

A detailed still life painting of autumn produce. The scene is set on a dark wooden surface. In the upper right, a large bunch of white garlic sits next to a cluster of small, round onions. Below these, a woven basket is tipped over, spilling walnuts and hazelnuts. To the left, a clear, cut-crystal glass holds two red apples. In the foreground, a single green apple sits prominently. The background is filled with various autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red, along with ears of corn and other seasonal items. The overall composition is rich and textured, with a focus on natural light and color.

The Good Samaritan

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It has long seemed to this writer that Luke 10:30-35 sets before us an exquisite picture of the sovereign grace of God unto those who have no claim upon Him. That grace is portrayed in the actings of Him who “came to seek and to save that which was lost.” First, we have depicted the state of the sinner: ruined, wretched, inert, helpless in himself. Next we are shown the worthlessness of human remedies, their unwillingness to come to the relief of the one fallen. Then we behold the Saviour succouring, fully meeting the needs of the fallen one. It is the blessedness of the Gospel which is here unfolded, the fullness of its provision, the sufficiency of its remedy. Consequently nothing is here said of its requirements—repentance and faith—nothing of man’s responsibility to meet those requirements. Instead, the sinner is viewed as one who is entirely passive, everything being done for him and to him: he is the recipient of unsought compassion, goodness and free grace. He is not even represented as crying out for help, nor does he “co-operate” at any point. His case is desperate: a fit subject for the great Physician, a suitable object for the Lord of Glory to bestow favour upon!

Strange it is that some of the best commentators dissent from such an interpretation as we have outlined above. Thomas Scott sees in the passage nothing more than “a beautiful illustration of the law of loving our neighbour as ourselves, without regard to nation, party, or any distinction.” In his sermon thereon C. H. Spurgeon said, “I do not think that our Divine Lord intended to teach anything about Himself in this parable, except as far as He is Himself the great Exemplar of all goodness. He was answering the question, ‘who is my neighbour?’ and He was not preaching about Himself at all. There has been a great deal of straining of the parable to bring the Lord Jesus and everything about Him into it, but this we dare not imitate. Yet by analogy we may illustrate our Lord’s goodness by it.” We must leave it to the judgment of our readers as to whether or not what follows is a “straining” or forcing into this portion of God’s Word what is not really there.

The context begins at Luke 10:25, where we read of a Jewish

lawyer asking Christ, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”—his design being to draw from Him an incriminating reply. Doubtless he had heard that Christ taught salvation by grace through faith apart from the deeds of the Law. Therefore he determined to now demonstrate from His words that He was in open conflict with Moses, whose disciple he professed to be. Having no conception of salvation except by Law-keeping, he framed his question in a legal way: “what shall I *do*?” Yet in his remaining words he betrayed his gross ignorance and blindness, for whoever heard of *inheriting* anything by *doing*? To “inherit” one must be an “heir,” and heirs are *born* such. A man must be born of God, be made a child of God by the supernatural operation of the Spirit, in order to be an “heir” of God (Rom. 8:17).

Having approached the Lord on the ground of creature performances, on the basis of *doing* something, Christ answered him accordingly: “What is written in the Law? how readest thou?” (Luke 10:26). It is most instructive and blessed to note how the Lord met different inquirers for He always dealt with them according to their moral state: it was not so much the question as the *questioner* He dealt with. There is only one way of dealing with those who are self-sufficient and self-righteous and that is to press upon them the righteous demands of the Law. The Law declares plainly enough what is required of man, what he must “do,” namely, obey God, render full obedience to all His commands, or otherwise fall under His condemnation. It is either complete compliance with the Law’s requirements or come under the curse of God: “For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them” (Gal. 3:10).

The lawyer gave a correct summary of the Law’s requirements (Luke 10:27), but was then met with a word from Christ well calculated to shatter his self-confidence: “And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live” (v. 28). It is not sufficient to *try* and obey God, it is not enough to do our best (though who among us ever really did so!): “do” then is the uncompromising demand of Sinai. Nor will a partial obedience suffice: “For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). Ah, my reader, law is

inflexible and unmerciful in the very nature of the case. It presents a fixed standard and cannot do otherwise than pronounce guilty all who come short of it. How clear it is, then, that “by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight” (Rom. 3:20). The Law should convince us that we are utterly undone, lost—that unless Christ saves us there is no hope for us.

