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C H SPURGEON ON GALATIANS

Galatians 1:16 God-Guided Men

NO. 3078

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1908,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 15TH, 1874.

“I conferred not with flesh and blood.” — Galatians 1:16.

The conversion of Paul is one of the evidences of the truth of our holy religion. So far as this life was concerned, he had nothing to gain, but everything to lose by becoming a Christian. From, being a great Rabbi he came to be the companion of poor fishermen who themselves were the followers of One who was poorer even than they. It is clear that he was no fanatic, and not at all likely to be carried away by any sudden impulse. He was clear-headed, thoughtful, logical, and his conversion must have been wrought by some very extraordinary power; there must have been, to him at least, overwhelming evidence of the truth of what he believed, and of that form of faith to which he devoted his whole after life.

In addition to supplying us with valuable evidence of the truth of Christianity, Paul has left to us a most remarkable example of its force in his own person. Never was there a man more fully possessed with the spirit of Christ than he was. He was no feeble saint with just enough grace to enable him to go limping into heaven, but he was a spiritual athlete, wrestling with the powers of darkness, running with endurance the race set before him, and “filled with all the fullness of God;” one who was indeed “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” He threw himself, with all his natural zeal, into the cause of Christ, that natural zeal being so sanctified by the Spirit of God as to make him a mighty and valiant servant of the Lord. I pray that we also, beloved, may be what Paul was; I will not even accept his bonds. He did so when he said to king Agrippa, “I would be God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” But we might be willing even to wear his bonds if we might, but have such a character as his fully developed within us.

Paul-being converted through Christ appearing to him out of heaven, and speaking personally to him, being deeply repentant for the past, and believing fully in Jesus as his Lord and Savior, — had no sooner been baptized than he struck out at once an independent path for himself. He did not need to receive any commission from men, for he had received his commission direct from heaven, and, therefore, “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”

In our text Paul says, “I conferred not with flesh and blood.” He did not even consult with good men as to what he ought to do. Why should he? Why should he ask them to countersign his commission when he had Christ’s name at the bottom of it? He did not consult, his relatives, for he knew very well what they would say. They would think him ten thousand fools in one to throw up all his prospects of advancement to become the follower of what they thought to be the meanest of all superstitions. He did not consult even with his own flesh and blood, with himself. As I have already reminded you, he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by

becoming a Christian; but he willingly descended from being a student of Gamaliel, and a member of the Sanhedrim, to earn his living as a tent-maker, and to be a simple itinerant preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He descended from comparative ease and luxury to poverty and stern toil, from safety and peace to bitter persecution, and at last to death by martyrdom; and while knowing that, he could never be a gainer as to temporal things, he nevertheless calmly and deliberately gave himself up to be the bond-servant of that Christ who had spoken to him out at heaven, and called him into his service.

I want to show you, first, that faith needs no warrant for its action but the command of God; if it gets that, it need not consult with flesh and blood. I shall try to show you, in the second place, the range of application of this principle to ourselves practically; and then I shall show you, in the last, place, that the principle is a grand one, and commends itself to our best judgment.

I. First, Faith Needs No Warrant For Its Action But The Command Of God.

Believers have no need to consult with flesh and blood. I may refer you in illustration of this truth, to good men in all ages. There is Noah, for instance. He is commanded by God to build an ark of gopher wood, -an ark large enough to hold himself and his family and some of all beasts, and birds and creeping things that were upon the face of the earth. Was it not an absurd idea to build so huge an ark upon dry land? Yet, Noah did not consult with any of the people who were then living; but we read, "Thus did Noah: according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

Then, think of Abraham. He was commanded by God to leave his country, and his kindred, and his father's house, and to go unto a land that God would show him;" and we read, "So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken unto him." Further on — in his life there was that very memorable occasion when God commanded him to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham did not consult with Sarah. He knew the mother's feelings far too well to wish to lacerate them, and she might have said, "No, my husband, such a deed as that must not be done." So he did not ask her, but he rose up early in the morning, saddled his ass, prepared the wood and set out on the three days' journey to the place of which God had told him. He did not even consult Isaac, who was, apparently, thus to die; and when Isaac said to him, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" his father significantly replied, almost choking, I think, as he said it, — "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." He consulted not with his own flesh and blood, else had the father been too strong for the believer; but as God had commanded him to offer his son as a sacrifice, he unsheathed the knife to slay his beloved Isaac—a glorious instance of what faith can dare to do without asking the advice or the approval of men.

