

THE LOST ARE FOUND.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—
LUKE XIX. 10.

THE first word is causal, and puts us in mind of some reference. In brief, the dependence is this. Little Zaccheus became great in God's favour; he was, ver. 2, a publican, a chief publican, a rich publican: yet he hath a desire to see Jesus, and Jesus hath a purpose to see him. A fig-tree shall help him to the sight of Christ, and Christ to the sight of him.

Our Saviour calls him down, (it is fit they should come down in humility that entertain Christ,) and bids himself to his house to dinner. He is made Zaccheus's guest for temporal food, and Zaccheus is made his guest for everlasting cheer. 'This day is salvation come to this house,' ver. 9.

This mercy is not without the Pharisees' grudging: ver. 7, 'When they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.' Murmuring is between secret backbiting and open railing; a smothered malice, which can neither be utterly concealed, nor dare be openly vented. The cause of their murmuring was, that he was become a guest to a sinner; as if the Sun of righteousness could be corrupted in shining on a dunghill of sin. No; while he did associate the bad, he made them good; feeding them spiritually, that fed him corporally. He did not consent to their sin, but correct it; not infecting himself, but affecting their souls, and effecting their bliss. A man may accompany those whom he desires to make better, or them to make him better. And that the mouth of all wickedness might be stopped, our Saviour says that his coming into this world was not only to call home Zaccheus, but even many such publicans: 'For the Son of man is come to seek and to save,' &c.

We are thus gotten over the threshold, *for*; let us now look into the house, and survey every chamber and room in it. The foundation of this comfortable Scripture is *Jesus Christ*, and the building may be distinguished into five several parlours, all richly hung and adorned with the graces and mercies of God, and the midst thereof paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem, Cant. iii. 10. CHRIST is the buttress or corner-stone, and in him consider here, 1. His humility, 'The Son of man'; 2. His verity, 'is come'; 3. His pity, 'to seek'; 4. His piety, 'to save'; 5. His power, 'that which was lost.'

1. 'The Son of man.' *Ecce humilitatem.* He that is the Son of eternal God calls himself the Son of mortal man.

2. 'Is come.' *Ecce veritatem.* What God had promised, his servants

prophesied, his types prefigured, he hath now performed. They all foretold in their kinds that he should come; he makes all good, he 'is come.'

3. 'To seek.' *Ecce compassionem.* He knew that we were utterly gone, that we had *nec valentis oculum nec volentis animum*,—neither an eye able nor a mind willing to seek him; in pity he seeks us.

4. 'To save.' *Ecce pietatem.* He seeks us not *in ruinam*, to our destruction, as we deserved; but *in salutem*, to our salvation, as he desired. *Amisissos quærit, quæritos invenit, inventos servat*,—He seeks them that were lost, he finds them he seeks, he saves them he finds. 'To save'—

5. 'The lost.' *Ecce potestatem.* He is not only able to strengthen us weak, nor to recover us sick, nor to fetch us home offering ourselves to be brought; but when we had neither will nor power to procure this, yea, when we had a reluctancy against this,—for we were his enemies and hated him,—he did recall us gone, revive us dead, seek and save us that were lost.

You see the chambers, how they lie in order; let me keep your thoughts in this house of mercy a while, wherein may all our souls dwell for ever! In surveying the rooms, it is fit we should begin with the lowermost, and thither the text aptly first leads us.

1. 'The Son of man.' Christ is called a son in three respects. First, In regard of his deity, the Son of God, begotten of him from all eternity, co-equal and co-essential to him. Secondly, In respect of his flesh, the Son of Mary, naturally born of her. Thirdly, He calls himself the Son of man, in regard that he took on him man's nature, and undertook the performance of man's redemption. Man like us in all things, sin only excepted. So that in this circumstance two things are considerable in Christ, the one necessarily involved in the other—(1.) His humanity; (2.) His humility.

(1.) His humanity. When the fulness of time was come, 'God sent his Son, made of a woman,' Gal. iv. 4. *Ex muliere, non in muliere*, as Gorran notes against Valentinus, whose heresy was that Christ passed through the Virgin as water through a conduit-pipe. But this preposition, *ex*, signifies a pre-existent matter, as a house is made of timber and stones, bread of wheat, wine of grapes. Christ had therefore the materials of his body from the Virgin Mary, though not his *formale principium*; for the Holy Ghost was agent in this wonderful conception.

Neither is this a thing impossible to God, though wonderful to man, that this Christ should be the Son of Mary without man. As it was possible to God in the first creation to make a woman out of a man without the help of a woman, so in this new creation to make a man out of a woman without the help of a man. There is the same reason of possibility. It is as easy to bring fire from a steel without a flint, as from a flint without a steel. But he that could *dare essentiam nihilo*, can raise a nature *ex aliquo*.

