

`THE GOOD SAMARITAN

NO. 1360

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 17, 1877,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

[On behalf of the Hospitals of London.]

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How read you? And he answering said, You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. And he said unto him, You have answered right: this do, and you shall live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 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, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 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, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever you spend more, when I come again, I will repay you. Which now of these three, think you, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do you likewise.”
Luke 10:25-37.

OUR text is the whole story of the Samaritan, but as that is very long, suppose, for our memories' sake, consider the exhortation in the thirty-seventh verse to be our text. *“Go, and do you likewise.”*

There are certain persons in the world who will not allow the preacher to speak upon anything but those doctrinal statements concerning the way of salvation which are known as “the Gospel.” If the preacher shall insist upon some virtue or practical grace, they straightway say that he is not preaching the Gospel, that he has become legal, and was a mere moral teacher.

We do not stand in any awe of such criticism, for we clearly perceive that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself would very frequently have come under it. Read the Sermon on the Mount and judge whether certain people would be content to hear the likes of it preached to them on the Sabbath. They would condemn it as containing very little Gospel and too much about good works. Our Lord was a great practical preacher. He frequently delivered addresses in which He made answer to questioners, or gave direction to seekers, or upbraided offenders, and He gave a prominence to practical truth such as some of His ministers dare not imitate. Jesus tells us over and over again the manner in which we are to live towards our fellow men and He lays great stress upon the love which should shine throughout the Christian character.

The story of the good Samaritan, which is now before us, is a case in point, for our Lord is there explaining a point which arose out of the question, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” The question

is legal and the answer is to the point. But let it never be forgotten that what the law demands of us the Gospel produces in us. The law tells us what we ought to be and it is one object of the Gospel to raise us to that condition. Hence our Savior's teaching, though it be eminently practical, is always evangelical, even in expounding the law He has always a Gospel design.

Two ends are served by His setting up a high standard of duty. On the one, He slays the self-righteousness which claims to have kept the law by making men feel the impossibility of salvation by their own works, and on the other hand, He calls believers away from all content with the mere decencies of life and the routine of outward religion, and stimulates them to seek after the highest degree of holiness—indeed, after that excellence of character which only His grace can give.

This morning I trust that though I keep very much to practical points, I shall be guided by the Spirit of holiness and shall not be guilty of legality, nor will any of you be led into it. I shall not hold up the love of our neighbor as a condition of salvation, but as a fruit of it. I shall not speak of obedience to the law as the road to heaven, but I shall show you the pathway which is to be followed by the faith which works by love.

Let us proceed to the parable at once.

I. Our first observation will be that **THE WORLD IS VERY FULL OF AFFLICTION.**

This story is but one among a thousand based upon an unhappy occurrence. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves." He went upon a short journey and almost lost his life on the road. We are never secure from trouble. It meets us around the family hearth and causes us to suffer in our own persons or in those of the dearest relatives. It walks into our shops and counting-houses and tries us, and when we leave home, it becomes our fellow-traveler and communes with us on the road. "Although affliction comes not forth of the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

Frequently the greater afflictions *are not occasioned by the fault of the sufferer*. Nobody could blame the poor Jew that when he was going down to Jericho about his business the thieves beset him and demanded his money, and that when he made some little resistance they wounded him, stripped him, and left him half dead. How could he be blamed? It was to him a pure misfortune.

Believe me, there is a great deal of sorrow in the world which does not arise out of the vice or folly of the persons enduring it—it comes from the hand of God upon the sufferer, not because he is a sinner above others, but for wise ends unknown to us. Now, this is the kind of distress which above all others demands Christian sympathy and the very kind which abounds in our hospitals. The man is not to blame for lying there beaten and bruised—those gaping wounds from which his life is oozing are not of his own inflicting, nor received in a drunken brawl or through attempting a foolhardy feat. He suffers from no fault of his own and therefore he has a pressing claim upon the benevolence of his fellow men.

Still, *very much distress is caused by the wickedness of others*. The poor Jew on the road to Jericho was the victim of the thieves who wounded him and left him half dead. Man is man's worst enemy. If man were but tamed to peace, the wildest beast in the world would be subdued, and if evil were purged from men's hearts, the major part of the ills of life would cease at once. The drunkard's wastefulness and brutality, the proud man's scorn, the oppressor's cruelty, the slanderer's lie, the trickster's cheat, the heartless man's grinding of the faces of the poor—these put together are the roots of almost all the poisonous weeds which multiply upon the face of the earth to our shame and sorrow.

