

## GOSPEL OF LUKE

(Discourse below by J. Hemery, Glasgow Convention, August 23 to 25, in 1913 Convention Report, starting on page 378.)

Some time ago when in Glasgow—not a convention time, however—but when we were visiting the friends here, we went over the Gospel of Mark, and I thought that this afternoon we might look through the Gospel of Luke, the Beloved Physician. This can, however, be done only in a very cursory manner in the time at our disposal, but I am sure that the Lord will bless our endeavors to learn something from his account. We might, in passing, note some of the differences there are in the several gospels, and we might also note why there are these differences. We sometimes tell the people that when they know *how* to study the gospel they become a most entrancing study for those who undertake it. I have never studied the science of astronomy nor have I ever gazed through telescope or microscope, but judging from all that we see of the faces of those who have scanned the heavens above or have explored the earth beneath there is not the joy in the study of these matters to be compared with that joy which is gained from the study of the word of God, and these matters cannot really be so interesting to these others because their hearts cannot be touched as our hearts can be, and *are*, touched, for *we* get both the telescopic and the microscopic view. God is seen in all His grandeur of character, and His works are seen in all their wonderful beauty.

You all know and realize that the gospels vary. There is a purpose in each gospel in itself, and each writer writes from a different standpoint. Matthew has his own particular view of the love of God, and Mark has his view also, and so has John his own particular object before him in writing and each writer has his own particular way of writing his narrative. These things are seen very easily and very readily if we are on the outlook, but we have not been in the way of taking note of them properly. We have been something like those people who ride about in motor cars. They take little notice of the signboards or finger posts so long as they know the main road they are in at the time. We can look back to a time when we were in the habit of reading God's word only casually. Our reading was almost half promiscuously until the Lord showed us how and where to "divide" the word of God. Even then we have not been equal to learn all the lessons.

The very fact that there are four accounts of our Lord's life should lead us to think that the Lord Jehovah has something special in giving us these. There is quite a lot of difference in the four gospels. Very briefly we might summarize the differences in this way: Matthew writes from the Jewish standpoint and tells of our Lord as the Great King of the Jews—the Messiah, and so when he begins to write of Jesus he gives the genealogy of Jesus from David and from Abraham. He is concerned about the coming of the Great King, and he tells of the wise men coming asking: "Where is He that is born

King of the Jews?” Matthew is concerned in showing that Jesus is of the select family through the Royal Line—Heir to the Kingdom.

When our Lord begins His ministry He says, “Repent! for the *Kingdom* is at hand.” When you get Matthew telling our Lord’s sayings you find very much there about the “Kingdom of Heaven.” You might say perhaps that the phrase “the Kingdom of Heaven” is one of the most frequently used phrases in the Bible and it may surprise you to know that we do not find that term anywhere but in Matthew’s gospel. You read elsewhere of “The Kingdom of the Heavens,” but not that phrase, “the Kingdom of Heaven.” We ought to ask ourselves Why? (Scholars are reckoned good scholars when they are ready to ask questions which are calculated to help them.) The phrase is not found elsewhere because Matthew makes “the Kingdom of Heaven” and the advent of the King his theme.

Mark, in his gospel, does not concern himself as to how or when or where Jesus was born, whether He was born “King of the Jews” or not. He begins by telling of our Lord’s ministry, but he does not tell us of the incidents connected with our Lord’s birth, nor mark any particular distinction in this way. The distinctive feature of Mark’s gospel is seen in *Service*. How full of it this gospel is! How full of services our Lord’s life was! We had quite a profitable time looking over these things when we were here last. We say that our Lord was ever and at all times willing to do His Father’s will at all costs, and was always seeking to know and understand His Father’s will more and more, and to prove Himself a faithful servant.

Again, John does not tell us of our Lord being born “King of the Jews,” nor does he tell us, as Luke tells us, about our Lord’s birth at Bethlehem, or of the incidents connected with it, but he tells us of the One who “was with the Father” before the world was, but who was “found in fashion as a man.” (That is not John’s term but it means that, all the same.) “The Logos was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.” John tells us of how the Son of God was made flesh and dwelt among us, and how we may be linked up to Him by faith.

Luke has an entirely different purpose in his gospel. He himself being a Gentile was used of the Lord to tell of His glory, and of the blessings which were to come to the Gentiles, and he is not particularly concerned to show that the Lord was born of the Jews to be the “King of the Jews,” but rather how, being born of a woman, into the world apparently in the normal way—how He is linked up with God through His (supposed) parentage. Luke traces His genealogy through Joseph to David and Abraham and back and back and back until he says, “Seth who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God.” Luke shows that God intended that His Son should be the man among men to die for the race of mankind and ultimately to be their Savior also.