God had four divers manners of creating human creatures. *First*, The first man Adam was made of no man, but immediately created of God. *Secondly*, The second, that was Eve, was made, not of a woman, but of a man alone. *Thirdly*, The third sort, all men and women else, are begotten of man and woman. *Fourthly*, Christ, the last sort, was of a different manner from all these. First, not of no precedent flesh, as Adam; secondly, not of a man without a woman, as Eve; thirdly, not of man and woman, as all we; fourthly, but after a new way, of a woman without a man. We are all in this sort opposed to Adam, Christ to Eve. Adam was made of neither man nor woman, we of both man and woman. Eve of a man without a woman, Christ of a woman without a man.

Now as this was a great work of God, so it is a great wonder to man.

Three miracles here : *Deum nasci, virginem parere, fidem hæc credere.* That the Son of God should become the son of woman, a great miracle. That a virgin should bear a child, and yet before, at, after the birth remain still a virgin, a great miracle. That the faith of man should believe all this, *maximum miraculum*, this is the greatest wonder of all.

Thus you have divinity assuming humanity, a great mystery : ' God manifested in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. *In mundum venit, qui mundum condidit*; he comes down to earth, but he leaves not heaven; *hic affuit, inde non defuit.* *Humana natura assumpta est, divina non consumpta est.* He took humanity, he lost not his divinity. He abideth *Marice Pater*, the Father of Mary, who is made *Marice Filius*, the Son of Mary. ' To us a child is born, to us a son is given,' Isa. ix. 6. Whereon Emissenus,* *Natus qui sentiret occasum, datus qui nesciret exordium*,—He was born that should feel death : he was given that was from everlasting, and could not die. *Natus qui et matre esset junior, datus quo nec Pater esset antiquior*,—He that was born was younger than his mother; he that was given was as eternal as his Father. He was Son to both God and Mary. *Non alter ex Patre, alter ex Virgine; sed aliter ex Patre, aliter ex Virgine.*

As the flowers are said to have *solem in celo patrem, solum in terra matrem*; so Christ hath a Father in heaven without a mother, a mother on earth without a father. Here is then the wonder of his humanity. The ' everlasting Father,' Isa. ix. 6, is become a little child. He that spreads out the heavens is wrapped in swaddling clouts, Luke ii. 7. He that is the Word becomes an infant not able to speak. The Son of God calls himself the Son of man.

(2.) His humility. If your understandings can reach the depth of this bottom, take it at one view. The Son of God calls himself the Son of man. The omnipotent Creator becomes an impotent creature. As himself saith, ' Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,' John xv. 13. So greater humility never was than this, that God should be made man. It is the voice of pride in man, ' I will be like God,' Isa. xiv. 14; but the action of humility in God, ' I will be man.' Proud Nebuchadnezzar says, *Ero similis altissimo*, ' I will be like the Highest;' meek Christ saith, *Ero similis infimo*, ' I will be like the lowest : ' he put on him the form of a servant;' yea, he was a despised worm. God spoke it in derision of sinful man, ' Behold, he is become as one of us,' Gen. iii. 22; but now we may say, God is become as one of us. There the lowest aspires to be the highest, here the Highest vouchsafes to be the lowest. Alexander, a son of man, would make himself the son of God : Christ, the Son of God, makes himself the Son of man. God, in ' whose presence is fulness of joy,' Ps. xvi. 11, becomes ' a man full of sorrows,' Isa. liii. 3. Eternal rest betakes himself to unrest : having whilst he lived ' passive action,' and when he died ' active passion.†

The ' Lord over all things,' Acts x. 36, and ' heir of the world,' Heb. i. 2, undertakes ignominy and poverty. Ignominy: the ' King of glory,' Ps. xxiv. 7, is become ' the shame of men,' Ps. xxii. 6. Poverty: *Pauper in natiuitate, pauperior in vita, pauperrimus in cruce,‡*—Poor in his birth, for born in another man's stable; poor in his life, fed at another man's table; poor in his death, buried in another man's sepulchre.

There are, saith Bernard, § some that are humbled, but not humble; others that are humble, not humbled; and a third sort, that are both humbled and

* Hom. de Nat.

† Bern. Tract. de Pas. Dom., cap. 2.

‡ Bern. Ser. in Fer. 4. Hebd.