If dominant sins could be taken away, as blessed be God they shall when Christ has triumphed through the world, much of human sorrow would be relieved. When we see innocent persons suffering as the result of the sin of others, our pity should be excited. How many there are of little children starving and pining into chronic disease through a father's drunkenness which keeps the table bare! Wives, too, who work hard themselves are brought down to pining sickness and painful disease by the laziness and cruelty of those who should have cherished them. Work-people, too, are often sorely oppressed in their wages and have to work themselves to death's door to earn a pittance. Those are the

people who ought to have our sympathy when accident or disease bring them to the hospital gates, “wounded and half dead.”

The man in the parable was quite helpless, he could do nothing for himself. There he must lie and die—those huge wounds must bleed his very soul away unless a generous hand shall interfere. It is as much as he can do to groan. He cannot even dress his wounds, much less arise and seek shelter. He is bleeding to death among the pitiless rocks of the descent to Jericho and he must leave his body to be fed upon by kites and crows unless some friend shall come to his help.

When a man can help himself and does not, he deserves to suffer. When a man flings away opportunities by his idleness or self-indulgence, a measure of suffering ought to be permitted to him as a cure for his vices. But when persons are sick or injured and are unable to pay for the aid of the nurse and the physician, then is the time when true-hearted philanthropy should promptly step in and do its best. So our Savior teaches us here.

Certain paths of life are peculiarly subject to affliction. The way which led from Jerusalem to Jericho was always infested by robbers. Jerome tells us that it was called the “bloody way” on account of the frequent highway robberies and murders which were there committed. And it is not so long ago as to be beyond the memory of man that an English traveler met his death on that road, while even very recent travelers tell us that they have been either threatened or actually attacked in that particularly gloomy region—the desert which goes down to the city of palm trees.

So also in the world around us there are paths of life which are highly dangerous and fearfully haunted by disease and accident. Years ago there were many trades in which from want of precaution death slew its thousands. I thank God that sanitary and precautionary laws are better regarded and men’s lives are thought to be somewhat more precious. Yet there are still ways of life which may each be called “the bloody way,” pursuits which are necessary to the community, but highly dangerous to those who follow them.

Our mines, our railways, and our seas show a terrible roll of suffering and death. Long hours in ill-ventilated workrooms are accountable for thousands of lives and so are stinted wages, which prevent a sufficiency of food from being procured. Many a needlewoman’s way of life is truly a path of blood. When I think of the multitudes of our working people in this city who have to live in close, unhealthy rooms, crowded together in lanes and courts where the air is stagnant, I do not hesitate to say that much of the road which has to be trodden by the poor of London is as much deserving of the name of the way of blood as the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. If they do not lose their money it is because they never have it. If they do not fall among thieves, they fall among diseases which practically wound them and leave them half dead.

Now, if you have not to engage in such avocations, if your pathway does not lead you from Jerusalem to Jericho, but takes you, perhaps, full often from Jerusalem to Bethany, where you can enjoy the sweetnesses of domestic love and the delights of Christian fellowship, you ought to be very thankful, and be all the more ready to assist those who for your sakes, or for the benefit of society at large, have to follow the more dangerous roads of life. Do you not agree with me that such persons ought to be among the first to receive our Christian kindness? Such abound in our hospitals and elsewhere.

Let that stand. It is clear that there is a great deal of affliction in the world and much of it is of the sort which deserves to be succored at once.

II. Secondly, THERE ARE MANY WHO NEVER RELIEVE AFFLICTION.

Our Savior tells us of two at least who “passed by on the other side” and I suppose He might have prolonged the parable so as to have mentioned two dozen if He had chosen to do so, and even then He might have been content to mention but one good Samaritan, for I hardly think that there is one good Samaritan to two heartless persons. I wish there were, but I fear the good Samaritans are very few in proportion to the number who act the part of the priest and the Levite.

Now, notice who the persons were that refused to render aid to the man in distress.