Remember, too, how Moses obeyed the divine command to lead Israel out of the house of bondage. He certainly did not consult with his own flesh and blood, for the riches of Egypt were at his feet. Perhaps Pharaoh's throne would have been occupied by him ere long, had he not counted "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," and he gave up glittering prospects to go forth into the wilderness with the despised people of God.

Remember David, too. He had those who wished to give him counsel, when he twice stood over his sleeping foe, the despot Saul. On the second occasion Abishai said to David, "Let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." But David laid to him, "Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" He knew right well that it is not for good men to do ill actions, even though they think the best results might follow from them; so he consulted not with flesh and blood, and he would not let the son of Zerniah, lead him into sin. Think too, of Daniel. When the royal edict was signed that none should ask a petition of anyone except King Darius for thirty days, did he confer with flesh and blood as to what he should do under the circumstances? Did he consult with himself or with others as to how he might satisfy his conscience, and yet at the same time save his life? Not he; he went into his house, where his windows were open towards Jerusalem, and there he prayed to God, three times a day, as he had done aforetime, although the lions' den awaited him. And think, also, of those three brave young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. When Nebuchadnezzar told them that they must worship his golden image or be cast into the burning fiery furnace, they replied, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter." Their only care was to do as God bade them regardless of all consequences. They did not consult with flesh and blood, but obeyed the command of their God.

This has been faith's rule all through the ages. It was the rule of the martyrs in the old days of the Roman persecution. They knew that they might be put to death in the Colosseum, — "butchered to make a Roman holiday," — yet, knowing that, they dared to confess that they were Christians. This was the glory of our Protestant ancestors in the days of Queen Mary. They went joyfully to Smithfield to be burnt for the sake of Christ; and, as one of the pastors significantly said, "the young people went, to see the others burn, and to learn the way when it should come to their turn." They did learn the way, too, to stand there, not consulting with flesh and blood, but being ready to be burned to ashes rather than worship the beast, or receive his mark in their foreheads. This is still the spirit that animates true faith. God's command is her sufficient warrant. She consults not with flesh and blood.

I would have you also recollect that, if we do ask for something over and above God's plain command, we are virtually casting the command itself behind our backs. God tells you to do a certain thing, but you say that you must first consult your advisers and

friends. Then has it come to this—that a mortal man is to tell you whether you are to obey God or no? That would be making man your god, and rejecting the living and true God. Suppose that, in such a consultation, you should be advised not to do the right thing, and that you should obey that advice, would you be relieved of your responsibility? Certainly not; it would still rest upon you. To you comes the divine command, and it is for you to obey it, whether you are advised by others to do so or not. Even to ask for such advice is to trifle with the authority of God. To hesitate to do right because of self-interest is rebellion against God. Suppose you say, “That is plainly my duty but it would involve me in loss,” — well, then, which shall it be,—will you suffer the loss or will you commit the sin? If you choose to commit the sin, you do distinctly make your own gain to be your god, for that which has the highest place in your soul is, after all, your god. What right have you to ask, “Will such a course pay me? Will it answer my purpose? What will be the good of it to me?” Such questions contain the very essence of rebellion against the Most High. What if thou art no gainer by obeying thy God? He who bids thee do it is thy Maker and Preserver; what if thou shouldst lose everything through obeying him? Would it not be better to lose the whole world than to lose thine own soul, for what wilt thou give in exchange for thy soul? The very thought of weighing self-interest against the authority of God should be revolting to all right-minded men.

Further, to consult with flesh and blood is diametrically opposed to the character of Christ. Flesh and blood, in the person of Peter, rebuked him when he talked of suffering and being killed; but the Lord said to him, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” When Jesus said to his disciples, on one occasion, “Let us go into Judaea again,” they said to him, “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?” Yet bravely did he go where he felt that he had a commission to go. His life was one of self-denial and self-sacrifice; his rule was not, “spare thyself,” but this was his rule, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” He knew that, without the sacrifice of himself, he could not glorify God; so, if you would be like him, you must not be making provision for the flesh, to gratify the ease and the lusts thereof; but you must be willing like him, to suffer; like him, to be reproached; and even, like him, to die, if so it must be for the glory of God.