§ In Cant., Ser. 34.

humble. Pharaoh was humbled and cast down, but not humble; smitten with subversion, not moved with submission. Godfrey of Bologne was not humbled, yet humble; for in the very heat and height of his honour he refused to be crowned in Jerusalem with a crown of gold, because Christ, his Master, had been in that place crowned with a crown of thorns. Others are both humbled and humble. 'When he slew them, they sought him: they returned and inquired early after God,' Ps. lxxviii. 34. Our Saviour Christ was passively humbled: 'he was made lower than the angels, by suffering death,' Heb. ii. 9; the Lord did break him. Actively, he humbled himself: 'He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; he humbled himself,' Phil. ii. 7. Habitually, he was humbled: 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' Matt. xi. 29. Let this observation lesson us two duties:—

Lesson 1.—Esteem we not the worse but the better of Christ, that he made himself the Son of man. Let him not lose any part of his honour because he abased himself for us. He that took our flesh 'is also over all, God blessed for ever, Amen,' Rom. ix. 5. There is more in him than humanity; not *alia persona*, but *alia natura*,—not another person, but another nature. Though he be *verus homo*, he is not *merus homo*. And even that man that was crucified on a cross, and laid in a grave, is more high than the heavens, more holy than the angels.

Stephen saw this very 'Son of man standing on the right hand of God,' Acts vii. 56. The blood of this Son of man gives salvation; and to whom it doth not, this Son of man shall adjudge them to condemnation, John v. 27. Under this name and form of humility our Saviour opposed his disciples: 'Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?' Matt. xvi. 13. Peter answers for himself and the apostles, whatsoever the people thought: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' ver. 16. He calls himself the Son of man, Peter calls him the Son of God. The Jews see him only a stumblingblock, and the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23; but Christians see him 'the power of God and the wisdom of God,' ver. 24. The wicked behold him 'without form or comeliness, or beauty to desire him,' Isa. liii. 2; but the faithful behold him 'crowned with a crown,' Cant. iii. 11, 'his face shining as the sun in his glory,' Matt. xvii. 2. Therefore, *Quanto minorem se fecit in humilitate, tanto majorem exhibuit in bonitate. Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior.**—The lower he brought himself in humility, the higher he magnified his mercy. By so much as he was made the baser for us, by so much let him be the dearer to us.

Observe it, O man; *et quia limus es, non sis superbus: et quia Deo junctus, non sis ingratus*,—because thou art dust of thyself, be not proud: because thou art made immortal by Christ, be not unthankful.

Condemned world, that despisest him appearing as a silly man! The Jews expected an external pomp in the Messiah: 'Can he not come down from the cross?' how should this man save us? They consider not that he who wanted a rest for his head, and bread for his followers, fed some thousands of them with a few loaves; that he which wanted a pillow, gives rest to all believing souls; that he could, but would not come down from the cross, that the dear price of their redemption might be paid.

Many still have such Jewish hearts: What! believe on a crucified man? But Paul 'determines to know nothing, but this Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' 1 Cor. ii. 2. They can be content to dwell with him on Mount Tabor, but not to follow him to Mount Calvary. They cleave to him so long

* Bern., Ser. 22.

as he gives them bread, but forsake him when himself cries for drink, John *xix.* 28. *Oderunt pannos tuos.* O Christ, they like well thy robes of glory, but not thy rags of poverty! They love him while the people cry 'Hosanna,' but shrink back when they cry 'Crucify him.' All pleaseth them but the cross: all the fair-way of delights they will accompany him, but at the cross they part.

They will share with him in his kingdom, but they will none of his vassalage. The lion (in a fable) had many attendants, and he provided for them good cheer. They like well of this, and are proud of their master, to whom all the other beasts gave awe and obedience. But it chanced that the lion fell into the danger of the dragon, who had got him down, ready to devour him. His followers seeing this, quickly betook themselves to their heels, and fell every beast to his old trade of rapine. Only the poor lamb stood bleating by, and, though he could not help, would not forsake his lord. At last the lion gets the victory, and treads the dragon under his feet to death. Then he punisheth those revolting traitors with deserved destruction, and sets the lamb by his own side.