These thoughts seem so easy when once we get into touch with them; they help us to at once see the purport of each respective Gospel. We can understand a good many things in Matthew's gospel we cannot comprehend otherwise. It is the same with Mark's account. We will grow to understand our Lord's lowly humble position on earth—how Jesus had emptied Himself to be a servant amongst those who should serve. Luke tells of the wider ministry of how the blessing of the Lord was to go to the Gentiles; all that we find in Luke's gospel is along that line of thought. Let us take some of his passages and examine them briefly in passing.

There are four songs given in Luke's gospel, one by Mary, one by Zacharias, the father of John; one by Simeon, and one by the Angels. You will see that they have all of them the same thoughts running through them. Take the first chapter and the 46th verse, reading to verse 55. This shows Mary's song, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," and so on (you can read it through for yourselves). You will notice as you read these verses that all these passages show forth the diversified wisdom of God. Those who had been hungering and wearily waiting for some revelation were now to be filled and satisfied. So Mary says, praying by the Holy Spirit surely, "He [the Lord] hath put down the mighty from their seats." See how this fits the Gentiles, and how Luke well tells us later on, "He hath filled the hungry with good things"—that is the "Lazarus" class—"but the rich [man] He sent empty away." What Mary said, speaking by the Holy Spirit, shows the beginning of the ministry.

Then we have Zacharias' song, from the 64th verse of this same chapter. What beautiful words! What a beautiful picture! The dear old man's tongue was loosened, and his mouth was opened immediately, and he praised God. He, like Mary, takes note and makes mention of the oath which God made to Abraham, and Zacharias says (verse 42) that God was to keep His promise and was about to "perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant"—the blessing of all the families of the earth—no mere Jewish calling now, for in verse 44 we read, "To give knowledge of salvation until His people by the remission of their sins" (beautiful words! We escape these things in our swift reading), "through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness"—the poor Gentiles who for 4,000 years had had no light. (I say 4,000 years but there were actually no Gentiles except from the days of Abraham when the world was divided into the elect and non-elect.) And the song concludes, "And to guide our feet into the way of peace." Grand! is it not?

Then we have Simeon's song in the second chapter, from the 28th verse onwards. The old man took the young babe in his arms (you can see him there in the Temple Courts—the old patriarch with his eyes glazing with age—probably shaking as he took the child, and the mother looking on and wondering as he took her babe up in his arms) and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have

seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people—a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.” There is a wideness in the gospel right away at the beginning of it.

Luke, as a Gentile, has to tell how this great Savior was linked in His humble, lowly way with the sons of men. We might say that this gospel is a “human document.” It is the only gospel that begins as from a man to a man. It is a sort of letter written from one man to another. See the 1st verses of the gospel, “Unto thee, Theophilus.” It is, if we might use the phrase, “a deeply human document,” full of that which thrills and fills the human heart. Was ever any tale told so solicitously? “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed amongst us... it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.” “It seemed good to *me* also”—a letter from a man to his friend—but exalted to be one of the words of God, and full of those touches which give pleasure to the human heart. What mother has not rejoiced over these things who knew anything of this word of God? How she has shared in the joy over this young child!

Then, again, Luke tells us of the song of the angels in the 2nd chapter. “I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to ALL people; for unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord... Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.” “Which shall be to ALL people!” “Gladness come for ALL people!”

Here is the foundation the writer has laid, and as you follow him going through this gospel, his theme—his plan—comes out wonderfully clear and very helpful for study; but now instead of taking a detailed account I want you to go with me briefly through the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of this gospel by Luke. In these chapters we have *seven* parables set before us, and I would like you to note them. If you are wise you will put a little pencil mark against each so that you may remember them when you see them again. Here in these 2 or 3 chapters you have a series of 7 parables that are peculiar in their setting—at any rate, to Luke’s gospel, and some of them are peculiar to Luke.

We might digress a little here, I would remind you that Matthew has seven parables in the 13th chapter of his gospel having as their theme “the Kingdom of Heaven.” You may be quite sure that when the Holy Spirit has given us such a cluster of parables there is a particular lesson for us to notice. These are the dividing marks in the word of God. They are the finger-posts to guide us through the word of God. These 7 parables in the 13th of Matthew’s gospel all relate to the Kingdom of Heaven and what happened or would happen to it.