I have generally found that, when men do consult with flesh and blood, the consultation usually leads to the neglect of duty, and the forsaking of the Lord. Had Paul conferred with flesh and blood he would probably never have been an apostle. I pray that you, beloved, may have the grace to say, “My Master’s command is my only law. My Master bids me do so-and-so; this is my excuse if men say that I play the fool by doing it, if they charge me with throwing prudence to the winds, and even if they thrust me into prison and lead me forth to death. Sooner let the sun refuse to shine at the Almighty’s bidding, sooner let the earth refuse to revolve upon her axis, or any longer to traverse her orbit, sooner let all nature revolt against the laws of its Maker, than ever a man of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, should dare to refuse to obey him, let him command whatever he may.”

There I leave the grand and searching principle that faith needs a warrant for its action but the command of God.

II. Now, secondly I am going to show you The Range Of Its Application To Ourselves Practically.

I judge that, first of all, it applies to all our known duties. I am not now speaking to unconverted people, I am speaking to you who profess to be converted. You say that you are saved, and that you do not trust, in your own works. That is well. I have preached to you the Scriptural doctrine of salvation by grace, but now I am going to give you a practical principle that is inseparably associated with that doctrine. It is this,—It is the duty of every Christian to forsake every known sin, whatever it may be; and, in doing so, he is not to consult with flesh and blood. Many professors say, “This course is wrong, judging by the Scriptural standard; but then, society has long tolerated it, nay, it has even decreed it to be right.” But will society judge thee at the last great day? If thou art cast into hell as a deceitful professor, will society fetch thee out of the bottomless pit? If thou art found at last outside the gates of heaven, will society recompense thee for thine eternal loss? What hast thou, O man of God, to do with society? Christians are to come out from among the ungodly, to take up their cross daily, and follow Christ, to go without the camp, bearing his reproach. The friend of the world is the enemy of Christ. What have you to do with doing as the world does?

The same principle applies to the duty of consecration to Christ. Every Christian should live for Christ alone. All that we are and have belongs to Christ. Even Paul wrote, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Well then, do not consult with flesh and blood to find out how far other Christians obey that command, for the pulse of the professing Christian is in a sickly state at this time, and Christianity is sadly adulterated. But what have I to do with what my fellow-Christians do? If they are not what they should be is not that rather a reason why I should be the more consecrated to Christ? If I see others put into the scales of the sanctuary, and found wanting, is that a reason why I, too, should be found wanting? I charge you people of God who are here present, to try how near you can get to complete consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ. Never say, “I am as good as my minister.” You had need be much better than I am. Never say, “I am as good as such-and-such a Christian.” O sirs, if ye compare yourselves among yourselves, ye are not wise; the only model for Christians is Christ himself.

This principle of not consulting flesh and blood also applies to our service for Christ. We have known ministers whose “call” to a

place always depended upon the size of the salary. We have heard of others whose work for Christ depends upon whether it is to be done in respectable society, and whether it is a tolerably light and easy task. If they find that it is Ragged-school work, or if they will have to labor amongst very poor people, and get no credit for it, they do not care for that kind of service; and if it involves a great deal of toil, they do not feel that they could manage it. The real difficulty is that it is not pleasing to flesh and blood. O soldiers of the cross, has it come to this, that you must have an easy place, or you will not fight for your King? Soldiers of the Queen do not wait to ask whether it will be hot or cold in the lands to which they are ordered to go; but away they go at the royal command. And so it must be with Christians; we must not be such feather-bed soldiers that we can only go where we shall be easy and comfortable. Nay, but in the name of him who bought us with his blood, let us ask, "Is this my proper sphere of service for Christ? Then I will occupy it, cost what it may."

Perhaps I am addressing some brother or sister here who says, "I feel that I am called to service for Christ", but I am going to consult my friends to see whether they are with me or not." That will probably put an end to your service before it begins. Nothing good will be done by a man who will not attempt it until everybody thinks it is wise. If God has called you to any work for him, go at it at once with all your might; for if you stop to consult even good people, it is very likely that they have not the faith that you have; or if they have, they will frankly tell you that they are not judges of your call. I cannot decide whether it is a call from God to you; you must yourself be the judge as to that; and if you feel that God has called you to any work, go and do it.