The great 'Lion of Judah,' Rev. v. 5, feeds many of the Jews, and at this day profane wretches: whilst his bounty lasts, 'Christ, and none but Christ.' But when the red dragon hath got him under, nailed him to the cross, crucified him dead, away go these renegades: 'No more penny, no more paternoster.' If affliction come for Christ's cause, they know where to find a kinder master. Back to the world: one to his fraud, and he will overreach others with the sin of deceitfulness, though himself be overreached with the 'deceitfulness of sin,' Heb. iii. 13. Another to his usury; and he chymically projects money out of the poor's bowels. A third to his covetousness; and he had rather that the very frame of the world should fall than the price of corn. A fourth to his idols; and he hopes for cakes from 'the queen of heaven,' as if the King of heaven was not able to give bread. If the Lord pinch them with distress, they run to Rome for succour, expecting that from a block which they would not tarry to obtain from the God of mercy. Then they cry like the Israelites: 'Up, make us gods to go before us; for as for this Moses, we know not what is become of him,' Exod. xxxii. 1. But at last this Lion conquers the dragon, overcomes Satan and his damnation; what shall he then say to those rebels 'that would not have him reign over them,' but 'Bring those mine enemies, and slay them before me?' Luke *xix.* 27. But the poor and innocent lambs, that 'suffer with him, shall reign with him,' Rom. viii. 17. 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' Matt. v. 10.

Lesson 2.—The other use is St Paul's: 'Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus,' Phil. ii. 5. What mind is that? Humility. Ver. 7, He that 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' humbled himself to become man: we should have found it no robbery to be equal with devils, and shall we be proud? What an intolerable disproportion is this, to behold *humilem Deum, et superbum hominem*,—a humble God, and a proud man. Who can endure to see a prince on foot, and his vassal mounted? Shall the Son of God be thus humble for us, and shall not we be humble for ourselves? For ourselves, I say, that deserve to be cast down among the lowest; for ourselves, that we may be exalted.

He that here calls himself the Son of man is now glorified: they that humbly acknowledge themselves to be the sons of men, that is, mortal, shall be made the sons of God, that is, immortal. In 1 Kings *xix.* 11, there was a mighty strong wind that rent the mountains, and brake the rocks; but God was not in the wind: the Lord will not rest in the turbulent

spirit, puffed up with the wind of vainglory. There was an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake: he will not dwell in a covetous heart, buried in the furrows of the earth, and cares of the world. There was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire: he will not rest in a choleric angry soul, full of combustion and furious heat. There was a still soft voice, and the Lord came with it: in a mild and humble spirit the God of heaven and earth will dwell. 'The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, will dwell in the contrite and humble soul,' Isa. lvii. 15.

It is a sweet mixture of greatness and goodness, *ut dum nihil in honore sublimius, nihil in humilitate submissius*,—when the highest in dignity are the lowest in courtesy. Augustine called himself, *minimum non solum omnium apostolorum, sed etiam episcoporum*,—the least not only of all the apostles, but of all the bishops; whereas he was the most illuminate doctor and best bishop of his times. Paul thought himself 'not worthy to be called an apostle,' 1 Cor. xv. 9; and, behold, he is called *The Apostle*,—*ἁγίου ἀποστόλου*,—not only Paul, but The Apostle. Abraham, that esteemed himself 'dust and ashes,' Gen. xviii. 27, is honoured to be the 'father of all them that believe,' Rom. iv. 11. David sits content at his sheep-folds, the Lord makes him king over his Israel.

But as humility, like the bee, gathers honey out of rank weeds, very sins moving to repentance; so pride, like the spider, sucks poison out of the fairest flowers, the best graces, and is corrupted with insolence. *Una superbia destruit omnia*,—Only pride overthrows all. It thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of men's society, proud Saul out of his kingdom, proud Adam out of paradise, proud Haman out of the court, proud Lucifer out of heaven. Pride had her beginning among the angels that fell, her continuance in earth, her end in hell. Poor man, how ill it becomes thee to be proud when God himself is humble!

2. 'Is come.' We understand the person, let us come to his coming. And herein, *ecce veritatem*,—behold his truth. Did God promise a son of a virgin; Emmanuel, a Saviour? He is as good as his word; *venit*, 'he is come.' Did the sacrificed blood of so many bulls, goats, and lambs, prefigure the expiatory blood of the Lamb of God to be shed? *Ecce Agnus Dei*,—'Behold that Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world,' John i. 29. Is the 'Seed of the woman' promised to 'break the head of the serpent?' Behold he 'breaks the heavens, and comes down' to do it. 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil,' John iii. 8. Did God engage his word for a Redeemer to purge our sins? 'Call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins,' Matt. i. 21.

Against unbelieving atheists, and misbelieving Jews, here is sufficient conviction. But I speak to Christians, that believe he is come. *Hac fide credite venturum esse, qua creditis venisse*,—Believe that he will come again with the same faith wherewith you believe he is come already. Do not curtail God's word, believing only so much as you list. Faith is holy and catholic: if you distrust part of God's word, you prepare infidelity to the whole. Did God promise Christ, and in 'the fulness of time' send him? Gal. iv. 4. Then, since he hath again promised him, and 'appointed a day wherein he will judge the world by that man,' Acts xvii. 31, he shall come. As certainly as he came to suffer for the world, so certainly shall he come to judge the world. 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation,' Heb. ix. 28. He that kept his promise when he came to die for us,

followed by some few poor apostles, will not break it when he shall come in glory with thousands of angels.