“But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29). Observe this verse opens with “but” not “and.” The man was not sincere: it was not light he sought, but to ensnare the Saviour. Yet it seems to us the previous statement of Christ’s had probed his conscience and made him feel uneasy. None had expressly condemned him, yet he now sought to “justify himself.” Christ had drawn the issue and he sought to evade it: lawyerlike he attempts to raise a quibble over a word. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy” (Matt. 5:43). Did not that furnish ground for necessary distinctions? Was an Israelite alone the “neighbour?” was every Israelite such, or was there a third class between the two? And if the classification was so uncertain, might not the duty of loving the neighbour be held in abeyance? With such quibbles will men seek to escape the cutting edge of God’s Word.

This brings us to the passage upon which expositors are disagreed—Luke 10:30. It opens with, “And Jesus answering said,” from which it is assumed that Christ did no more than continue His conversation with the lawyer, supplying a reply to his last question, an assumption or conclusion which is said to receive confirmation in verse 36, where the Lord asked His tempter, “which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”—to which the lawyer answered, “he that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.” According to our understanding of verses 30-35 the Lord’s design was twofold. First, He drew a picture or stated a case which exposed the state of His interrogator: only one with an *unneighbourly heart* would ask such a question! Second, He took advantage of the occasion to use the Law to bring into relief the glory of the Gospel, portraying one who was in desperate need of love’s ministration and showing that by Himself ministering to that need He was the perfect Neighbour, the true “Friend of sinners.”

Viewing the passage thus, let us now consider—

I. The State of the Sinner.

With six short lines Christ drew the picture of fallen man: true of the human race in general, true of every man in particular.

1. He “*went down* from Jerusalem to Jericho” (Luke 10:30). In that brief clause there is both a refutation of the flesh-captivating theory (lie) of “evolutionism” and an allusion to the Fall. Man did not begin existence as a beast, to slowly fight his way upwards by his own efforts; instead, he was created in the image and likeness of God, but apostatised, and ever since his direction has been *downward*. Man was placed in a paradise of peace and rest, but he left that blissful state of his own accord and contrary to the expressed command of his Maker. The word “Jerusalem” signifies “the foundation of peace” and stands for heavenly and spiritual things, being the City of God, but apostate man has turned his back upon it, and now, “the way of peace” he knows not (Rom. 3:17). But more—he has gone down “to Jericho,” which is the place of destruction and of the curse (Josh. 6:26). Such is the estate into which man, by his revolt against God, has fallen: he has destroyed himself and lies under the curse of the thrice Holy One.

2. “And fell among thieves.” Travellers tell us that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a steep descent, the latter part of it going through a desert and it is still infested with brigands or highwaymen. In his original state of peace and rest, man was safe and happy, but by deliberately forsaking the same he encountered those who were the remorseless enemies of his soul. The Devil, the world and the flesh are the thieves which rob man of his heritage: they sap his energies, deprive him of the time which should be redeemed for eternity and take away all serious thoughts God-ward. They take from us, but never give; that was how they treated the “prodigal son” in the far country till he was reduced to penury and starvation. Egypt is the outstanding symbol of the world in the Scriptures, and what did it give to Israel? Nothing but the taskmaster and the whip. O my reader, Satan and the world may promise you “a good time,” but they are liars and thieves, waiting to rob you of your soul and your bodily health! Pay no heed to their

siren voices, but hearken unto what God says to you.

3. “Which stripped him of his raiment.” How solemnly true to life is this! What did Satan do to our first parents? What did sin do unto Adam and Eve? It stripped them of that brilliant raiment of light with which God had originally covered them (Psa. 104:2 and cf. Gen. 1:27). As the result of their disobedience they stood naked before God with nothing to hide their shame. But man lost something more than his outward adornment by the Fall; through sin he was divested of his internal investiture—he was stripped of the robe of original righteousness in which the soul had hitherto appeared in immaculate purity before God. And thus it is with you, my reader, if you be out of fellowship with Christ—your sins are uncovered to the sight of Heaven—you are naked and exposed to the law, the justice, the wrath of God. Nothing but the atoning blood of Christ can hide your shame from a sin-hating and sin-avenging God. O that you might be brought to realize your wretched plight!