First, they were *brought to the spot by God's providence on purpose to do so*. What better thing could the Lord Himself do for the poor man half dead than to bring some man to help him? An angel could not well have met the case. How could an angel, never wounded, understand binding up wounds and pouring in wine and oil? No, a man was wanted who would know what was necessary, who would with brotherly sympathy cheer the mind while doctoring the body.

In our English version we read, "*By chance* there came down a certain priest that way," but learned Greek scholars read it, "*By a coincidence*." It was in the order of divine providence that a priest should come first to this afflicted person, so that he might go and examine the case as a man of education and skill, and then when the Levite came afterwards, he would be able to carry on what the priest began—and if one could not carry the poor man—the two might between them be able to bear him to the inn, or one might remain to guard him while the other ran for help. God brought them to this position, but they willfully refused the sacred duty which providence and humanity demanded of them.

Now, you that are wealthy are sent into our city on purpose that you may have compassion upon the sick, the wounded, the poor, and the needy. God's intent in endowing any person with more substance than he needs is that he may have the pleasurable office, or rather let me say, the delightful privilege, of relieving want and woe. Alas, how many there are who consider that store which God has put into their hands on purpose for the poor and needy to be only so much provision for their excessive luxury—a luxury which pampers them but yields them neither benefit nor pleasure.

Others dream that wealth is given them that they may keep it under lock and key, cankering and corroding, breeding covetousness and care. Who dares roll a stone over the well's mouth when thirst is raging all around? Who dares keep the bread from the women and the children who are ready to gnaw their own arms for hunger? Above all, who dares allow the sufferer to writhe in agony uncared for and the sick to pine into their graves unnursed? This is no small sin. It is a crime to be answered to the Judge when He shall come to judge the quick and dead. Those people who neglected the poor man were brought there on purpose to relieve him, even as you are, and yet they passed by on the other side.

They were both of them persons, too, who ought to have relieved him, because *they were very familiar with things which should have softened their hearts*. If I understand the passage, the priest was coming down from Jerusalem. I have often wondered which way he was going—whether he was going *up* to the temple and was in a hurry to be in time for fear of keeping the congregation waiting, or whether he had fulfilled his duty, and had finished his month's course at the temple and was going home.

I conclude that he was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, because it says, "*By chance there came down* a certain priest that way." Now to the metropolis it is always, "going up"—going *up* to London or *up* to Jerusalem, and as this priest was coming *down*, he was going to Jericho. It was quite literally going down, for Jericho lies very low. I conclude that he was going home to Jericho, after having fulfilled his month's engagements in the temple, where he had been familiar with the worship of the Most High, as near to God as man could be, serving amidst sacrifices and holy psalms and solemn prayers, and yet he had not learned how to make a sacrifice himself.

He had heard those prophetic words which say, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," but he was entirely forgetful of such teaching. He had often read that law, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," but he regarded it not. The Levite had not been quite so closely engaged in the sanctuary as the priest, but he had taken his share in holy work and yet he came away from it with a hard heart.

This is a sad fact. They had been near to God, but were not like Him. Dear people, you may spend Sabbath after Sabbath in the worship of God, or what you think to be so, and you may behold Christ Jesus set forth visibly crucified among you, and themes which ought to turn a heart of stone to flesh may pass before your minds, and nevertheless, you may return into the world to be as miserly as ever and to have as little feeling towards your fellow men as before. It ought not to be so. I beseech you, suffer it not to be so in any case again.

These two persons, moreover, were *bound by their profession to have helped this man*, for though it was originally said of the high priest, yet I think it could be said of any priest that he was taken from among men that he might have compassion. If anywhere there should be compassion towards men, it should be in the heart of the priest who is chosen to speak for God to men and for men to God. No stone should ever be found in his bosom. He should be gentle, generous-hearted, kindly, full of sympathy, and tenderness, but this priest was not so, nor was the Levite, who ought to have followed in his wake. And oh, you Christian ministers and all of you who teach in schools, or who undertake any service of Christian ministry—and you ought all to do so, for the Lord has made all His people to be priests unto Him—there ought to be in you from your very profession a readiness of heart towards kindest actions for those who need them.