Neither did God only promise that Christ should come, but that all believers should be saved by him: 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to be the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,' John i. 12. *Misit filium, promisit in filio vitam.* He sent his Son to us, and salvation with him. Wretched and desperate men that distrust his mercy! 'Whosoever believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.' *Whosoever; Qui se ipsum excipit, seipsum decipit.* Did not God spare to send his promised Son out of his bosom to death, and will he to those that believe on him deny life? No; all 'his promises are Yea and Amen in Christ:' may these also be 'Yea and Amen' in our believing hearts! A yielding devil could say, 'Jesus I know;' yet some men are like that tempting devil, Matt. iv., *Si filius Dei sis,*—'If thou be the Son of God.' *Si, If;* as if they doubted whether he could or would save them.

'Is come.' There is a threefold coming of Christ; according to the threefold difference of time—past, present, future. As Bernard*—*Venit, (1.) Ad homines; (2.) In homines; (3.) Contra homines.*

(1.) First, for the time past, he came *among* men: 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,' John i. 14. (2.) Secondly, for the present, he comes *into* men, by his Spirit and grace: Rev. iii. 20, 'I stand at the door and knock; if any open unto me, I will come in to him.' (3.) Thirdly, for the time to come, he shall come *against* men: Rom. ii. 16, 'At the day when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts by Jesus Christ.' Or as it is wittily observed, the 'Sun of righteousness' appeareth in three signs: *Leo, Virgo, Libra.* First, in the law like a lion, roaring out terrible things, with a voice not endurable: 'And they said to Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die,' Exod. xx. 19. Secondly, in the gospel he appeared in *Virgo*, an infant born of a virgin, Matt. i. 25. Thirdly, at his last audit he shall appear in *Libra*, weighing all our thoughts, words, and works in a balance: 'Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be,' Rev. xxii. 12.

'Is come.' He was not fetched, not forced, *sponte venit*: of his own accord he is come. 'No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself,' John x. 18. Ambrose on these words of Christ, in Matt. xxvi. 55: 'Are ye come out against a thief, with swords and staves to take me?' *Stultum est cum gladiis eum quærere, qui ultro se offert.* It was superfluous folly to apprehend him with weapons that willingly offered himself; to seek him in the night by treason, as if he shunned the light, who was every day teaching publicly in the temple. *Sed factum congruit tempori et personis; quia cum tenebræ, in tenebroso tempore, tenebrosum opus exercebant,*—The fact agrees to the time and persons: they were darkness, therefore they do the work of darkness, in a time of darkness. Indeed he prays, 'Father, save me from this hour;' but withal he corrects himself, 'Therefore came I to this hour.'

But he is to 'fear death,' Heb. v. What is it to us *quod timuit*, that he feared; *nostrum est quod sustinuit*, that he suffered. Christ's nature must needs abhor destructive things: he feared death, *ex affectu sensualitatis*, not *ex affectu rationis*.† He eschewed it *secundum se*, but did undergo it *propter aliud.* *Ex impetu nature* he declined it, but *ex imperio rationis*; considering that either he must come and die on earth, or we all must go and die in hell, and that the head's temporal death might procure the body's eternal

* Ser. 3, de Adventu Christi.

† Lomb. iii., sent. dist. 17.

life, behold, 'the Son of man is come.' Neither was it necessary for him to love his pain, though he so loved us to suffer this pain. No man properly loves the rod that beats him, though he loves for his soul's good to be beaten. As Augustine said of crosses, *Tolerare jubemur, non amare. Nemo quod tolerat amat, etsi tolerare amat* ;*—We are commanded to bear them, not to love them. No man that even loves to suffer, loves that he suffers.

