

house of Saul to perish. But his own heart condemned him, and history would have fixed a brand upon his memory. Two and twenty years of a chequered life had not blotted out the recollection of Jonathan's self sacrificing love, and the plea, "for Jonathan's sake" had power with him still. Gratitude is often the spring of generous deeds. Show kindness to one and you make him by the act feel kindly to others. The hard and cruel selfishness of rich men adds gall to the bitterness of poverty. The frozen heart that does not thaw at sight of human misery will send an icy chill into the heart of the miserable; and God knows they do not need that! There is one to whom we all owe an infinite debt of gratitude and love. Face to face with death and the curse of sin, He sacrificed his life to save ours. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. A Scotch preacher had the following circumstances come under his observation: "There was a poor woman in the parish, who was about to be turned out because she could not pay her rent. One night she heard a loud knocking at the door, and she made no answer, and continued to hide herself. She was frightened almost unto death. She said: 'That's the officer of the law come to throw me out of my home.' A few days after a Christian philanthropist met her in the street, and said: 'My poor woman, where were you the other night? I came round to your house to pay your rent. Why didn't you let me in, were you at home?' " "Why" she replied, "was that you?" "Yes that was me; I came to pay your rent." "Why," she said, "if I had had any idea it was you I would have let you in. I thought it was an officer come to cast me out of my home." Oh! soul; that loud knocking at thy gate to-day is not the Sheriff come to put you in jail; it is the best friend you ever had come to go your security. You shiver with terror because you think it is wrath. It is mercy. Realize this wonderful love of Christ, and you will find self-denial and self-surrender a possible thing, and but the natural return of love for love. He who is born of God and constrained by the love of Christ is conscious of an instant enlargement of sympathy. The heart that has room for Christ has room for all whom Christ loves, and its instinctive yearning cry is—"Are there any to whom I can show kindness for Jesus' sake?"

IV. *The question is answered.*—"And there was of the house of Saul a servant

whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the King said unto him, art thou Ziba? And he said, thy servant is he. And the King said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the King, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the King said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the King, Behold he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodabar." What an illustration have we here of the proverb—"Our fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Fathers, whose only entail is guilt and a curse must not be surprised if reverses come upon their families, and their children live to execrate their memory. The retributions of Providence are stern and exacting. That which is called in Scripture "the bloody house of Saul" was brought to ruin. A fragment remains, a mutilated fragment, like a shattered column of a stately palace, once the pride and glory of the land. A lame youth is discovered, the last and only member of the house of Saul in any sense worthy of this kindness of David. But the fact that one was found is instructive. Every honest inquiry, like that of the text, is sure to meet with a ready response. Earnest, willing workers are not overshadowed by the Great Master for want of work. The sum of human misery is always equal to the sum of human sympathy. There is no superfluity of virtue in the Church or in the world. Charity need never run to waste for want of an object on which to exercise its power. He who seeks will find abundant opportunities of doing good. David no sooner put the question than a lame youth was discovered who needed and deserved his uttermost kindness. As a rule those objects of sympathy which are only to be found when sought are worthier than those which obtrusively thrust themselves in your way. "The poor ye have always with you." "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

V. *Action is taken.*—"Then King David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodabar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth! And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."