4. “And wounded him.” Sin and Satan have wounded man’s body, which bring it down with disease and pain to the dust from whence it was taken. They have wounded his soul in all its faculties: his understanding with darkness, his will with a vicious choice, his affections with worldly mindedness, so that he places his love upon the creature instead of the Creator. They have wounded his conscience with guilt, with fear of death and dread of Hell. They have stopped his ears to the voice of the Spirit and closed his eyes to the glory of God. How completely and severely man is wounded appears from that solemn description supplied by the inspired Prophet: “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores” (Isa. 1:5, 6). Worst of all sin has inflicted a mortal wound which has deprived man of his spiritual consciousness, for he is insensible, *unaware* of his desperate state.

5. “And departed.” When those thieves had taken everything they sought from the traveller and left him sorely wounded, they callously went their way, caring nothing what became of their miserable victim. How heartless and cruel! Yes, though he appears as an angel of light, desiring to make us happy, Satan is a heartless

fiend, anxious only that others should share his awful doom. Though sin clothes itself in many specious forms which attract the unwary, yet it is remorselessly cruel, having no concern for the grief it produces. Satan and sin rob us of health and strength, destroy manhood and womanhood, bring them to the place of acutest distress, and then leave them to their fate. Worldlings will pose as happy and friendly companions while a man's money lasts, but when adversity and retribution overtake him, they depart and desert him. Though history faithfully records these facts, each new generation refuses to profit from the warning and rushes headlong to its doom.

6. "Leaving him half dead." Some have stumbled over these words, supposing that if the previous clauses depict the state of the *sinner* then the description falls short at this point. Not so, the terms are minutely accurate: half dead is precisely the condition of man since the Fall. Alive naturally, dead spiritually; alive earthward, dead heavenward; alive unto sin, dead toward God: no desire to please Him, no fear of Him, no love for Him—"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). Moreover, men are only "half dead" with regard to the wages of sin: even now they are "alienated from the life of God," but in the Day of judgment they shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9)—when they are cast into the Lake of Fire "which is the *second* death" (Rev. 20:14). In these six lines then, we have a true picture in every part of its tale of misery, the faithful and unerring representation of fallen man, such as none but a Divine Artist could have drawn.

II. The Passersby.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, come and looked on him, and passed by on the other side" (Luke 10:31, 32). If careful attention be paid to their setting, and especially to their terms, these verses need occasion no more difficulty than those which precede or those which follow. But if they are regarded cursorily and only a blurred and general view be taken of their contents, then the fault is ours if

we err in our understanding of them. If we approach them on the assumption (“presumption,” we ought to say) that they supply nothing more than the “drapery” of the parable, then no wonder if they convey no clear conceptions. Are we to regard each parable of our Lord’s as designed merely to set forth a single and central truth, much in it being only “embellishment,” or as a Divinely-drawn picture, *no line* in it being superfluous and meaningless? Which is the more honouring to God?

This writer has no difficulty or hesitation in answering these questions. In his judgment it is quite clear that the “priest” and the “Levite” symbolize or set forth something definite, something which it is important for us to understand, something which serves to enhance the beauty and blessedness of that which follows. What that something is must be prayerfully inquired after and sought for by duly pondering each particular detail mentioned in connection with the “priest” and the “Levite.” First, it is said of the former that “by chance” he came that way. The same thing is intimated in the case of the “Levite” by the word “likewise.” Second, of the former it is said that he “saw” the half-dead traveller; of the latter that he “looked” on him. Third, in each case we are told that he “passed by on the other side,” that is he offered no assistance to the desperately wounded one—he ministered not to his sore needs. Let us seek to ponder these details.

1. “By chance there came down” that way a certain priest. “By chance” means “by accident,” or as the world speaks, “by a mere co-incident” the priest passed along the road at that time. But does not this very expression present a real difficulty to those who believe that there are no “accidents” in a world which is governed by God—that nothing enters our lives by mere “chance” or without His appointment? Most certainly this was not a “chance” meeting with respect to Him by whose Providence our every act is ordered. Yet the solution is simple: the word “chance” signifies *without design*: he had no conscious intention, no deliberated purpose of encountering the poor sufferer. Therein lies the key which unlocks this section of the narrative: it was never the Divine will that religion as such should recover or save the sinner—whatever the reason why God gave the “priest” and the “Levite,” it most

certainly was not for *that*.