Voluntarily yields himself ; saluting Judas by the name of *friend* : *Amice, cur venis* ? He suffered not his followers to offend his enemies, nor commands the angels to defend himself.† O blind Jews ! was it impossible for him, *de parvo stipite ligni descendere, qui descendit à cœlorum altitudine* ?—to come down from a piece of wood, that came down from heaven ? *Nunquid tua vincula illum possunt tenere, quem cœli non possunt capere* ?—Shall your bonds hold him, when the heavens could not contain him ? He came not to deliver himself, that was in freedom ; but to deliver us, that were in bondage.‡

'Is come.' Is Christ come to us, and shall not we come to him ? Doth the Son of God come to the sons of men ; and do the sons of men scorn to come to the Son of God ? Proud dust ! wilt thou not meet thy Maker ? If any ask, 'Whither is thy beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee ?' Cant. vi. 1 ; the church answers, 'My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies,' ver. 2. You shall have him in his garden, the congregation of the faithful : 'Wheresoever a number is gathered together in his name.' Behold, *venit ad limina virtus*, manna lies at your thresholds ; will you not go forth and gather it ? The bridegroom is come ; will you not make merry with him ? The nice piece of dust, like idolatrous Jeroboam, cries, The church is too far off, the journey too long to Christ. He came all that long way from heaven to earth for us, and is a mile too tedious to go to him ? Go to, *sede, ede, perde*,—sit still, eat thy meat, and destroy thyself ; who shall blame the justice of thy condemnation ?

But for us, let us leave our pleasures and go to our Saviour. *Non sedæas sed eas, ne pereas per eas*. Come a little way to him, that came so far to thee. Philip tells Nathanael, 'We have found the Messias.' Nathanael objects : 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?' 'Come and see,' saith Philip. And straightway Jesus saw Nathanael coming, John i. 45–47. Christ hath sent many preachers to invite us to salvation. We ask, *Ubi*, Where ? They say, 'Come and see : ' but we will not come ; Christ cannot see us coming. *Mundus, cura, caro* ; three mischievous hinderers : we come not. Christ himself calls ; yet 'you will not come unto me, that you might have life,' John v. 40. He comes amongst us, Christians ; *ad suos* : 'He came to his own, and his own received him not,' John i. 11. We say of such things as are unlike, they come not near one another ; many clothes lie on a heap together, yet because of their different colours, we say they come not near one to another. But of things that are alike, we say they come nigh one another. Our coming near to Christ is not in place, but in grace. Not in place ; for so the wicked is near to God. 'Whither shall I flee from thy presence ?' Ps. cxxxix. 7. But in grace and quality ; being 'holy as he is holy.' Indeed he must first draw us before we can come. 'Draw me, we will run after thee,' Cant. i. 4. He first draws us by grace, then we run after him by repentance.

3. 'To seek.' He is come ; to what purpose ? *Ecce compassionem* : 'to

* Confes., lib. x., cap. 28.

† Ambr. in Matt. xxvii. 40.

‡ 'Non venit ut se liberaret, qui sub servitute non erat ; sed ut nos de servitute redimeret.'—Ambr. *ut sup.*

seek.' All the days of his flesh upon earth he went about seeking souls. He went to Samaria to seek the woman, to Bethany to seek Mary, to Capernaum to seek the centurion, to Jericho to seek Zaccheus. Oh, what is man, and the son of man, that the Son of God should thus hunt after him! We sought not him: 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God,' Ps. x. 4. Behold, he seeks us. We would not call upon him; he sends ambassadors to beseech us: 'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,' 2 Cor. v. 20. Indeed, we cannot seek him till he first find us. *Oportuit viam invenire errantes, errantes enim nequeunt invenire viam.*—If the 'way,' John xiv. 6, had not found us, we should never have found the way. Lo, his mercy! *Non solum redeuntem suscipit, sed perditum quaerit.*—How joyful will he be to us, that is thus careful to seek us!

Let this teach us not to hide ourselves from him. Wretched men, guilty of their own eternal loss, that will not be found of Christ when he seeks them! How shall they at the last day 'stand with confidence before him,' 1 John ii. 28, that at this day run from him? If we will not be found to be sanctified, we cannot be found to be glorified. Paul 'desires to be found in Christ,' Phil. iii. 9: in Christ found, for without Christ ever lost. 'Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them are lost, but the son of perdition,' John xvii. 12. Woe to that man when Christ shall return with a *Non inventus!* What can the shepherd do but seek? *Nolunt inveniri,* they will not be found. What the charmer but charm? *Nolunt incantari,* they will not be charmed. What the suitor but woo? *Nolunt desponsari,* they will not be espoused to Christ. What the ambassador but beseech? *Nolunt exorari,* they will not be entreated. What then remains? 'He that will be unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that will be filthy, let him be filthy still,' Rev. xxii. 11. 'If we will not be found of him when he seeks us, he will not be found of us when we seek him. 'They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me,' Prov. i. 28. *Quaesitus contemnet, qui quaerens contemnitur.*—He was despised when he sought, and will despise when he is sought to.