Here in this passage in Luke we have seven parables all related to one another. The first you will find in the 14th chapter beginning at verse 7. Our Lord went out one Sabbath day to have a meal “in the house of one of the chief Pharisees,” and He sat there and talked we may be quite sure that He watched the people coming in. He no doubt noticed that they did not wait as they came in at the doorway for their host to place them at the table, but, coming in sometimes two and three together, they made for the finest seats at the table, thus showing the real Pharisee spirit. They thought proudly and exceedingly highly of themselves and, more than that, they expected other people to think the same of them. It is good and desirable to have a proper amount of self-confidence but keep it in its proper place and proper quantity—just as much as enable a man to be of service to His God, his neighbors and himself. But, to continue the narrative—the Pharisees took these high places and our Lord sat looking at them until He could bear it no longer and He thought He would say something, and so we read in Luke 14:7, “He put forth a parable to those which were bidden when He marked how they chose out the chief room, saving unto them” (read for yourselves the narrative).

When a man thinks so highly of himself as to take the highest place of his own choice, when he thinks so well of himself as that, he forgets the shame that may come upon him if he has to be asked to move down to make room for one more worthy than he. His arrogance has blinded him and he does not see the other side of things.

“But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room that when he that bade thee cometh he may say unto thee ‘Friend, go up higher!’” Then He gave them some further advice, and, as He was talking, one man in the company blurted out, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God.” He must have been touched with our Lord’s words, and probably he had a good impulse within him just at that moment, but the Lord put the best to him and took the opportunity of showing those around Him that those people who were always TALKING—and ONLY talking—about the things of God were missing the very things that they were talking about; and in further support of what He has said He gives them another parable—the parable of a man who made a great supper. The message goes out to the guests that all things are in readiness for them, but they all begin “with one accord” to make excuse. The Lord was showing these people who had some expectation of being members in the Kingdom of God that they were having the very opportunities before them there and then, but their eyes were so filled with the things that they themselves had put there—their own desires and purposes and ideas—that they could not see the things that God was offering them.

You all know the parable. You remember that they all with one accord made excuses, almost as if they had made up the answer they were each to give to the servant. They declined the invitation and others actually came into the place of favor who never for a moment expected it. You remember that some out of the street were gathered in. “Go into the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be

filled.” The Lord wanted to show that those who were *always talking* about these things were the very people who had received the invitation but were so filled with their own little concerns that they had done—and were doing—despite to the heavenly call or invitation. It is the same in the two parables. There were those who were placing themselves in certain high positions and who were reminded of the danger of being called out of the higher places to take the lowest places. “Yes,” says our Lord, in effect, “you are like the people invited, you are missing the very thing you want, and which is being offered to you.” There is the same lesson in both parables but pointed a little differently in each of them.

Then there is a little break in the series of parables until we come to the well-known 15th chapter of Luke’s gospel. The Pharisees came to our Lord but they came with a critical ear and wanted to catch Him. They were always seeking to trip Him up that they might make an accusation against Him; but the poor despised “Publicans and Sinners” amongst the community drew near the Lord—as our quaint English has it—“for to *hear* Him,” *not* to catch Him, but to listen to what this man had to say to them. The Pharisees did not care to come too near to these publicans and sinners. If they had to come near to them at any time or place they lifted their eyes and hands and said, “I thank Thee, God, that I am not as *this* man.” The Pharisees pointed their prayers at them and thus made a difference in the attitude towards God. Here our Lord Jesus Christ *actually* went in their company—with them. He was charged with the offense—the terrible offense—of eating with them (the publicans and sinners) and how glad we are that the Lord did draw near to them and did eat with them! This spirit shows out in Luke continually. He wants to show that our Lord was “one of the people,” come to be their Savior, to lift those who were willing up to a place in harmony with God and His will. What gracious words fell from our Lord’s lips when “the publicans and sinners drew near!” If our Lord *did* speak sharp words it was not to the “publicans and sinners,” but to the Scribes and Pharisees. Luke 11:42: “Woe unto you Pharisees!” Again in verses 43 and 44. He spoke gracious words unto the publicans and sinners. Yes! and the Scribes and Pharisees *murmured*. “This man receiveth sinners—and eateth with them!” Whoever heard of such a thing as that? Anyone wanting to be reckoned a holy man would keep away from sinners; but “this man” was actually found eating with them and sharing with them. The grace of God was being manifested. The Scribes and Pharisees of old murmured, and so it is today when we tell of a message which we have from God through His holy word, that there is hope for the great mass of “publicans and sinners,” and as we tell of that hope and scatter our words of truth abroad the people murmur. They do not like us to tell of the mercy and grace of God. But Jesus was right and surely we are right in following in His footsteps. Whoever went wrong through hearing of the grace and mercy and love of God? We know of a great many who have “gone right” through it, but never of any who have “gone wrong” in that way! Our Lord spoke this parable now before us to the Scribes and Pharisees—the *righteous* men of the nation.

