

THE TRAVELLER... who fell among thieves
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(LUKE 10:30)

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" -and, as Dr. Parker once said, "He asked for it! " It is not possible for any man to turn his back upon the house of God and to walk toward Jericho-the city of the curse -and not to fall among thieves. The Bible has several examples of such foolish travellers.

The Ephesian Elder who lost his first love

There are travellers who set out with a fixed purpose of reaching a desired destination; there are others who stroll along aimlessly. Probably the man of Ephesus belonged to the latter class. Perfectly satisfied with the abundance of church services, and a little conceited over the obvious superiority of his church connections, the revered saint sauntered along without a care; and while he walked in his sleep, the evil thieves stole his greatest jewel. The Lord Jesus said of such a man, and the Church he represented, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil . . . Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2 : 2-4), If love warms the heart and cheers the assembly, then the Church at Ephesus had no heating apparatus.

The Psalmist who lost the joy of his salvation

King David was one of those unfortunate men whose eyes were permitted to rest for too long a time upon prohibited pleasures. His vision kindled an unholy fire upon the altar of his heart, and in those fires he sacrificed his peace of mind. The sordid story of murder reveals David walking away from the sanctuary. He had forgotten his former vows, and sought attractions on the road to Jericho. And then came the thugs! When the soul of David struggled back to consciousness, he discovered that serious harm had befallen his spiritual raiment. He had been stripped, and left naked in his guilt before God. The accusing eyes of the prophet were focused upon him, and the unwavering finger pointing at his heart added emphasis to the accusation, "Thou art the man." Broken-hearted. David bowed in despair, and discovered that the Jericho thieves had stolen his fairest treasure. Psalm 51 tells how he prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Poor David, he should have known better.

The Prodigal who lost his father's fellowship

As he whistled his way along the road which led to the far country, the prodigal smiled. Bah! His father was old-fashioned and stodgy. The home was too circumscribed. He had left it forever. Ahead lay the far country and a grand time. Instinctively he lengthened his stride. The road was hazy. Visibility was never very good in the Jericho area, and some of the fog entered the mind of the boy. He was unable to recognize -his own stupidity; he could not see what awaited him in the glamorous city, and he was too short-sighted to discern the base hypocrisy of the thieves who posed as friends. He fell among thieves who left him bewildered and penniless in a pig sty. When the disillusioned fellow began taking

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stock of his position, he discovered he had lost many
treasures, including the fellowship of his father. In
comparison with that tragedy, the loss of his money seemed
insignificant.

The Crown of Life-the greatest jewel of all

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I
also will keep thee from the hour of temptation. . . . Behold,
I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no
man take thy crown" (Rev. 3 :7-11). This constitutes
the greatest warning given to the Church, and to all who
ever worked in the Church. No man can afford to lose
his eternal crown of life, and the undivided attention of
every individual should be devoted to the guarding of this
great treasure. Jericho has never been a health resort,
and the man of old should be a warning to all travellers.

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