And there is one thing to be mentioned also against this priest and Levite that *they were very well aware of the man's condition*. They came close to him and saw his state. It is a narrow trackway down to Jericho and they were obliged to go almost over his wounded body. The first comer looked at him, but he hurried on. The second appears to have made a further investigation, to have had sufficient curiosity, at any rate, to begin to examine the state of the case, but his curiosity being satisfied, his compassion was not awakened and he hurried away.

Half the neglect of the sick poor arises from not knowing that there are such cases, but many remain willfully in ignorance and such ignorance is no available excuse. In the case of the hospitals for which we plead today, you do know that there are persons in them at this moment suffering, persons suffering grievously for no fault of their own, and you know that these need your aid. As I rode the other evening by that noble building on our side of the water, St. Thomas' Hospital, I could not help meditating upon what a mass of pain and suffering was gathered within those walls, but then I thanked God that it was within those walls where succor would be most surely rendered to it to the best of human ability. So you do know that there is poverty and sickness around you, and if you pass by on the other side you will have looked at it, you will have known about it, and on your heads will be the criminality of having left the wounded man unhelped.

Yet the pair had capital excuses. Both the priest and the Levite had excellent reasons for neglecting the bleeding man. I never knew a man refuse to help the poor who failed to give at least one admirable excuse. I believe there is no man on earth who wickedly rejects the plea of need who is not furnished with arguments that he is right—arguments eminently satisfactory to himself and such as he thinks should silence those who press the case.

For instance, the priest and Levite were both in a hurry. The priest had been away for a month at Jerusalem from his wife and dear children, and he naturally wanted to get home. If he lingered, the sun might be down—it was an awkward place to be after sundown and you could not expect him to be so imprudent as to stay in such a lone place with darkness coming on. He had spent a very laborious month in the temple. You do not know how exhausting he had found it to act as a priest for a whole month, and if you did you would not blame him for wanting to get home to enjoy a little rest.

Besides, he had promised to be home at a certain hour and he was a man of punctuality, and would by no means cause anxiety to his wife and children who would be looking from the housetop for him. A very excellent excuse was this, but he also felt that he really could not do much good. He did not understand surgery and could not bind up a wound to save his life. He shrank from it—the very sight of blood turned his stomach. He could not bring himself to go near a person who was so frightfully mangled. If he did try to bind up a wound, he felt he should be sure to make a muddle of it. If his wife had been with him, she could have done it, or if he had brought some plaster, liniment, or strapping, he would have tried his best, but as it was, he could do nothing.

The poor man, moreover, was evidently half dead and would be quite dead in an hour or two, and therefore it was a pity to waste time on a hopeless case. Then the priest was only one person and could not be expected to carry a bleeding man—and yet it would be idle to begin with the case and leave him there all night. True, He could almost hear the sound of the Levite's feet indeed, he hoped he was

coming up behind, for he felt very nervous at being alone with such a case. But then that was all the more reason for leaving the matter, since the Levite would be sure to attend to it.

Better still was the following line of excuse—you would not have a person stop in a place where another man had been half killed by thieves. The thieves might be back again—they were scarcely yet out of hearing even then—and a priest after a month's service ought to have some fees in his purse and it was important not to run the risk of losing the support of his family by stopping in a place which was evidently swarming with highwaymen. He might be wounded too, and then there would be two people half dead and one of them a valuable clergyman.

Really, philanthropy would suggest that you take care of yourself, as you could not possibly do any good to this poor man. And then the man might die and the person found near the body might be charged with the murder. It is always awkward to be found alone in a dark spot with the corpse of one who has evidently suffered from foul play. The priest might be taken up upon suspicion and did not all the principles of prudence suggest that the very best thing that he could do was to get out of the way as quickly as possible?

Moreover, he could pray for the man, you know, and he was glad to find that he had a tract with him which he would leave near him, and what with the tract and the prayer, what more could a good man be expected to do? With this pious reflection he hastened on his way. It is just possible also that he did not wish to be defiled. A priest was too holy a person to meddle with wounds and bruises. Who would propose such a thing? He had come from Jerusalem in all the odor of sanctity. He felt himself to be as holy as he could conveniently be and therefore he would not expose such rare excellence to worldly influences by touching a sinner. All these powerful reasons put together made him content to avoid trouble and leave the doing of kindness to others.