Here we have the “Lost Sheep” parable. You all know it. Notice how personal our Lord’s words are, “And *I* say unto *you*.” Then immediately, without elaborating further than was absolutely necessary on the parable, He gave them another parable. “Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it.” This is frequently called the parable of the Lost Piece of Silver. Oh, how beautifully this is put! Note the reference to the angels particularly in our Lord’s comment. “There is joy *in the presence of the angels of God*.” Who rejoice? “Joy in the presence of the angels of God.” The angels look on and they are mightily pleased with you who “seek first the Kingdom of God.” “Joy in the presence of the angels.” See these two parables, numbers 3 and 4. One tells of the love of God for His fallen race. We think that this one wayward sheep in this parable represents the race of mankind—the children of Adam—gone away on the mountains of sin—into the wilderness of desolation—away from God, and *lost*. This parable, short as it is, is intended to show us of the love of the Great Shepherd—the great God of Israel—the Most High over all the earth. How did this fallen race ever have a place in His heart so that He will work out a mighty plan, taking thousands of years to accomplish, in order to bless this people? God might have acted otherwise; He might have cut off the “wandering sheep” from His favor—cut them off from all favor to all eternity, but the love of God for that poor “lost sheep” was so great that He sent His Son from Heaven to save “that which was lost”—not only the life of the race but the race of mankind itself. Brethren, until we get an answer to this question of the fate of the “lost sheep”—such answer as we have received in knowing the Plan of the Ages—our heart could never rest satisfied. Unless we know that somehow God will deal adequately with the great evil that is in the world, and that He will in a Godlike fashion make good come out of it, and that everlastingly—until then our hearts cannot bow down before Him and adore Him and extol His Holy Name—not while the great question mark is written so large before our eyes. Not until we see the great sweep of the great love and plan of God can we praise God with our heart and soul and mind. But now we know that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world and that the angels’ song was the true foreshadowing of what is future. Now we can love God with all our mind and all our heart. No man can love God with all his heart while this great question mark—the fate of the “wandering sheep”—is there. He *must*—God *will*—work out His purposes until ill has been turned into good and to the praise and glory of God and the good of His people.

Look now at the parable of the money. It was not just a piece of money that was lost but those who know tell us that it was one of the pieces of “money” or silver that a woman in the East wears for her ornament, to show her to be a married woman. These meant the same thing to an Eastern woman and were treasured in the same way as a woman here takes her wedding ring. There would be some looking and searching if the wedding ring were lost. If a married woman went about the world without it, it would signify a change of mind since she put it on first. This was a piece of “money” from this girdle around the forehead which was lost, and the woman’s honor was in question so long as there was

something lacking here. Quite an important thing to the woman in the East this girdle was. She has lost part of this and she must search diligently “until she find it.” Her neighbors see her and come to help her to search for this lost piece until she has got it, and the circular girdle is again complete. My dear brethren, from the world’s point of view, and from the *Christian* world’s point of view, God’s honor is in question over this great matter of the permission of evil and why death has been allowed to reign, why God has not done more to avert this calamity which is before every generation of the sons of men. Is His love strong enough to attempt to undo the misery? His honor is involved and it must be cleared. Why does He not do it? God shows us here from our Lord’s beautiful parable that He will never rest until He has done this great work of revealing Himself and His love and proving Himself the God of love, justice, power and wisdom to all men, that they may praise Him to all eternity. There must never be anything lacking in the praise of God. No more will there be a great question before angels and men when once God has carried out His plan. The angels have wondered; men have wondered. Yet all this is given to *us* and *we* can see that God’s honor and the majesty of His character will be manifested when His work is accomplished. Our Lord was driving this lesson home to the Pharisees and to the Gentiles; He was showing them that *all* the race were precious in the sight of God. A grand word comes out in Paul’s epistle to the Romans, not to the Pharisees only, but to the Jews who thought that *they* were the only people of God, “Is He the God of the Jews only?” “Is He the God of the Jews only?” I repeat it. What will the god of a people do for them? He will bless them and multiply them and protect them from their enemies. “Is he the God of the Jews only?” says Paul. He says that He is the God of the Gentiles too, and soon the whole world will see that God is as much for them as for Israel. He will yet show Himself to be the God of the Jews and Gentiles, and the God of the race of mankind, although in the meantime He is hiding Himself behind the clouds.

