

upon all alike, even to the peril of the ship and the crew. All but the transgressor were wondering what was wrong. They were wise enough to make an inquiry. They searched the ship and found the stranger and questioned him. And he, transgressor though he was, was honest enough to acknowledge that he was the cause, and magnanimous enough to ask them to cast him overboard rather than suffer all to be lost. There is good left even in the transgressor. He had no desire to bring harm to others but that follows as a natural consequence. And so he was cast overboard and there was a calm and the ship passed on in safety. But Jonah, where was he? The account says a great fish swallowed him up. We need not enter into speculation about the word. Let us trace the human and divine elements in the case. God prepares a way of escape from utter destruction and gives us sufficient opportunity to repent and work out our salvation. And out of the darkness and very bitterness of soul that result from transgression, "out of the belly of hell," we are often led to cry for a preserving power. And the Lord will hear. He heard Jonah and delivered him, so that Jonah was willing to declare that "Salvation is of the Lord."

This is one illustration of the law, and by going back a little farther we find a parallel instance, when the first man Adam was brought into the same lost condition by his own act. Then turn over the pages and we find that when the blessed Master was in the earth, he made that most practical and beautiful illustration of a certain man that had two sons. This is threadbare you may say. But still it comes up each time with force and weight, and may bring a new truth to some soul here. It corroborates our line of thought that sin is the result of man's own individual act. I believe in original sin, but not in inherited sin. If there is a soul here to-night in anguish it has been brought there on

account of its transgressing some commandment of the Lord. This has been my experience, and experience is the best teacher. We should read the Scriptures in the spiritual sense.

The father had two sons. The one chose to go forth from the parental roof. Jesus speaks of no hard feelings between father and son that caused him to leave; he had always been treated with love on the part of the father, which love was never abated though the son took his share of the goods and departed. The son did not see the consequences of separation from the father. He simply desired to go in the world and do for himself. But where do we find him? Away down there in the fields feeding with the swine. Into the very lowest condition of human life. But when he feels a thirst for better things, when he comes to a sense of his own situation, and remembers the abundance of his father's house, he revolves—What? to return. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." See the humbling condition necessary. "Make me as a hired servant." He was made willing to simply serve. He not only resolved but acted up to it. Good resolutions are of no use unless acted up to. It was not simply a faith, but a living faith.

And how did the father act towards this wanderer? Was he angry towards his disobedient son? Did he demand an atoning sacrifice to satisfy his wrath? No, not one word of it. He ran out to meet him. He embraced him. The son pours out from his penitent heart the open confession: "I have sinned in thy sight, take me back as a hired servant." The father calls his servants. To one: "Go kill the fatted calf." To another: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; "Let us eat, and be merry." And thus was the son received. He had of his own free choice brought