

need to wait—that we all may be healed—that his only question is, Wilt thou be made whole?

3. Beware of wicked, cavilling objections against the gospel. Acts xiii. 41.

DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED.

There is no evil so inveterate that Christ cannot cure it. Mark v. 5; Luke xiii. 16; John x. 25; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. ii. 1; 1 John i. 7.

FIRST SABBATH OF SEPTEMBER

SUBJECT: *The lost sheep and the lost piece of money.* Luke xv. 1-10. (Compare Matt. xviii. 12, 13.)

The three parables contained in this chapter are closely connected. Their general aim is to show forth the great love of God, his power to save to the uttermost, and his tender solicitude, even for those whom men may despise and regard as lost and reprobate. The lost sheep is a type of the heedless, stupid sinner. The lost piece of money represents the sinner wholly unconscious of his own state. The prodigal son represents the sinner who knowingly and wilfully chooses sin and its pleasures. Our lesson includes the first two.

Vv. 1, 2.—“*Publicans*”—tax-gatherers—those who collected the public revenue. They were of two classes, the higher being respectable Roman citizens; the lower, generally outcast Jews. They were keenly hated, partly because of their extortion, but mainly as serving to remind the Jews of their servitude to the Romans. “*Sinners*”—heathens—persons who did not observe the law of Moses. These the Jews called sinners, as if they were not such themselves! Jesus deals with publicans and sinners as he would have done with the people of Jerusalem had they received him—most tenderly welcoming them, teaching them divine truth, showing them the way of peace and safety. These outcasts crowd around Jesus and he receives them. This is the glory of Christ and of the gospel, to rescue the fallen and the outcast. The physician heals the sick. To do his work of mercy Christ followed sinners to their houses, to their meals and tables. At this manifestation of grace the Pharisees “murmured!” God and his angels rejoiced, but *they* and the devil “murmured.”

Vv. 3-7.—*Wilderness*—the grassy plains, hillsides and valleys of the east, where sheep and cattle are fed and tended. Shepherds of the east, at the present day, often carry pack and straying sheep on their shoulders. The good shepherd misses the one out of the hundred. Christ left heaven and came here to bear our sins, and to carry us home to heaven on his shoulders rejoicing. God has multitudes to serve him, but he seeks man

and saves him. No creature strays more easily than a sheep, and none find it more difficult to regain the flock and fold. A just emblem of us! *Joy in heaven*,—envy and wrath and murmuring on earth. *Needing no repentance*, in their own eyes. Christ here referred probably to the “righteous” Pharisees and Jews whose outward observances were perfect. It may also refer to the heavenly hosts who have never strayed like lost sheep.

V. 8.—Piece of silver here mentioned is the *drachma*, worth about 16 cents of our money. God lights the candle of his word and goes forth in search of the sinner. A lost silver coin may be in the mire, dirty, trodden under foot, the image and superscription defaced, like *men* when lost to God. It is from this forlorn condition that God rescues him. Sweeping raises a “dust,” but it discovers the coin. We must not complain though noise and dust should sometimes accompany God’s work among men: these are the *human* elements.

Vv. 9, 10.—*Rejoice with me.* Our salvation is God’s joy; our destruction he regards as his loss. His name and image are on us, and he declares our conversion to the angels and they too rejoice.

LESSONS.

1 In the lost sheep and the piece of money we have symbols of our own state by nature.

2. The shepherd and the woman seek “*until they find*” the lost objects. God and Christ in like manner seek and save to the uttermost; and as the sheep and the piece of money would be forever lost had the search ceased sooner, so the sinner is lost unless God completes his work of seeking and saving. From this we see our entire dependence on God in Christ.

3. Christ is the good shepherd. “He transferred our burdens to himself and became a victim for us.”

4. If there is joy in heaven over the conversion of one sinner, how much more over the conversion of multitudes! How awful must be the loss of a soul! How infinite the value of a soul!

5. We should rejoice in the conversion of sinners and seek to promote it.

DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED.

All mankind have departed from God. Rom. iii. 9-23; Gal. iii. 22; Psalm xiv. 1, 2, &c., &c. All experience and observation confirms this doctrine of scripture.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT: *Christ feeding five thousand, and walking on the sea.* Matt. xiv. 13-33.

Feeding the five thousand. This miracle is the only one recorded by all the evangelists. With Matt. xiv. 13-21 compare