

what it meant in Roman days for people to pass under the yoke, why then he simply set them to work at lime-kilns, drawing harrows, cutting down trees and using saws; quite different, is it not? But it is astonishing to see how eager some people are to get a shot against the Bible. They do not stop to see if there is anything in their hand, but if it only appears to be something that can be hurled against the Word of God, away it goes! It reminds me of the strictures of one of the Boston papers, stating that the whole story of the quails in the wilderness was absolutely absurd, because Moses represented them as falling on the earth several cubits high; and an estimate was made by the editor as to how many each Hebrew would have for his breakfast, dinner and supper, and how many he would have over to give to the heathen neighbours around about! If I should tell you that coming here to this church to-night I saw a flock of quails three cubits high, you would not think I saw them *piled* three cubits high, but *flying* three cubits high, so that I could take a stick and knock them down easily. That is exactly what Moses meant, that they came within reaching distance so that they could be easily knocked down. He did not consider, I dare say, that the newspapers were ever going to be published, or gather such absurdity from the language he used. As I have said, the ethical truth of the Bible is marvellous,—no condoning of offences, no commending of iniquities,—the purest moral code ever found in the world, absolutely free from all adulteration. And then, when you come to its splendid conceptions, look at the spiritual truth,—think of God, Eternal, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Infinite, All-wise, just, good, merciful, true, a Spirit, and a Spiritual God. And then think of the fact that there are no half-truths in this Bible,—I think that is also most marvellous. I will give you one illustration if you will bear with me. Take the fifteenth chapter of Luke, it is a most instructive chapter, it contains three illustrations, three revelations as to the "lost, found." It is a common thing for ministers of the Gospel and commentators to say that it contains *three* parables; it contains only one. He "spoke *this* parable unto them;" it is in three forms of representation; he does not pass to the second and third and say "another parable," because it is one parable illustrating one great subject, and there are three divisions or representations. We recognize the trend of the parable, it is how the lost is found. I simply want to call attention to the fact that no half-truths are presented in this chapter. The first part of this parable is the shepherd seeking the lost sheep and carrying it back on the shoulder; it is not even led or driven home, but is borne home on the shoulder, the place of strength. In the second part, the woman loses a piece of silver from her necklace, and sweeps the whole house until she finds it, but even when found it must be lifted up, and placed there on the necklace among its fellows. Well, after you have got these two representations you might suppose that, in the matter of salvation, God does all and man has nothing to do; he is simply the sheep lost by wandering to be found and brought back, or like the senseless coin on which the image and superscription of God was once placed, which, by contact with the world and currency in a worldly society has had that image and superscription defaced, if not effaced; and which must be picked up by the Spirit of God, who with His lit candle searches for the lost soul among the rubbish of this world, and who reclaims it and puts it on the necklace of the Bride of Christ. Christ does not leave us with these half-truths. Men leave us with half-truths, and perplex us by omissions, but here Christ goes on, and he gives us the third representation that completes the three-fold parable: A certain man had two sons.

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