

is lost; as the ship which rots in harbor is lost! Are not these souls made for God's glory? ought not every power about them to conduce to *that*? oh, what loss of noble possibilities unless they do! What glory ought we to have rendered to God, what good to man, what knowledge and happiness to ourselves! And if a soul's whole powers and energies are given to the mere supply of wants that end upon a present life and world,—to the mere earning of the daily bread—is not that soul a noble thing *lost*, a noble machinery whose power is wasted and flung away!

In all these senses, and more, the Saviour's description of us is a sound and just one. Each of us is lost. We have indeed the means of knowing what was the Saviour's especial meaning when he spake of us as such. It should seem from the parables of the lost sheep and the lost piece of money, that the thoughts present to His mind were, mainly, that we are lost, in the sense in which any precious possession is lost when we have no longer the use of it; and that we are lost, in the sense that we have wandered away, and by ourselves never will return. But in any case, the text reminds us of what the Blessed Redeemer did for us in our lost estate. He came to seek and save us.

Yes: "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." When we were lost, *that* was what He did for us. Is it needful to repeat that old story, that good news which never can be repeated too often, but which I trust we all know and love so well, of how the blessed redeemer came to the world, and wore our manhood about his God-head, and lived and died to save? Let us try to meet a difficulty which we may have heard not unfrequently stated, and which at the first glance appears to have much weight. Can it be believed, say some, when they read such words as those of the text,—can it be believed that Christ, the Creator and Preserver of countless worlds, would come to this little speck in immensity,—would live here in human form for three-and-thirty years, and here would suffer and die,—all "to seek and to save that which was lost,"—all to work out fallen man's salvation? And truly, when in the starry night you look up at the glittering host above you, and think of their incalculable number and vastness, and remember how it is the creed of the philosopher, and, as some have maintained, the faith of the Christian, that each of these gigantic orbs, among which the earth is a sand-grain, has its own teeming population of rational and immortal life, do you not feel as the psalmist felt when he said, in the contemplation of that grand sight, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him!" Was it worth the Saviour's while to come down to so little a world, to seek and save a lost thing so very small!

Yes, brethren; reason and experience come in here to confirm the teachings of Revelation; it is quite credible, quite natural by the very make of all things, that the Son of Man, Creator of the universe as He was, should "come to seek and to save that which was lost." By the very make and nature of the universe, if a thing goes wrong, it becomes a matter of special interest. Suppose that some skilful engineer is watching the first trial of some great, complicated piece of machinery; suppose that a hundred pistons and cranks and levers go right, but that he sees away in a corner some little piece of machinery going wrong, jarring and straining; do you think that the skilful mechanician will for the time forget all the rest of his engine, and concentrate his attention on that little thing that is wrong, till he has got it right? And even so we may think of the great Creator, as He looks upon the system of things playing beneath Him, turning away from a million worlds, where there is no sin nor sorrow, where there is no jarring of the grand machinery, and coming down to this world, that is wrong, to set it right, to this race, that is lost, to seek and save!

Did not the man leave the ninety and nine sheep that were safe, and give his entire thought and energy to the finding of the one that had gone astray! That sheep had been an unnoticed unit in a mass; it was singled out, it became of importance, just by going wrong. A thing which never attracted attention when going right, often becomes a matter of much interest when it goes wrong. Some little detail in your household arrangements,—some little nerve in your physical frame,—you never thought of it,—but you are obliged to think of it now that it is jarring and tingling. And does not the sick member of the family awaken more interest, and get more care, than all the rest put together? How softly you speak to the dying ear; how kindly you clasp the dying hand; how anxiously you moisten the dying lips; how lightly fall the foot-steps round the dying bed! You were kind enough, perhaps; but you know you never were so careful in the days of health and vigor. And have we not all been touched to see how the special care and fondness of the mother of a healthful, hopeful family centre on her poor little deformed child,—that poor little thing that must face the toils and trials of life at so sad a disadvantage? And even so may Jesus look upon this defaced and deformed world: the poor object amid a fair family of millions; the one, perhaps, in all He made that fell!—Or, to take a familiar instance, suppose a merchant is balancing his books at the end of the year; suppose that in his calculation thousands and thousands of figures are right, and only one is wrong; does he not fix upon the little error, and labor and labor on *that* till it is put right? And even so, we may say, does God hunt out the error that has