2. What was denoted here by the “priest” and the “Levite?” Viewing the whole parable *dispensationally* the one fallen by the way-side would be Adam: the “priest” the patriarchal era, from Adam to Moses, when the firstborn was the priest, having the right to offer up the appointed sacrifices. Then followed the Levitical age, from Moses to Christ. But considered *doctrinally* and practically, the priest and Levite would stand for the moral and ceremonial law of Sinai. Was it then the purpose of Christ to throw contempt upon Law and Religion? Certainly not: His purpose was to teach us what, after nineteen centuries, vast multitudes in Christendom are still ignorant of, namely, that neither the deeds of the law nor religious performances can avail anything for a desperately wounded sinner who is dead toward God. Baptism, confirmation, church-membership, fasting, attendance at the Lord’s Table can neither impart life nor remove the guilt of sin. The most scrupulous observance of ordinances amounts to nothing for one who is under the wrath of God.

3. “He passed by on the other side.” The real force of this is nearly always missed. It was *not* that Christ here portrayed the priests of Israel as a callous and cruel class. No, according to his own inspired textbook the priest and the Levite *could do nothing* else. The “priest” was appointed for the specific purpose of offering sacrifices. But the wounded traveller had none, nor had he any money to purchase one, for he had been robbed! What, then, could the priest do for him? Nothing whatever. Nor was the “Levite” any better equipped: for him to have so much as *touched* a bleeding man would have ceremonially defiled him (Lam. 4:14)! Neither the one nor the other was competent to or qualified for delivering the ruined sinner, nor had God ever appointed them for any such end.

As we have previously intimated, in order to discover the doctrinal and spiritual meaning of our Lord’s teaching in Luke 10:30-35 it is necessary to pay attention to the *context*. There we find a lawyer asking Christ, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 25). His immediate answer we have already noted: it remains for us to point out that in the passage we are now pondering the Saviour supplied a further and more humbling, if less

direct, reply. What is it that the sinner must do in order to obtain everlasting felicity? Consider the actual condition of fallen man and then answer your own question. The sinner has fallen among thieves, who have stripped him, wounded him, abandoned him to his fate, leaving him half dead—alive to the world, yet dead Godward. What can such an one do? They who teach salvation by works ignore the ruin which sin has wrought in the human constitution; they who inculcate salvation by self-effort repudiate man's total depravity.

Such we believe was Christ's purpose in the first part of this passage: to make clear the fact that fallen man is in such a wretched condition he is *beyond* doing anything for his deliverance. But such a truth is far too distasteful to proud human nature. Man will not accept the Divine verdict, he will not believe his case is so desperate as the Scriptures depict it. He persuades himself that it lies in his own power to win the favour of God. He thinks that if he tries his best to render obedience to the Divine commandments and employs himself in religious performances such endeavours will receive an eternal recompense. All the expedients which human wisdom has devised as remedies for the wounds sin has inflicted may be reduced to two—law-keeping and ritualistic performances—and man fondly concludes that he finds Scriptural warrant for such remedies. Did not God Himself give the Law at Sinai, a law both moral and ceremonial? Then surely if we use them diligently they must prove effective!

It was, we are convinced, to expose the sophistry of such a theory that Christ introduced into His narrative the "priest" and the "Levite." They were indeed the representatives of a Divinely instituted system of religion, but *Judaism* was never appointed by God as a means of *salvation*. So far from the Law being given to furnish redemption it was but a "schoolmaster unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24), revealing to man his wretchedness and powerlessness to meet the Divine requirements. In the very nature of the case law cannot condone, but must condemn its transgressors. Though the law demands obedience, it cannot communicate enablement. On the other hand, it cannot excuse disobedience. And since fallen man is "without strength" (Rom. 5:6), his case is utterly hopeless so far as salvation by law-keeping is concerned. The Law cannot impart life,

so of what avail can it be unto one who is dead toward God?

