

conversations—"surely you will no more listen to ravings like these! The man has no character; he speaks blasphemy—does His works of healing on the Sabbath—does not fast—drags out a mendicant existence—eats with unwashen hands—consorts with the vilest, doubtless from congeniality of feeling—'receives sinners and eats with them.'" Now it is partly to vindicate Himself against this accusation that the Saviour unfolds to them His principle of action, and appeals to the home-experience of them all whether that principle was not one of the commonest of life. The principle is this, that the mind uniformly goes out in deepest interest, among all the objects of attachment, after that one which is in peril. The three parables illustrate it well. You do not wonder that the woman should be listless about the nine pieces of silver, safe in the desk or in the drawer, but that she should be active and interested about the one piece which she had lost. You feel at once that it is nature for the shepherd to leave the ninety and nine folded, though it were in the wilderness, and seek in pit and glen for the one hapless which had wandered astray. And when the illustration is carried higher, and the thing in peril is not a coin, nor a sheep, but a child, you feel, in your heart of hearts—and it is commended to you by your own experience—by the clinging tenderness with which you yearned over the dying babe, by the wakeful anxiety with