Now, this morning, I shall leave you to make all the excuses you like about not helping the poor and aiding the hospitals, and when you have made them, they will be as good as those which I have set before you. You have smiled over what the priest might have said, but if you make any excuses for yourselves whenever real need comes before you and you are able to relieve it, you need not smile over your excuses—the devil will do that—you had better cry over them, for there is the gravest reason for lamenting that your heart is hard toward your fellow creatures when they are sick, and perhaps sick unto death.

III. In the third place THE SAMARITAN IS A MODEL FOR THOSE WHO DO HELP THE AFFLICTED.

He is a model, first, if we notice *who the person was that he helped*. The parable does not *say* so, but it implies that the wounded man was a Jew and therefore the Samaritan was not of the same faith and order. The apostle says, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This man was not of the household of faith, as far as the Samaritan's judgment went, but he was one of the "all men." The Jew and he were as much apart in religious sympathy as they well could be. Ay, but he was a man, whether he was a Jew or not, he was a man—a wounded, bleeding, dying man, and the Samaritan was another man, and so one man felt for another man and came to his aid.

Do not ask whether a sick man believes in the thirty-nine articles or the Westminster Assembly's catechism. Let us hope that he is sound in the faith, but if he is not, his wounds need staunching just as much as if he held a perfect creed. You need not inquire whether he is a sound Calvinist, for an Arminian smarts when he is wounded. A Churchman feels as much pain as a Dissenter when his leg is broken and an infidel needs nursing when he is crushed in an accident. It is as bad for a man to die with a heterodox creed as with the orthodox faith. Indeed, in some respects it is far worse and therefore we should be doubly anxious for his cure. We are to relieve real distress irrespective of creed, as the Samaritan did.

Moreover, the Jews were great haters of the Samaritans and no doubt this Samaritan might have thought, "If I were in that man's case, he would not help me. He would pass me by and say, 'It is a

Samaritan dog, let him be accursed.” The Jews were accustomed to curse the Samaritans, but it did not occur to the good man to remember what the Jew would have said. He saw him bleeding and he bound up his wounds. Our Savior has not given us for a golden rule, “Do you to others as others would do to you,” but “as you would they should do to you.” The Samaritan went by that rule and though he knew of the enmity in the Jewish mind, he felt that he must heap coals of fire upon the wounded man by loving help—therefore he went straight away to his relief. Perhaps at another time the Jew would have put off the Samaritan and refused even to be touched by him, but the tender-hearted sympathizer does not think of that. The poor man is too sick to hold any crotchets or prejudices and when the Samaritan bends over him and pours in the oil and wine, he wins a grateful glance from the son of Abraham.

That poor wounded man was one who *could not repay him*. He had been stripped of all that he had, even his garments were taken from him, but charity does not look for payment, else were it no charity at all. The man was a *total stranger* too. The Samaritan had never seen him before. What did that matter? He was a man and all men are akin. “God has made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth.” The Samaritan felt that touch of nature which makes all men kin and he bent over the stranger and relieved his pains.

He might have said, “Why should *I* help? He has been *rejected by his own people*—the priest and the Levite have left him—his first claim is upon his own countrymen.” So have I known some say, “These persons have no claim. They ought to go to their own people.” Well, suppose they have gone and failed? Now comes your turn. And what the Jew would not do for the Jew, let the Samaritan do, and he shall be blessed in the deed. He had been neglected by the officials and neglected by the saints—the best, or those who ought to be the best, the priest and the Levite had deserted him and left him to die. The Samaritan is neither saint nor official, but yet he steps in to do the deed. Oh, Christian brethren, take care that you are not put to shame by this Samaritan.

He is a model to us, next, in *the spirit in which he did his work*. He did it without asking questions. The man was in need, he was sure of that, and he helped him at once, doing so without hesitation and made no compact nor agreement with him, but at once proceeding to pour in the oil and wine. He did it without attempting to shift the labor from himself to others. Charity nowadays means that A asks B to help him and B, in his wonderful charity, does him the great favor of sending him on to C. That is to say, the common run of benevolent persons nowadays put their hands but seldom into their own purses, but send people on to a few individuals who find cash for all. It seems to me to be a very mean way of getting rid of a case by saving your own pocket and passing the applicant on to another who is no better off than yourself, but far more generous. The Samaritan was personally benevolent, and therein he is a mirror and model to us all.