In perfect accord with what has been just pointed out, our Lord represented the priest and the Levite as coming where the wounded traveller lay “by chance,” and not by premeditated purpose. Therein He plainly denoted it was never God’s design that either the moral or the ceremonial law should improve the condition of the fallen one. All they could do was “look on him” (take note of his condition) and “pass by on the other side.” The Law can render no assistance to those who have broken it. On the one hand it makes no abatement of its demands and on the other it shows no mercy. The Law can furnish no relief to those who are naked, wounded, half dead. It can supply no robe of righteousness, pour in no balm, impart no life. It cannot so much as speak a word of comfort to the distressed conscience: rather does it fill it with terror.

It is on *that* dark background the Saviour brought into more vivid relief the blessedness and glory of the Gospel of the grace of God. This is what is now presented to our view. But before we turn to that Divine grace as acted out in the Person and work of His dear Son, we will dispose of what some are fond of raising as an objection. We are told by a certain type of would-be superior expositors that we must not “go too far” in our application of such a passage as this, that we must beware of reading a meaning into every “trivial clause”—that we should fix our attention upon the “main features” and ignore what is “only verbiage.” Particularly do these men warn us against looking for a meaning in each detail of our Lord’s parables. Personally we have long believed that the danger lies in the opposite direction: mere generalizations convey no tangible and clearly-defined concepts to the mind, and where such a loose method of exegesis be adopted, all certainty is at an end.

As the author of the “Numerical Bible” has pertinently pointed out: “A picture out of which we may leave whatever features we please to consider of no use save for decoration is surely that in which we are most liable to go astray. On the other hand, having to make every detail fit is just what will put bounds to the imagination when disposed to go astray. The insisting upon a complete agreement between the representation and what it represents is in the interests of exact interpretation every way.” But the door is not

open for any debate upon this point: our Lord Himself has settled it once for all. In Matthew 13:3-9 we have the parable of “The Sower” and at verse 18 Christ began His explanation of the same. What did He say there? Did He merely generalize and summarize or did He particularize? He particularized and showed that *every detail* possessed a distinct significance! The “seed” was the Word of the kingdom, the “wayside” soil was an hearer who understood it not, the “fowls” which came and devoured the seed were “the Wicked One” who prevents the Word finding lodging in the heart. So Christ went on through each part of the parable, assigning a specific meaning to every term He used therein. Shall we then be deemed “fanciful” when we discover a beauty in every separate line of the picture of the good Samaritan, when the Lord Himself declared the “thorns” on the third kind of fruitless ground symbolized “the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches” in verse 22!

As though to anticipate the objection that that particular parable was an exception, standing in a different category from all others, we find in Mark’s Gospel that before He expounded its meaning Christ asked His disciples, “Know ye not *this* parable? and how then will ye know *all* parables?” (4:13). He then went on to explain that the smallest detail in it conveyed express instructions. But more—if we turn back again to Matthew 13 it will be found that to settle the matter once and for all, Christ condescended to interpret *another* of His parables, that of the “Tares.” Here, too, He gave a distinct meaning to *every detail*: the “Sower” is the Son of Man, the “field” is the world, the “good seed” the children of the kingdom, the “tares” the children of the Wicked One, the “Enemy that sowed them is the devil,” the “harvest” is the end of the world, the “reapers” are the angels. The only detail not interpreted is “the furnace of fire,” because *it* is literal and not figurative. Thus, when we fail to perceive a meaning in the minutiae of our Lord’s parables it is not because such is not there, but because we are not sufficiently spiritual to perceive it.

III. The Saviour Succouring.

1. “But a certain Samaritan” (Luke 10:33). This opening “But” (rather than “And”) is designed to draw a sharp contrast, to bring into welcome relief what follows from that which precedes. A

“certain” Samaritan: observe he is not named, which was a rebuke not only to the lawyer but to the whole of unbelieving Israel, the allusion being to the *unknown Stranger* in their midst. But why allude to Himself as a “Samaritan?” Varied, indeed, are the thoughts embraced in this term. First, this was one of the Saviour’s Divine titles, for it signifies “Keeper,” and is He not designated “He that keepeth Israel . . . the LORD is thy Keeper” (Psa. 121:4, 5)? Second, it was a name given Him by way of reproach by His enemies: “Say we not well Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?” (John 8:48). The Samaritans were abhorred by the Jews, and they refused to have any dealings with them (John 4:9), and only as a last resort would a Jew accept help from such a quarter! Third, the Samaritans were under the curse of the Law, being two-thirds heathen—see 2 Kings 17 for their unlovely origin. And this the true Samaritan must needs be: if He would remove the curse denounced on sin, He must Himself bear it.

