

ternal reformation which is morality, but an inward change as well, a change of the very basis—of the very motives—of life, a turning right round.

By nature men are essentially selfish, self-centred. We often see this in young children who reveal their true nature before they are taught the courtesies of life. Some parents perhaps will need to think of their neighbor's children to appreciate the force of this! Whatever they see they want and generally get. Until they are taught better manners, they do not wish, as a rule, to share anything with their little brothers and sisters and playmates; they want everything for themselves. Now this is simply the selfishness which we all inherit in our animal nature. We very seldom see one animal generous enough to stand by until his neighbor eats and drinks; the strongest animal generally helps himself first and is not at all anxious as to whether anything is to be left for his fellows or not. We may often see this selfishness of our animal nature in unregenerate men. They really live for themselves and for their own; they are actuated by no high disinterested motives in life. When they engage in any enterprise, the question with them is not—What will do the most good to others? but What will bring the most material good to me and mine? Not What will help the poor or advance the cause of Christ? but What will best

serve my own personal considerations? And even in men who are truly Christian, this animalism often makes a bold stroke for the mastery. In the temptation to a flash of anger, a cruel word, a dishonest act, an untruthful statement for the sake of gain or to hide disgrace, self often strongly asserts itself, and has to be sternly bidden down or it would soon gain the upper hand. However much the natural man may gloss over by refinement and thereby conceal his selfishness, yet if you can get down to the very basis of his life, to the very motive springs of his conduct, I think you will find invariably that self in some form has the mastery; self is that about which everything is made to revolve; self is that to which everything is made to bow down and pay homage; self is the determining point in his character. Now this selfishness may assume many and various insidious forms. Social position, intellectual ambition, family ties, worldly pleasure, any or all of these things may be uppermost in our affections. Or, as was the case with the rich young ruler of our text, it may be worldly possessions—what we have and thereby are—that form the centre of our life. Now to all such persons, the message of Christ is—Give up all that. Make Me and not yourself the centre of your life. By nature we make everything revolve about self. By nature we are therefore self-centred; but we must become Christ-