Three vicious sorts of men are here culpable. First, some skulk when Christ seeks. If there be any bush in paradise, Adam will thrust his head into it. If there be any hole of pretence, Saul will there burrow his rebellion. If Gehazi can shadow his bribery with a lie, Elisha shall not find him. When the sun shines, every bird comes forth; only the owl will not be found. These birds of darkness cannot abide the light, 'because their deeds are evil,' John iii. 19. Thus they play at all-hid with God, but how foolishly! Like that beast that having thrust his head in a bush, and seeing nobody, thinks nobody sees him. But they shall find at last that not holes of mountains or caves of rocks can conceal them, Rev. vi. 16.

Secondly, Others play at fast and loose with God; as a man behind a tree, one while seen, another while hid. In the day of prosperity they are hidden; only in affliction they come out of their holes. As some beasts are driven out of their burrows by pouring in scalding water; or as Absalom fetched Joab, by setting 'on fire his barley-fields,' 2 Sam. xiv. 30. These are found on the Sunday, but lost all the week. Like the devil, they stand among the sons of God, yet devour the servants of God; as Saul at one time prophesied with the prophets, and at another time massacred them. Christ calls them to a banquet of prosperity, they cry *Hic sumus*, We are here; but if Satan (in their opinion) offer them better cheer, *Tibi sumus*, We are for thee.

Thirdly, Others being lost, and hearing the seeker's voice, go further from him. These are wolves, not sheep. The 'sheep hear his voice,' and come; the wolf hears it, and flies. The nearer salvation comes to them, the further they run from it. Because England tenders them the gospel, they will run as far as Rome for damnation.

Christ came to seek the lost sheep: Luke xv., he found it, he laid it on his shoulders, and he rejoiced. In his life he seeks the sinner till he find him. In his death he lays him on his shoulders, bearing his sins in his body on the cross. In his resurrection he rejoiced for him. In his ascension he opens the door of heaven, and brings him home. *Venit et invenit*,—he comes to seek, and he seeks to save; which is the next point:—

4. 'To save.' *Ecce pietatem*, behold his goodness. Herod sought Christ *ad interitum*, to kill him; Christ seeks us *ad salutem*, to save us. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,' 1 Tim. i. 15. Yield to be found, if thou wilt yield to be saved. There is nothing but good meant thee in this seeking. *Vidimus et testamur*, &c.,—'We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world,' 1 John iv. 14. The fishermen's riddle was: Those we could not find we kept; those we found we lost. But Christ's course is otherwise: whom he finds he saves; whom he finds not are lost for ever. It was a poetical speech, *Amare et sapere vix conceditur diis*,—To love and to be wise seldom meet. They are met in Christ: he did love us—*suscepit naturam*, he became man; he was wise—*occidit peccatum*, he killed sin. In love he seeks us, in wisdom he saves us: here was *amare et sapere*. This sweet and comfortable note I must leave to your meditations; my speech must end his saving, though of his salvation there be no end. *Parvum est servare bonos*,—It is a small thing to save those that are in no danger of spilling; therefore, lastly, look to the object:—

5. 'The lost.' There *ecce potestatem*, behold his power. He is that 'strongest man' that unbound us from the fetters of sin and Satan. *Fortissimus*; for *cætera excellit, cætera expellit*,—he excels the rest, he expels the rest. He had need be powerful, that redeems so weak man from the hands of so strong enemies. *Magnus venit medicus, quia magnus jacebat ægrotus*. The whole world was sick; there had need be a great physician, for there was a great patient. Lo, where wretchedness lies at the foot of goodness: *ecce miserum ante misericordem*. What but infinite misery should be the fit object of infinite mercy!

Here was then the purpose of Christ's coming: to 'seek the lost,' to recall wanderers, to heal the sick, to cleanse the leprous, to revive the dead, to save sinners. He 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' Matt. ix. 13; he leaves 'the ninety-nine in the wilderness, to seek the lost sheep,' Luke xv. Whether it be meant of the just angels in heaven, (as Ambrose, Chrysostom, Hilary, Euthymius think;) or those that thought themselves just, (as Bucer and Ludolphus,) the scribes and Pharisees, that presumed they needed no repentance;—he embraceth publicans and sinners, that confess themselves sick, and lacking a physician; sinful wretches, and needing a Saviour.

Those worldlings in the gospel have better cheer at home; what care they for Christ's supper? It is the dry ground that thinks well of rain, the hungry soul that is glad of sustenance. The mercy of God falls most welcome on the broken spirit. They that feel themselves miserable, and that they stand in need of every drop of his saving blood, to those it runs fresh and sweet. They that feel themselves lost are found. They are least of all

lost that think themselves lost; they are nearest to their health that are most sensible of their sickness. These he seeks, these he saves: to these *nascens se dedit in socium, convalescens in cibum, moriens in pretium, regnans in premium*,*—in his birth he became their companion, in his life their food, in his death their redemption, in his glory their salvation.