2. “As He journeyed.” This heightens the contrast pointed by the opening “But.” It was “by chance,” without design on their part, that the “priest” and the “Levite” passed that way. Not so with the antitypical “Samaritan.” The very term “journeyed” imports a *definite design* and destination, a specific starting point and goal. What human pen is capable of describing the “journey” which was here undertaken—a journey taken by none less than the Son of God. It was a journey from the heights of celestial glory to the degradation of Bethlehem’s manger. It tells of the *activity* of Divine love. It was a lengthy and labourious one, one which entailed untold hardship and suffering, for at times He “had not where to lay His head.” That journey was not completed till the Cross was reached, when He entered that unspeakable darkness wherein the light of God’s countenance was removed from Him. Yet knowing all of this beforehand, that journey was freely entered into. Murmur not then fellow-minister or fellow-believer when God calls you to take some unpleasant journey in His service, but remind yourself of the one undertaken by Christ.

3. “Came where he was.” If anyone feels we have “strained” the word *journey* in the above paragraph, we would remind him there is one other passage (and only one other in the New Testament)

wherein Christ represents Himself as taking a “journey,” namely after distributing the “talents” (equipping His Apostles—and servants—for their work) He “straightway took His journey” (Matt. 25:15). Now if that “journey” signifies His ascension from earth to Heaven (and it can signify nothing else) why should we be deemed “fanciful” for regarding the “journey” in Luke 10:33 as His descent from Heaven to earth? The outcome of this journey was that it brought Christ to where the fallen one lay. With gratitude the believer exclaims, “He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay” (Psa. 40:2—a Messianic Psalm as vv. 6-8 make clear)—but in order to do so Christ has to enter the pit where he lay. He came to seek and to save that which was lost and did so by putting Himself in their Law-place, taking upon Himself their sins.

4. “And when He saw him.” It was an elect soul which the Saviour here gazed upon, for the sovereign grace of God is exercised unto none save those who were “from the beginning chosen unto salvation” (2 Thess. 2:13). Thus we may regard these words as first looking back to a point before the foundation of the world, when Christ contemplated those given unto Him by the Father in the glass of His decrees. In Proverbs 8, where Christ is before us under His title of “Wisdom,” He is seen with the Father “before the mountains were settled . . . while as yet He had not made the earth” (vv. 25, 26). “Then I was by Him (said the Son) as One brought up with Him,” then it is added, “and My delights were with the sons of men” (vv. 30, 31). God showed Christ those “many brethren” among whom He was to be the Firstborn. But after His incarnation He saw them in their actual fallen state, yet He was not repelled by their putrifying sores, nor did He turn from them in disdain, not even from the leper or the adulteress. What a sight for One accustomed to behold the glories of Heaven!

5. “He had compassion on him.” How this line in the picture brings out the heart of Christ toward His own! He did not gaze upon this wretched object with stoical composure, but felt deeply his abject misery. This word evidences the reality of the Divine incarnation and manifests the genuineness of Christ’s humanity. It is a word which occurs again and again in the Gospels manifesting the fact that the Lord Jesus was “moved with compassion.” It is

recorded for our instruction and consolation, teaching us that our High Priest is not one who “cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15), for “in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren” (Heb. 2:17). Therein He differed from the angels: they may pity us, but they cannot have “compassion” on us. Pity is sympathy *for* one who is in distress, but compassion is to sorrow *with* him: it is the placing of one’s self alongside another in distress and sharing it with him. Thus it was with the Saviour: He assumed our very nature and “took our infirmities” upon Him (Matt. 8:17). It was love moving Him to use His power on our behalf.

6. “And went to him.” Here again the antithesis is sharply drawn, for this clause is in designed contrast from the “passed by on the other side” of the priest and the Levite. It brings out the radical difference between the Law and the Gospel. The Law can render no assistance to fallen man, but the Gospel presents One who is mighty to save. Here is good news, glad tidings indeed. The Law cannot bring us close to God, but the Gospel brings God close to sinners. “And went to him.” Christ does not merely advance half way toward the desperately wounded one and then bid him to come the other half. There would be no good news in *that* for one who is *dead* toward God. Nor does Christ come nine-tenths of the way and bid us go the last tenth. No, blessed be His name, He comes all the way, going after the lost sheep “until He find it, and when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing” (Luke 15:4, 5).