The Lord pushes this lesson home further in the parable of the Prodigal Son. See the picture. Two young men at home with their father; one is a very good sort of a man; the other one warm-hearted but more impulsive. He got discontented and felt the blood of his veins run quicker; and being more sensitive to influences, he lived quicker, felt more and greater possibilities within him, and thought that it would be better for him to give himself new experience, and having resolved to go away from home, he asked his father for the portion which belonged to him and went away “into a far country.” He got badly done too! Probably he got among thieves. He wasted his money. How all things hurt when the trials came to pinch him! He thought about his father and how kind his father had been and how his father treated his servants; and he said: “There is no servant in my father’s house suffers as much as I do, and he is there taking care of them all the time; I would rather be a servant in my father’s house,” and away he went home. “I will arise and go to my father,” and he made up what he would say to his father. He never dreamed that his father would be on the lookout for him, but his father saw him coming. The old man thought that some time that lad would come back. He never lost faith in him. He

was not going to be ashamed when his son came back. Love and honor never failed there; and when the young man “was yet a long way off”—the boy with his head down, coming pretty quickly, the old man, strong with the strength of love, ran to meet him, fell on his neck and kissed him; and brought him home in triumph. A picture of the love of God! Our Lord is here showing the love of the Father—the greatness of His mercy, and all those things which make existence glorious.

How the Pharisees must have squirmed when they heard the Lord tell about this, and recalled His previous remarks about the “publicans and sinners!” “He’s saying that the publicans and sinners are better than we are,” they murmured. The Lord was saying, that the publicans and sinners had a better heart than they. Notice again, the elder son actually grumbled because his father made a feast for the younger son. The old man had a warm heart and he called for robe and ring and shoes. The Pharisees murmured because the Lord spoke to the publicans and sinners and in doing so spoke comfortably to them. Here is the lesson driven home to those who are seemingly so near to God in their display of righteousness, but so far away in their heart. The Lord is telling them that the younger one would get the honors first. It is a beautiful picture. The Loving Father! But the very best that our Lord gives in the picture does not rise to the heights of our Father Himself.

See another parable. This now is the sixth parable. Read Luke 16, beginning at first verse. These parables we have considered were given very closely together, but now our Lord speaks to His disciples. He turns His attention away from the Pharisees particularly and speaks to His own love ones. “He said also to His disciples,” etc. (I need not read the parable you all know it.) The Lord now speaks to His disciples so that the Pharisees could hear His words. You will find that in the fourteenth verse. “The Pharisees also who were covetous heard all these things and derided Him.” They could not answer Him: they did what men usually do. They laughed at Him. No difference to the argument or to our Lord’s lesson! The steward had not been a good servant, and there comes a time when he has to give an account of stewardship. Hear his appeals: “What am I to do? I have to give an account of my stewardship, I cannot dig; I’m ashamed to beg; I cannot go down and beg for a living: what *shall* I do?” And, have a pretty clever brain, he comes to a decision, and you know how he does. He comes to the first debtor and asks, “How much do you owe?” And when he is told the amount he says, “Cut it in half;” and to another he comes and he says to him, “Take so much per cent off.” This he did in the hope that these would take him into their houses and keep him in food in return for his kindness in cutting down their accounts. Thus he would not have to dig for a living, or beg his bread. He was serving his own purposes all the time. Cute! wasn’t he? Our Lord points this parable to His disciples. He does not say it was right or proper, but as steward of the estate the man had a right to cut down the bills. There is no admonition. He is said to have been a wise man.

