



DIVINE COMPASSION.

NOTES OF A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. HULL, OF HASTINGS,
DECEMBER 15TH, 1889.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was : and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine."—LUKE x. 33, 34.

OUR text relates to one that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. You have, no doubt, heard of the "down grade." Well, this man went on the down grade, and fitly represents our first parents' sin, and that of all their posterity. Jerusalem is called the city of God, where He placed His name. Jericho was a place of ill fame, renowned for sin. You will also remember the case of Lot going to Sodom. Abraham said to him, "Make your choice; if thou wilt take the left-hand, then I will go to the right," or *vice versa*. Lot looked toward Sodom, and saw that there was a well-watered plain, and here he chose to go. Sodom was a place renowned for wickedness, but God, in mercy, kept alive His fear in Lot's heart, so that his righteous soul was vexed day by day with their evil deeds, and when Sodom was destroyed he was saved.

Oh, sinner, do you know what it is to look toward the world, and to choose that which is pleasing to the eye, or which is well suited to your corrupt taste?

The way of man is ever before God; His eyes are upon all their goings; their steps are marked by Him; even the way of the wicked is pondered by God, and is under the power and control of His word and decree. Sinner, you live only by His permission, and when He bids you must die. Why, then, do

you live in sin? Because you love it, and choose it; therefore you indulge it. This life would be nothing to you without sinful sweets, but sin makes the child of God miserable, while you, perhaps, are now miserable because you cannot satisfy your sinful desires. Yet the thought of judgment troubles you at times. And you would be glad to banish it from your mind; but you will have to die. Yes, the day of death is coming, and "after death the judgment." You will not be able to cheat God. He will pay you your wages, for "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," to receive His just award. There is the finish of your doings. Sinner, you will not be able to hide anything from God, who has declared He will bring you and your works to judgment. You may then call for the rocks and mountains to cover you, but you will not be able to hide yourself from Him. As one said, "If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there." You are here this morning, and therefore out of hell, but if you had been found dead in your bed, what would your end have been? You may think your end is a long way off now, but there is but a step between you and death. Oh, sinner, think of this! What a mercy you are here! it is His mercy alone that allows you to live. Oh, what a mercy you are spared; may it be in order that you may be brought to repentance. The Lord Jesus Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance, and I know there are some here that feel their dependence upon Him for it, it is not the work of the creature. You that know it grieve because you cannot as you would produce repentance, and with the poet you say—

"I would, but can't repent,
Though I endeavour oft;
This stony heart can ne'er relent,
Till Jesus makes it soft."

Sinner, you are there; you cannot repent. Do you say, "Then why did God enjoin repentance, if I cannot repent?" It was your sin, not God's decree, that placed you in your helpless state. "Thou hast destroyed thyself" (Hosea xiii. 9), therefore it is quite right for Him to enjoin repentance. Yet, if you are taught of God, you will feel to have no hope or help apart from Him; but His Word declares that if you feel your lack of wisdom, of any good thing, you are to ask of God and He will give it. Oh, what a mercy, sinner, if you should be brought to feel your need of these things. You, one day, would then heartily thank

God for Jesus Christ. Beg for it, ask the Lord to bestow it; He will not deny those who are led by Him thus. May the Lord bless you and save you.

This man spoken of in our text went the wrong way, and smarted for it. Have you? I confess that I have.

Child of God, thy way is before Him. You know it, and at times you are glad of it. In looking back, morning by morning, upon the way you have come, from one year's end to another, He has neither slumbered nor slept; He has been a blessed Friend; what care He has taken for you; He knows the worst of your sorrows; He knows all about your wicked heart and your carnal mind; all is ever before Him. Your down-sitting and uprising He well understands. "Thou hast searched me and known me," said David. Ah! it is no trifle to feel that we ever live in God's sight, that His piercing glance is ever upon us. Yet, if you did not believe this you could not put your confidence in Him. It proves that He knows all your case, and He is perfect in wisdom and ability. You know He searches the heart, and you want to be right with Him. In looking back we remember the time when first our cry was, "Am I right with God?"

Oh, my dear friends, these feelings have pressed upon me ever since, and I trust they will till my dying day. You may be told of men that you are right, but you will not be satisfied till it is fastened upon your heart by the Holy Spirit. Your cry will be—

"Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood,
And bear Thy witness with my heart,
That I am born of God."

God knows whether matters are right, and He can give His testimony, and if you have God's testimony and seal, it can never fail.

"If once the love of Christ you feel
Upon your heart impressed,
The mark of that celestial seal
Can never be erased."

You may lose sight of it, but that will not undo it, because it is of Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above."

How do you stand as to these things this morning? are you resting upon something twenty years ago? a garment of profession twenty years old? Has it ever been washed since then in that blood which cleanses from all sin, or are you satisfied with a little emotion twenty years old? You are nearer death, and some of you want fresh tokens of His love. It is a mercy indeed to have a divine work twenty years long, or even days, or hours, or minutes, for it will prove a never-ending chain, linking you to the God of eternal love; but whether twenty years or days long, I ask, Do you try your way by the Word of God? because if you seek to hide or cloke anything wrong, God will search it out. All must be put straight while you are here, or you will never see Jesus with joy, nor go where He dwells. Heaven is only for those who are washed in His blood. Do you feel you have no good account to bring before God? but do you think of Calvary and of that blood that was shed for the ungodly? Do you sometimes say, as you look toward the Lamb, "Oh, what should I do, had I not Thy blood to plead." What a mercy to be able to plead that blood, and to feel that it prevails. May your eye of faith ever be upon this blood, for we can have no hope apart from it.