7. “And bound up his wounds.” How this reminds us of that Messianic prophecy at the beginning of Isaiah 61: “The Spirit of the LORD God is upon Me: because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek, He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted.” It was part of His commission to bind up the brokenhearted. Christ alone can speak peace to the burdened conscience, open blind eyes, liberate the sinner’s enslaved will, and loose the tongue so that it gladly praises God. It is love which moves the Redeemer to employ His all-mighty power for the recovery of sinners. It is grace which causes Him to lay His hand upon those who are such revolting objects and tenderly minister unto them. Has He bound up your wounds, my reader? No matter how desperate they may be, they are not beyond the skill of this great Physician.

Unless *Christ* does bind them up, you are lost forever.

8. “Pouring in oil and wine.” Observe the means for effective healing. Oil is the element with which anointing was made (Exo. 30:25; Lev. 8:12) and our Redeemer is anointed with the Holy Spirit (Isa. 61:1). Oil is therefore the symbol of the Spirit. Wine is the emblem of joy (Psa. 104:15), as “the fruit of the wine” (Luke 22:17, 18) is also the memorial of the precious blood of Christ. Nothing but the joyful remembrance of Christ’s finished work, applied in the power of the Spirit, can speak peace to the lacerated conscience. When the Divine oil and wine are poured into the deepest and most dangerous wounds of sin, they infallibly work a perfect cure—for the atoning blood has a Divine virtue to heal—being appointed for that very purpose. It “cleanseth us” says one who had experienced its healing power, “from *all* sin.” And no wonder, for it is the blood of Immanuel. He who shed it was God and man in one Christ, and therefore is it possessed of infinite efficacy and merit. His blood can make the foulest clean, and by cleansing, it heals.

9. “And set him on His own beast.” This line in our picture presents an aspect of the truth which has no place in the emaciated evangelist of our day. Christ not only comes to the sinner in his dire distress and helplessness—He does more. He not only ministers to him and relieves his want—He goes much further. He does not leave him after He has befriended him. He not only empowers him to walk but instates him into an entirely new position. Christ not only meets the sinner in his place of need, but *gives him His own place*. Here is the climactic blessing of the Gospel: that the one who is saved by Christ is not only pardoned and cleansed, healed and recovered, but brought near to God in Christ’s own acceptableness. Because Christ took our place we enter into His place: “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21), and therefore God “hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:6).

10. “And brought him to an inn.” Still the befriended one does nothing for himself: all is done for him. And how accurate this line in the picture! he was not brought “home” but to an “inn.” When Christ saves a soul He does not take him to Heaven at once, but

leaves him in this world for a while longer. But observe well the *character* which is now stamped upon him: the “inn” is for wayfarers and travellers. And such is the character which Christians are to maintain upon earth: “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Peter 2:11). Thus we may note that Christ gives His people the *same* character He sustained—for when here He was the homeless Stranger. The “inn” is where travellers assemble and spend the night. It is the local church that is symbolized, which is an assembly of strangers and pilgrims, the place where they meet together in spiritual fellowship.

11. “And took care of him” (Luke 10:34). The tender grace of the good Samaritan did not slacken: “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end” (John 13:1).

12. “When He departed:” contrast from “as He journeyed” (Luke 10:33)—His return on High.

13. “He took out two pence and gave to the host and said unto him, Take care of him.” His loving solicitude ceased not. The “host” is the minister of the local church or “house of God”—not the Spirit personally and distinctly, for Christ will not reward Him, yet as identified with His work and agents. The “two pence” we regard as the Two Testaments (each bearing the same Divine impress), which ministers are to make use of for the good of those entrusted to them.

14. “Whatsoever thou spendest more (the minister’s own labours) when *I come again*, I will repay thee.” How blessed: the parable ends with the rescued one and his caretaker looking forward with joyous anticipation to the return of his Benefactor! What must I do to enter into this experience? Take the sinner’s place before God, repudiate my own righteousness, and receive Christ as He is offered in the Gospel.