He did it without any selfish fear. The thieves might have been upon him, but he cared nothing for thieves when a life was in danger. Here is a man in want and the man must be relieved, thieves or no thieves, and he does it. He does it with self-denial, for he finds oil and wine, and money at the inn, and everything, though he was by no means a rich man, for he gave two pence—a larger sum than it looks, but still a small sum. He did not fling his alms about because he was rich. He is not said to have given a handful of pence, but two, for he had to count his pence as he expended them. It was a poor Samaritan who did this rich and noble act. The poorest can help the poor, even those who feel distress themselves may manifest a generous Christian spirit and give their services. Let them do so as they have opportunity.

This man helped his poor neighbor with great tenderness and care. He was like a mother to him. Everything was done with loving thought and with whatever skill he possessed. He did the best he could. Brethren, let what we do for others always be done in the noblest style. Let us not treat the poor like dogs to whom we fling a bone, nor visit the sick like superior beings who feel that they are stooping down to inferiors when they enter their rooms, but in the sweet tenderness of real love, learned at Jesu’s feet, let us imitate this good Samaritan.

But *what did he do?* Well, first, he came to where the sufferer was and put himself into his position. Then he put forth all his skill for him and bound up his wounds, no doubt tearing his own garment to get the bands with which to bind up the wound. He poured in oil and wine, the best healing mixture that he knew of, and one which he happened to have with him. He then set the sick man on his mule and of course he had to walk himself, but this he did right cheerfully, supporting his poor patient as the mule proceeded.

He took him to an inn, but he did not leave him at the caravanserai and say, “Anybody will take care of him now,” but he went to the manager of the establishment and gave him money, and said, “Take care of him.” I admire that little sentence, because it is first written, “He took care of him,” and next he said, “Take care of him.” What you do yourself you may exhort other people to do. He said, “I leave this poor man with you, pray do not neglect him. There are a great many people in the inn, but take care of him.” “Is he a brother of yours?” “No, I never saw him before.” “Well, are you at all under obligation to him?” “No!—Yes, yes, I feel under obligation to everybody that is a man. If he wants help, I am obliged to help him.” “Is that all?” “Yes, but do take care of him. I feel a great interest in him.”

The Samaritan did not cease till he had gone through with his kindness. He said, “This money may not be sufficient, for it may be a long time before he is able to move. That leg may not soon heal, that broken rib may need long rest. Do not hurry him away, let him stop here, and if he incurs additional expense, I will be sure to pay it when I come back from Jerusalem again.” There is nothing like the charity which endures even to the end. I wish I had time to enlarge on all these things, but I cannot do so. Exhibit them in your lives and you will best know what they mean. Go and do likewise, each one of you, and thus reproduce the good Samaritan.

IV. But now, fourthly, WE HAVE A HIGHER MODEL than even the Samaritan—our Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not think that our divine Lord intended to teach anything about Himself in this parable, except so far as He is Himself the great exemplar of all goodness. He was answering the question, “Who is my neighbor?” and He was not preaching about Himself at all. There has been a great deal of straining of this parable to bring the Lord Jesus and everything about Him into it, but this I dare not imitate.

Yet by analogy we may illustrate our Lord’s goodness by it. This is a picture of a generous-hearted man who cares for the needy, but the most generous-hearted man that ever lived was the Man of Nazareth and none ever cared for sick and suffering souls as He has done. Therefore, if we praise the good Samaritan, we should much more extol the blessed Savior, whom His enemies called a Samaritan and who never denied the charge, for what cared He if all the prejudice and scorn of men should vent itself on Him?

Now, brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ has done better than the good Samaritan, because our case was worse. As I have already said, the wounded man could not blame himself for his sad estate—it was his misfortune, not his fault, but you and I are not only half dead, but altogether dead in trespasses and sins, and we have brought many of our ills upon ourselves. The thieves that have stripped us are our own iniquities. The wounds which we bear have been inflicted by our own suicidal hands. We are not in opposition to Jesus Christ as the poor Jew was to the Samaritan from the mere force of prejudice, but we have been opposed to the blessed Redeemer by nature—we have, from the first, turned away from Him. Alas, we have resisted and rejected Him.