“Make to yourselves friends *out of*” (for that is what the original word means) “out of the mammon of unrighteousness so that when *it* fails, they [who have the mansions] may receive you into everlasting habitation.” Our Heavenly Father is showing to the disciples that they are going to get the places of honor, and showing the Pharisees that there is going to be a change of stewardship. Our Lord went on to emphasize this point to them that the time was coming when that stewardship would be transferred; a time when they would have to give up their stewardship and it was to be passed over to another, and our Lord is telling His disciples (and us) that we are to be good stewards of God, making friends out of the mammon of unrighteousness that when it fails they may receive us into their everlasting habitations. A man may have some money, a lot or a little. It represents the mammon of unrighteousness to him. We are in an evil world where money is the great thing which underlies it. If I have some money I can make that a friend, or I may so use it that it becomes an enemy to me. In showing what things we have need of for our daily life, God permits us to use this “mammon of unrighteousness” of necessity for Him, and I can make this little money (especially *the little* I have—coppers it happens to be) a friend. I can make a friend of it if I do all to the glory of God. For my spiritual advantage I may make friends out of these things of the earth—out of Satan’s dominion—so that when it fails, they who have the “mansions” in Heaven shall count me worthy of being received there. So our Lord is telling us to be good stewards of that which is now in our hand. “He that is faithful in that which is least”—and most of us have very small things, especially in the way of money, “will be faithful in that which is great.” “If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s who shall give unto you that which is your own?” If we were unfaithful how would God give us the treasures of Heaven for our inheritance? Here is the lesson for us who are become stewards of God’s mysteries and of the things which are to come to the world. We follow in the disciples’ footsteps. God tests and proves His stewards by entrusting to them little things now.

Luke tells us here that the “Pharisees also who were covetous heard all these things and they derided him.” For one thing, they thought that *their* stewardship never could be taken away from them. How *could* it be taken away from them? they questioned. They practically said, “Yes, yes, you are talking grand, but you know the Jews are the people of God.” They did not see—and would not see, so blinded were they—how that God in His plan intended to drop them from being His representatives and take up with a little people—the spiritual Israel—who *were* like the long-lost son or wandering sheep or the publicans and sinners; and the Lord pushed this parable still further. In passing, we may see something of its application at this time. There has been ever since our Lord’s day—or soon after when the disciples fell asleep—the coming and establishment of a great system which has spoken for God, and God has acknowledged it; I mean the great systems of earthly churches. But now is coming the time to give up their stewardship, and when we realize that, we can see *our* position of favor and *our* responsibilities in it.

There is come a time when history has repeated itself. We see with sorrow that the great “Church Nominal” has been called upon to give an account and has even now lost her stewardship, her place of favor. No one of our denominations is increasing in light or understanding. No one shows the manifest favor of God in it! but, on the other hand they are having it taken away from them. They feel that the people are going from them. They do not understand and are, in effect, confessing that the stewardship is being taken away. It is going to “the publican and sinners,” to those who are counted nobody. Let us handle the word of God aright. Let *us* be faithful in that we have. How true the parable is being wrought out in our day! The bills that the people had run up against God—God’s account—were very heavy; and the Christian churches had got some very heavy charges against the people, but now that they are finding that their stewardship is going they are coming to the people and saying, “how much do we say you owe? Yes, well, we’ll drop out these items about Eternal Torment,” and several other items go. They are whittling away the account in order to keep “in” with the people. They do this out of a good conscience, but it is being wrought out before our eyes, helping us to understand the position of favor we have at this time.

Now, in closing, look at the last parable—the Rich Man and Lazarus, as it is commonly called. You know it has been so much a point of controversy that we do not need to go over it. The Lord is showing that the long-lost sinner will come into the favor of God; not only showing the Scribes and Pharisees that they will lose their inheritance, but also that the Jewish people as a whole will lose their favor; and you know how God worked this out in His plan. The time *did* come for the casting off of that people. They were cast off from favor—but not forever. “Until the fullness of the Gentiles” be come in.

Summarize now this series of parables of our Lord. Do not take the high seat voluntarily; again, do not talk so freely of the Kingdom of Heaven as if it were yours by right and no other one could get it. Others *may* get this place. You may be missing the invitation. Do not think you are the only individual to get the favor of God. The Father’s heart of love is shown in His eagerness to get back that long-lost son, and now we have the last parable telling of the poor man who sat at the rich man’s gate and how he (the poor man) goes to the place of favor. By the grace of God he comes to “Abraham’s bosom;” gets *there*—to the very place the Jew thought was *his* by right. The Lord shows here how the poor Gentiles, who were so far away from God and without hope, are to be brought into the very places the Jews and Scribes and Pharisees thought were theirs. There can be no doubt in our minds that the Lord *did* mean to infer and indicate by this parable what we know and understand. It is *not* an account of the few being saved and the many being turned away into the torment of the damned. Our Lord is pushing His lessons home and showing that those who have been out of favor will come into the favor of God, and how that God will yet vindicate His character and name. If we have eyes to see and ears to hear, may the Lord help us to quicken ourselves and to stir up our dull minds in the doing

of His will that we may know and understand Him, and live more in harmony with His will. Amen.