"Jesus, there's nothing but Thy blood
Can bring me near the throne."

Oh, I do so continually need that precious blood. What a mercy to be able to say, "but I obtained mercy." No mercy apart from this precious blood, but if you have had one spiritual blessing, it came through the blood of the Lamb, and it left the mark of the blood, and a savour of Christ; for—

"Every grace and every favour
Comes to us through Jesus' blood."

Do you feel to be afar off, and a longing to be made nigh by Jesus' precious blood? That is a good mark.

The fear of God is a pure stream; it flows from a pure fountain, and is distinct from all the streams of the world. If it is in your heart it will separate you, and spoil you to sin, the world, and yourselves; yea, it will separate you from everything but God in Christ. Have not some of you felt a dread of meeting the world in your daily affairs, and begged of God to

preserve you while having to do with it? That is a proof that you are not of the world. "They are not of the world," said Christ, "even as I am not of the world." I wish we had enough religion to make us more separate and distinct, not only from the profane, but also from empty professors. I hope we have a little of the distinction which grace makes; some complain that our charity is not wide enough, but we know that they are not lovers of God who love the world. For His Word declares, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"; that is the line the Bible draws, and I am telling you what God says. Not every man that speaks of love is right with God. He may set his face toward Christ in a profession, while his heart is toward Jericho, seeking the pleasures that are there. Ah! there are many who don't mind being religious if they can enjoy the world's pleasures as well; but you cannot mix Jericho with Christ; you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; you must be on the one side or the other, and if you are not on Christ's side you are on the world's side.

Remember, it is the act which proceeds from the heart that shows what the man is. The man spoken of in our text went down to Jericho, a place of ill repute, and we read that he fell among thieves, who stripped and wounded him, leaving him half dead. "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Whatever we may think about the world or worldly professors, we shall find them the same as they ever were, robbers and spoilers. You may come within their reach, and feel to be stripped of all you possessed, and even fear that God will not again show mercy unto you; but oh, to find after all that you have in such a case one Friend, the Man who was called a Samaritan. The priest and Levite passed by, but on the other side—there was no pity from them, though this poor man greatly needed help and pity. But a certain Samaritan going a journey came where he was. Oh blessed Gospel, which thus sets forth the grace and compassion of Jesus Christ! Poor backsliders, you that are writing bitter things against yourselves, you sometimes feel that you would be destroyed if you were left to your bad hearts, even if there was no devil in existence. What a mercy that the Lord Jesus knows and considers our case in our downward way. He Himself journeyed that way.

Yes, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; the eternal Son of God came to the place where we lay; Jesus Christ loved us when we were dead in sin. Where all His people are, till born again, as the poet says—

“ He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me notwithstanding all.”

Though He came down where we lay, and was made sin for us, yet He was not a sinner; if He had been, He could not have made an atonement. “ He was made sin for us who knew no sin,” and He for ever put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He was numbered with the transgressors, but He did not transgress, or He could not have magnified the law and made it honourable. They reckoned Him as such, and treated Him as a Samaritan, but that did not make Him one. No, sin could have no place in Him; there was not a blemish in Him; sin was put upon Him, as being reckoned unto Him, but He was free from its pollution. He did not act as the priest and Levite, who turned away, He came to the very place and picked up the wounded and bleeding ones who were left by thieves to die. Yes, many times has He picked up such wounded and bleeding ones, but His hands have never been defiled. He can do it without contracting the least infection. What a beautiful thing light is; let it shine into some dirty cellar, it will show the vermin and filth, which you could not see without it, but however filthy the cellar, it will not corrupt the light. So Jesus takes the worst cases in hand, but is never defiled thereby. The Samaritan was moved with compassion toward the poor man; He did not walk away on the other side, but went up to him, attended to his bleeding wounds, bound them up, and acted the part of a friend, though, being a Samaritan, he was looked upon as the most unlikely person to do so. Have you not sometimes felt afraid the Lord Jesus Christ would say, “ I have no pity for you, O wounded one ” ? Remember, He still has the same compassionate heart; He knows what sin has done, and His precious love and blood are a divine balmy mixture for your wounds. Did you ever feel the virtue of that precious blood ? You must if you go to heaven. Have you known the coming of Christ ? He walks about still; He journeys in the Gospel seeking sinners still ? Is there one here that needs Him ? He is here, my friend, what is thy grief ? Tell Him all, bad as thy case may be, He can wash away all thy defilement, and in such a way as to bring honour to Himself. Oh what a Friend is Christ ! We read in Ezekiel xvi. of an infant being cast out, and the Lord said, “ When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, Live, and thy time was a time of love.” Oh this is the blessed Samaritan. I tell you, He journeys about still, He notices backsliders still, therefore it is thus written, “ O Israel,

return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity; take with you words, and turn to the Lord. Say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.” He gives you the words to come with, and verily He will bind up the wounds that sin has made. Has the world cast you off, saying, “ We do not desire fellowship with you ” ? All the better if it is so. Christ will take you in. We do not want to be numbered with them. Yet we would say as Paul did, when he wished that they before whom he stood were altogether such as he was, except his bonds. Oh for more of this Gospel spirit.

May the Lord add His blessing, and He shall bear the glory.

