

the bondage of corruption, in being led captive by the devil at his will, without the least possibility of freeing themselves.

When you think of the Saviour's profound perception of spiritual evil, when you couple with it the melting pity which he ever showed to such poor wretches as a Magdalene, and consider the constant recurrence of such spectacles,—then you may see how intensely magnified were His merely physical sufferings by the keenness and extent of His mental emotion;—how wearing and harrassing they were to His bodily frame.

2. We must next notice the beautiful instance in our text of our Saviour's considerate kindness.

He who never thought or cared for His own ease or comfort; who never complained of His weariness or watching, of His hunger or thirst; was ever forward, with a divinely beautiful charity, to care for the minutest wants of others. He who endured the rigour of a forty days' fast, disregarding the solicitations of His bodily nature, will work a miracle rather than dismiss a hungry multitude fasting: yea, when there was no *necessity* at all, He will work a miracle rather than allow even shame to touch the feelings of those who honour Him—as in the miracle of Cana. And here, forgetful of Himself, He seems careful only for His disciples who humbly shared His labours: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile"—hereby providing, at once, for their bodily and spiritual refreshment.

3. We are now to consider the *end* of all this activity.

I suppose we must be all conscious that it was vastly more than the mere exercise of merely benevolent emotion, transient and aimless in its nature. No—there was too much of difficulty, of self-denial, and of sacrifice, in all this, to allow us to suppose that it proceeded from aught but solid principle, firm determination, and settled definite aims. While inferior motives were not disregarded, we feel assured that the Son of God aimed at men's salvation chiefly. The miracle of healing or of feeding was wrought for the body, but the *method* of it was studiously managed, that it might be instrumental to the effecting of a similar mercy for the soul. We know better, too, than to confine the glorious design of salvation to the multitudes of Judæa. That would be too small a result for the matchless love and divine activity of the Eternal Son.