‘Lost!’ But where was man lost? There are diverse losing-places:—

(1.) A garden of delights: and there the first man lost himself, and all us. In a garden therefore our Saviour found us again. We were lost in a garden of rest; we are found in a garden of trouble. The serpent could never take the hare, (he was too light-footed for him,) till he found him sleeping in a garden of sweet flowers, under which the serpent lay hidden. Whilst man not only surfeits on pleasures, but sleeps in them, Satan, that old serpent, wounds him to death.

(2.) A wilderness is a place able to lose us: and that is this world, a wide and wild forest; many lost in it. We read of a rich man, Luke xii., that lost himself in one corner of this wilderness, his very barns. Strange, to be lost in a barn; and yet how many lose themselves in a less room, their counting-house! The usurer hath there lost his soul, and no man can find it. It is so long wrapped up among his bonds, till Satan take the forfeit. The depopulator takes a larger field to lose his soul in; and to make sure work that grace may never find it, he hedges and ditches it in.

(3.) Another losing-place is a labyrinth or maze. In the orchard of this world the god of it hath made a labyrinth, which St John describes, ‘The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,’ 1 Epist. ii. 16. The entrance hereinto is easy, as you have seen in that emblem of suretyship, the Horn: a man goes gently in at the butt end, but comes hardly out at the buckle; the coming forth is difficult. It is so full of crooked meanders, windings, and turnings, out of one sin into another,—from consent to delight, from delight to custom, from custom to impenitency,—that in this labyrinth men soon grow to a maze, and know not how to be extricated: *Labyrinthus, quasi labor intus*. The wicked ‘weary themselves in the ways of destruction,’ Wisd. v. 7.

‘Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life.’ *Hæc tria pro trino Numine mundus habet*,—This is the trinity the world worships.

‘Lust of the flesh.’ The adulterer loseth himself in the forbidden bed: *Inter mamillas perditur*,—He is lost between the breasts of a harlot. He that seeks for him must, as the pursuivant for the Seminary, not forbear the mistress’s bed to find him.

‘Lust of the eyes.’ Ahab casts a covetous eye at Naboth’s vineyard, David a lustful eye at Bathsheba. The eye is the pulse of the soul: as physicians judge of the heart by the pulse, so we by the eye; a rolling eye, a roving heart. The good eye keeps minute-time, and strikes when it should; the lustful crotchet-time, and so puts all out of tune.

‘Pride’ has lost as many as any her fellow-devils. They say she was born in heaven, and being cast down, wandered upon earth, where a woman took her in; and there she hath dwelt ever since. Indeed, Isa. iii., the shop of pride is the woman’s wardrobe; in this wardrobe many souls, both of women and men too, are lost. The common study is new fashions; but it is an ill fashion thus to lose the soul.

If we would get out of this maze, we must, as God warned the wise men, depart another way. Out of lust we must wind forth by chastity, out of covetousness by charity, out of pride by humility. Penitence is the

* Postil. Cathol., con. ii., Dom. Advent.

clue to guide us forth ; howsoever we came in, we must go out by repentance.

(4.) A fourth losing-place is the multitude of new and strange ways ; wherein men wander, as Saul after his asses, and are lost. There is a way to Rome, a way to Amsterdam ; a way to the silliness of ignorance, a way to the sullenness of arrogance. None of all these is the way to Zion. In the multitude of ways, multitude of souls lose themselves.

(5.) Lastly, some are lost in the dark vault of ignorance, applauding themselves in their blindness, and like bats refusing the sunshine. They have an altar, Acts xvii. 23, but it is *Ignoto Deo*, to an unknown God. Like the host of the king of Syria, they are blind, and lost betwixt Dothan and Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 19. They may grope, as the Sodomites, for the door of heaven ; but let not the Pope make them believe that they can find it blindfold. Ignorance is not God's star-chamber of light, but the devil's vault of darkness. By that doctrine Antichrist fills hell, and his own coffers. The light that must bring us out is Jesus Christ, 'which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' John i. 9 ; and his 'word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths,' Ps. cxix. 105.

Thus you see there are many places to be lost in, but one way to be found ; and that is this : 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that was lost.' O Jesus, turn our wandering steps into the narrow way of righteousness ! Come to us, that we may be sought ; seek us, that we may be found ; find us, that we may be saved ; save us, that we may be blessed, and bless thy name for ever ! Amen.