose even harder terms than those which had been propounded by the law itself. The disciples, thinking only of being saved, say, “Who then can be saved?” What is our Lord’s answer? He does not in the least relieve the conscience from the pressure that is upon it; but he draws us away to God—“The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.” And, as a matter of fact, but a few short months after this, hosts of people did, without an exhortation, what the young man declined to do, even at the cost of rejecting Christ himself and heaven, when it was put before him as a test. When the Holy Ghost had come down from heaven, consequent upon the exaltation of Jesus there; when he had come, revealing to souls the Saviour—the crucified, risen, exalted Saviour; and when, by faith looking up, they beheld there the One who *had accomplished their salvation*; every barrier of selfishness was broken down, and all that believed were together, and had all things common. The full tide of blessing so filled their hearts! God had come in, and saved these three thousand people, and the result was produced at once.

One word as to the closing narrative. It affords such an instance of another lost one saved, and is such a contrast to the case we have been considering.

“As he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging.” It is not a rich ruler now, but a poor mendicant; and that with the added misfortune of being destitute of sight. He is sitting by the way side begging; and they tell him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. He had heard of Jesus before, and in secret had evidently owned that the One who was to sit upon David’s throne, is the Jesus of whom he had heard. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” “Yes,” says this poor man; “the Christ of God can come out of Nazareth!” His faith owns him as David’s royal son; and it is now his one opportunity of having the affliction of his life-time removed by the royal bounty of the One who had not where to lay his head. It would not seem that his faith reached further than this at first;—“Jesus,” he cries, “thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” It is not his soul that occupies him, as in the publican’s case; but still it is conscious need, and this is a plea for mercy. “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” And as before with the little children, so now, there were those who rebuked him, and told him to hold his peace. But he was not to be put to silence thus. Faith cannot be so easily turned aside. I believe that where persons have been seeking for many years after peace, and have not found it, it becomes a very serious question whether there is any true seeking at all;—where there is, the answer of God is usually sooner given. But faith does earnestly seek, and wont be turned aside from seeking, the object of its pursuit. He cried so much the more—“Thou Son of David, have mercy on

me." There was confidence in Jesus; not only in his power, but that, if he could only reach his ear, he was One who would feel differently towards him, from those who were rebuking him. And so he did. "Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God." It might seem as though this were written in illustration of the receiving the kingdom of God as a little child. At the bidding of Jesus, the man is brought to him;—"What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" he asks. Then there is the simple confiding utterance of his request—"Lord, that I may receive my sight." No sooner said than done. "Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." &c. The whole thing took less time in the accomplishment, than the perusal of the narrative requires.

And this blessed One is still waiting—still passing by, if I may so say. He is not beyond the reach of sinners. The Holy Ghost has come down from heaven with the testimony of the risen and ascended Lord. And wherever there is a poor soul to cry, "Have mercy on me"—a soul sensible of being lost and ruined, and turning the eye to Jesus;—there is the answer at once. Once brought here, it is heard in an instant—there is an immediate answer. Faith never gets a refusal from faith's blessed object, the

Lord Jesus. Oh, no! it gets an answer at once :—
“ And *immediately* he received his sight, and *followed him.*” Observe, dear friends, this poor man *followed* Jesus. The word to the young man was—“ Come, follow me ;” but he turned his back, and went away. He had too much to leave to follow Jesus. Here was one who had nothing to leave. In the first instance, he had nothing to bring. Empty and ruined, his need draws forth the grace of Jesus. He receives his sight; and that, evidently, in a deeper sense than the opening of his eyes to the light of day. He now beholds Jesus. The first object that greets his inwardly and outwardly opened eyes, is the One to whom he owes all, and to whom his heart is now linked with an affection that cannot be repressed : so he follows him of his own accord.

And thus it is, my friends, with all true service to Christ. If we are trying to attain a certain standard of excellence, on our conformity to which we suppose our eternal safety to depend, self is both the spring of our efforts, and the object on which our attention is fixed. Safety *for ourselves* is what we seek ; and the attainment *by ourselves* of the mark we emulate, is the business in which we are engaged. Our attention being thus concentrated on ourselves, how can there be that devotedness to Christ, and to God the Father, in which self is lost sight of and completely renounced? We may go a long way, impelled by motives such as these ; but whenever it comes to the question of forsaking all for Christ, content with him alone for our portion whether on earth, or in heaven, this selfish

religion is sure to break down. Who could proceed further in it than the ruler, on whose case we have been meditating? Yet, he went away "very sorrowful, for he was very rich." But when we are divinely enlightened to discern our lost condition; when, seeing and owning that we are lost, we have discovered to us the Father's matchless love in the gift of His only begotten Son, and the quenchless love of Jesus, in giving himself for our salvation; when we find ourselves at his feet, or in his arms, pardoned, washed, adorned, adopted into God's family, and made heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ; then a new motive begins to actuate and govern us. It is not now, that we seek to attain this or that mark, in order to be saved, or to possess eternal life. We are saved already. We have eternal life. All that we could desire for ourselves, yea, more than we could have asked or thought, has been already freely given, by that grace of God, which, at infinite cost to Himself and to the Saviour, has rescued us from perdition, and given us eternal life.

The effect is, "we love him, because he first loved us." Love to God—to Jesus—displaces the selfishness which had previously been our only spring of action. Love finds an Object outside self. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." We have thus an all-absorbing Object, as well as an all-

constraining motive. We have both in Christ. His glory is our object, and his love the motive which impels to its pursuit. But with neither motive nor object has *self* anything to do. "That they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves." The Lord grant that it may be thus with all of us, for His name's sake.

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