The poor man did not put his Samaritan friend away, but we have done so to our Lord. How many times have we refused Almighty love! How often by unbelief have we pulled open the wounds which Christ has bound up! We have rejected the oil and wine which in the Gospel He presents to us. We have spoken evil of Him to His face and have lived even for years in utter rejection of Him, and yet in His infinite love He has not given us up, but He has brought some of us into His church, where we rest as in an inn, feeding on what His bounty has provided. It was wondrous love which moved the Savior’s heart when He found us in all our misery and bent over us to lift us out of it, though He knew that we were His enemies.

The Samaritan was akin to the Jew because he was a man, but our Lord Jesus was not originally akin to us by nature. He is God, infinitely above us, and if He were “found in fashion as a man” it was because He chose to be so. If He journeyed this way, *via* Bethlehem’s manger, down to the place of our sin and misery, it was because His infinite compassion brought Him there. The Samaritan came to the wounded one because in the course of business he was led there, and being there, he helped the man. But Jesus came to earth on no business but that of saving us, and He was found in our flesh that He might have sympathy with us. In the very existence of the man Christ Jesus you see the noblest form of pity manifested.

And being here, where we had fallen among robbers, He did not merely run risks of being attacked by thieves Himself, but He was attacked by them—He was wounded, He was stripped, and not half dead was He, but altogether dead, for He was laid in the grave. He was slain for our sakes, for it was not possible for Him to deliver us from the mischief which the thieves of sin had worked upon us except by suffering that mischief in His own person—and He did suffer it that He might deliver us.

What the Samaritan gave to the poor man was generous, but it is not comparable to what the Lord Jesus has given to us. He gave him wine and oil, but Jesus has given His heart’s blood to heal our wounds, “He loved us and gave himself for us.” The Samaritan *lent* himself with all his care and thoughtfulness, but Christ *gave* Himself even to the death for us. The Samaritan gave two pence, a large amount out of his slender store, and I do not depreciate the gift, but “He that was rich for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might be rich.” Oh, the marvelous gifts which Christ has bestowed upon us! Who is he that can reckon them! Heaven is among those blessings, but His own self is the chief boon.

The Samaritan’s compassion did but show itself for a short time. If he had to walk by the side of his mule, it would not be for many miles, but Christ walked by the side of us, dismounted from His glory, all through His life. The Samaritan did not stop long at the inn, for he had his business to attend to and he very rightly went about it, but our Lord remained with us for a lifetime, even till He rose to heaven—yea, He is with us even now, always blessing the sons of men.

When the Samaritan went away, he said, “Whatsoever you spend more I will repay you.” Jesus has gone up to heaven and He has left behind Him blessed promises of something to be done when He shall come again. He never forgets us. The good Samaritan, I dare say, thought very little of the Jew in later years. Indeed, it is the mark of a generous spirit not to think much of what it has done. He went back to Samaria and minded his business and never told anybody, “I helped a poor Jew on the road.” Not he. But of necessity our Lord Jesus acts differently, for because we have a constant need, He continues to care for us and His deed of love is being done, and done, and done again upon multitudes of cases and will always be repeated so long as there are men to be saved, a hell from which to escape, and a heaven to win.

I have thus set before you the highest example and I shall conclude when I have said two things. *Judge yourselves*, all you my hearers, if you are hoping for salvation by your own works. Look to what you must be throughout an entire life if your works are to save you. You must love God with all your heart and soul and strength, and your neighbor in this Samaritan’s fashion, even as yourself, and both of these without a single failure. Have you done this? Can you hope to do it perfectly? If not, why do you risk your souls in this frail skiff, this leaky, sinking craft of your poor works, for you will never get to heaven therein.

Lastly, you who are Christ’s people are saved and you are not going to do these things in order to save yourselves. The greater Samaritan has saved you—Jesus has redeemed you, brought you into His church, put you under the care of His ministers, bidden us take care of you, and promised to reward us if we do so in the day when He comes. *Seek, then, to be true followers of your Lord* by practical deeds of kindness and if you have been backward in your gifts to help either the temporal or the spiritual needs of men, begin from this morning with generous hearts and God will bless you. O divine Spirit, help us all to be like Jesus. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—LUKE 10:17-42
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—92 (verse 1), 15, 428.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.