

Just for a little—looking on him as the Saviour of Man—let us trace Him in His life work that we may catch something of His missionary spirit. The lesson to be drawn from this aspect of His life need not be mentioned; they appear in every incident. His commission we have seen included "preaching good tidings, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound." How greatly was all this carried out! He seems ever to have had before Him the fact that for Him there was a precise work to do, that His period for that work had its definite termination, and that therefore "He must work the works of Him that sent Him while it was day"—that the night was coming. Add to this the doing of His Father's will, and we have the key note to that wonderful life.

Notice His implicit confidence in His Father. The work before Him would entail sufferings, but "The Lord God will help Me, therefore have I set my face like a flint." "I know that thou hearest me always." This was enough. One moment the people to whom He was sent ~~wondered~~ at His gracious words—the next they were ready to murder Him; yet never once did He fail or falter, upheld by His Father's presence, His Father's smile. O, for a loving confidence like this; a trust that nothing shakes!

But notice again, His resolute purpose. "This one thing I do"—to seek and save the lost. This was with him an all-absorbing passion, and so it mattered little whether crowds hung on His word; or His audience consisted of only the few. His work was to save, and He labored with the one as with the many. See Him that day at Jacob's well. How much is implied in the words, "Jesus being wearied with His journey, sat *thus* on the well." It was noon-day, a time when even the very flocks rested; but Jesus cannot rest while even one is in wretchedness and sin; and so putting aside His own weariness and thirst, He pleads and labors with the woman, until she is brought to His feet in penitence. Only one soul to talk to, and that a woman, very humble and very repulsive too, yet He speaks not of His condescension, of the pity and love He had spent upon her. No, He had gained her, and through her would gain others, and this so filled His whole soul that He was satisfied.

Christ seemed to realize that this work needed preparation: or else why do we read "that rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" Why, after a long day's work does He, after seeing to the comfort of others, depart Himself alone into a mountain to pray. Why, but that He felt the need of direct communion with God: felt, that with "strong crying and tears." He must plead for those He would save. Trace the intention of these hours of prayer, and you will notice that it was always before, any great work, or after a specially long and fatiguing day that He sought this retirement with His Father. He not only prayed, but gained power and strength in secret communion.

No thought of self ever hindered Christ's work. On one occasion, He bids His disciples to "come apart into a desert place and rest awhile" and Mark adds this graphic touch: "For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." We can imagine the crowd with their sick to be healed, with their endless questions, many of which the great Father knew were asked only out of mere curiosity. An honest, earnest questioner Christ would have gladly hailed, but these must only have added to the weariness. Yet just as He goes to take the needed rest, He has compassion

on the multitude, and regardless of His own comfort and deaf to the entreaties of His disciples—"He spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing." O wondrous life of self-denial, of loving tenderness!

But He goes further. He could not be contented with preaching; could not even be contented with that last crowning act of His life, but during His ministry He sought the lost! "The Son of Man is come to seek." "He looked up, and saw Zachæus." We have but scanty record of any success in His work, yet it needs no great stretch of imagination to picture many other such cases, cases that only He *looked for*, and sought out sinners like Zachæus from whom others turned away. A funeral train was a common sight then as now, but He who was always about "His Father's business" who "went about doing good" the Man, Christ Jesus, saw in it a human heart in trouble, and independently of the wondrous miracle, what comfort must have come to that mother in the simple words He uttered, "Weep not," O the tenderness, the loving sympathy wrapped up in them, how the sore heart must have leaped at the very sound of His voice.

But once more we notice how He came into personal contact with those He sought to save or His words expressed love and tenderness, but the touch of His hand far more. Small marvel would it have been if He had done no more than speak. But, "He came near," "He touched," "He laid His hand upon her," the story reads again and again. Was it necessary this personal contact? They were so ignorant, so degraded, so loathsome with disease. He so pure, so far removed from them surely to speak was all that could be expected of Him, but remember, His work was to do His Father's will, and that will was the salvation of souls. Listen to the record once again, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." It made no difference, through the body he might reach the soul; and so, "He laid His hand on every one of them." The sinful, the sick, the doubter, all might come near, might touch Him and feel confident of only tender, loving words. We have looked at but a few of the many characteristics which marked the life of the first great Missionary; but we have seen enough to cease to wonder at the enthusiasm His life begat in His early followers.

Sending them out that through them He might carry on the great work on which His heart was set. He said to them, "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." "My Father sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and all this is yours to do." And is it any wonder that when the first missionaries of the cross went out, that "the people took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They had caught His spirit of self-denial, of loving tenderness, of singleness of purpose, caught it until they counted it all joy to give their all; caught it until one of them looking back over three years of service could say that in all that time he had "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Shall we, too, catch the inspiration of this wondrous life? He is our elder brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, "It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren." So that we too may come very near, and O let us ponder His life, until we too hear Him saying to us, "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

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