"Oh, but Christian people throw cold water over my plans!" Yes, that is a common practice, but it ought not to stop you from doing the Lord's work. Remember how David's brother, Eliab, said to him, "I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." I have always admired the modesty of David's reply, "What have I now done?" Is there not a cause?" He had been sent down to the camp by his father, and he had a further justification, a little later, when he stood before Saul with the giant's gory head in his hand. If God bids you do any work for him, go and do it in his strength without consulting with flesh and blood. Many a noble purpose has been strangled by a committee, many a glorious project, that might have been the means of carrying the gospel to the utmost ends of the earth, has been crushed by timid counsellors, who said that it was not practicable; whereas, had it been attempted, God would have wrought with the worker, and great would have been the result. So you go, O man of God, to the work he has called you to do, and consult not with flesh and blood!

In the next place, this principle applies to all needful sacrifices. There are sacrifices which we must make for Christ and his cause. For instance, there are persons, who, if they are converted to God, must make sacrifices in their business. There are here to-night one or two men who used to be publicans; but, when they became converted, they took the very first opportunity of getting out of that business, although it meant a considerable sacrifice. They have cheerfully borne the loss, and they are now sitting here with clear consciences as they could not have been if they had not done what they believed to be right. There are others here, who used to get a living by their Sunday trade, but they willingly gave it up for Christ's sake when they became his. I do not think they have ever got back as much money as they gave up, but they have great peace of mind, and they feel perfect satisfaction at the loss, because they believe it to be right. Every Christian is bound to act thus, not considering for a moment the profit or loss of the matter. As God is God, he is to be served at all costs.

Sometimes, however, the following of Christ involves the loss of more than money, - the loss of friendships. There are separations still made in the world because of devotion to Christ. Ungodly parents drive away from them their converted children. Close friendships have been snapped, and situations of influence and usefulness have had to be given up for Christ's sake and the gospel's. "What am I to do?" asks one who is threatened with grievous loss if he will not give up Christ. Be willing to let father, and mother, and husband or wife, and all else go, rather than let him go upon whom your eternal interest depends. Remember that he said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Some persons feel that, if they become followers of Christ, they will lose prestige and position; and that is more than they can endure. There have been some who, when they had joined this church, have henceforth had the cold shoulder in the aristocratic circles to which they belonged; and they have come to me, and said, "Our former friends no longer call upon us, nor ask us to their houses." And I have replied, "Thank God! Then you will be out of the way of the temptation to which you might be exposed from their idle chat." They have said, by-and-by, that it was even so, and that it was well. But at the first it was hard to bear. Dear brethren and sisters in Christ, ever do what is right; whatever may come of it, be out-and-out for Christ. Verily I say unto you, there is no man who shall be a loser by Christ, at the last. Great shall be his gain who, for Christ's sake, can give up even all that he has.

I want you further to notice that this principle also applies to the confession of your faith, if you have been converted to Christ. Very often, some of those who really do believe in Jesus neglect to avow their faith in the Lord's appointed way. Nothing is more plainly taught in the New Testament than that it is the duty of every believer in Christ to be baptized. It is the duty of every Christian, having first given himself to Christ, afterwards to give himself to Christ's Church, according to the will of God. Now, my dear friend, do your Master's will, and consult not with flesh and blood.

Do not consult with yourself about this matter, for if you do, self will say, "Why need you take that trouble? You will bring a great

deal of unnecessary notice upon yourself if you do. Perhaps you will not be able to hold out to the end; you may fall into sin, and bring disgrace upon the name of Christ.” Self will reason in this way, but what have you to do with such reasoning? Is it not your bounden duty to do as your Master bids you? If soldiers, in the day of battle, are commanded to charge the enemy at the point of the bayonet, they must not stop to consider the danger of such a course, or to ask why their commander gave such an order; and so it must be with all the soldiers of King Jesus; and so surely it will be with every true Christian. Are you a Christian, and does your Lord bid you confess your faith in him? Then come forward and say, “According to his will, I do with my mouth confess, because with my heart I have believed in his name.” Possibly someone says, “If I were to do that, I should grieve my parents.” Do not needlessly grieve anybody; but if it be needful for Christ’s sake grieve everybody, and yourself grieve most that they should be grieved because you do what is right. Another says, “My position would become very uncomfortable if I were to be baptized.” Then find your comfort in the presence of Christ with you in uncomfortable circumstances. “But,” says one, “I don’t see how I could be baptized at present.” Is it your duty? Then remember that the apostle says, “Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” When I preached in the country, before I came to London, I used to have a hearer who professed to have been a Christian for many years. Whenever I spoke to him about joining the church, he always said, “He that believeth shall not make haste,” to which I replied, “Well, if you come at once, you certainly will not have made haste.” Then I tried to explain to him that the haste referred to there was the haste of fear and cowardice, and I said that a much more appropriate text was this one, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”

“Well,” says one, “I don’t wish to put off joining the church; at the same time, I cannot quite give up the world.” Then, do not join the church. We do not want in the church those whose hearts are still in the world, so injurious both to the world and to the church are those who try to join the two together. If you are Christ’s, you must give up the world; but why should you hesitate about doing that? What is there in the world but vanity and vexation of spirit! You will find Christ to be infinitely preferable to the world, for in him you will have —

“Solid joys and lasting treasure.”

III. I see that my time has gone, but I need not dwell upon the last point,-that This Principle Commends Itself To Our Best Judgment.

It is the judgment we exercise upon others. We do not like to see half-and-half people, do we? And if we see people who are willing to suffer for their principles, we respect and honor them. Well, then, let us so act that others may be able, in their inmost hearts, to respect and honor us.

This principle will commend itself to us when we come to die. I never heard of a Nonconformist father saying to his son, when he was dying, “My boy, you know that I was a Dissenter, and I lost my farm for that reason. I advise you to go to church, and get into the goad books of the parson and the squire.” I never heard of a Christian man, when dying, saying to his wife, “My dear, the shutting up of our shop on the Sabbath has meant a great loss to us, and I have all the less to leave you; and I regret now that we were so unwise.” No, no; I never heard and never dreamed of hearing of anyone saying such a thing as that. I never heard a dying Christian saying, “I gave too much to the Lord’s cause; I worked too hard in Christ’s service; I really did not exercise sufficient prudence, and look out for myself as I ought to have done.” Oh, no! Their regrets always are all the other way; those who have denied themselves most always wish that they had done more, and given more, and been privileged even to suffer more for Christ’s sake.

And, finally, this will be our judgment at the last great day. We shall account that, to have followed Christ, and to have suffered loss for Christ, was the’ right thing; but for anyone to have got off cheaply through consulting with flesh and blood will then seem to us to have been the meanest thing that was ever heard of, treason against the King of love, treachery against the Christ that died. Those who have been faithful to Christ on earth shall share his glory in heaven, and dwell with him there for ever and ever. So, if you do believe in him, come out boldly, and confess that you do.

If you love not the Lord Jesus Christ, take heed that he should come against you with his rod of iron, and utterly destroy you. May he, by his gracious Spirit, give to all of us faith in him, and loyalty to him, for his dear name’s sake!-Amen.

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Galatians 5:6

Circumcision and Uncircumcision

NO. 3454

PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 15TH, 1915.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPT. 6TH, 1866,

**“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.” —
Galatians 5:6.**

MAN appears to the meet superficial observer to have, at any rate, two parts — his outward bodily form and constitution, and his inward, invisible, but essential self. There are some persons who care nothing for the inner man, who think that to educate the body, and to have it in the finest state for athletic exercises is sufficient, but these persons are very few and very foolish, for the common-sense of mankind now holds that the mind must be trained, that the mental faculties must be put into healthy order, and that the inner man must be cared for as well as the outer man. Who shall venture to say that the flesh is more important than the soul? He would be foolish who should attach no importance to the body. “Verily, bodily exercise profiteth a little,” says the apostle, though it may be but a little. We are not to despise the body, nor to neglect it. We are not to consider it as a thing utterly unworthy of our regard in any respect. “Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost,” and, therefore, are neither to be despised, nor to be defiled? But, still, wisdom tells us that the inner man is more important than the outer, and that we must care for that at all hazards, and see to its interests, come what may of the into of the body.

Now true religion I may compare, in this respect, to man. It, too, has its two parts — the outward and the inward. I suppose every religion must have acme outward way of displaying itself. Even our Quaker friends, who give up both baptism and the Lord's Supper, yet must show their religiousness, even more conspicuously than most of us do, by a certain form of dress, and if there were nothing else, the mere sitting still in the meeting-house for an hour would be an outward form, and I believe it is one which has a tendency to become as formal as any other method of worship. All religion, whether true or false, must have an outward part to it, that is, its body, and this outward part of religion, the body, is not to be despised, but is to be cared for and thoughtfully observed. But the tendency with most men is to put the outward form of religion into the highest place, and to think the most of it, just as I have said some think more of the body than they do of the mind.

Now this is all idle and foolish, for the outward form of religion, after all, is nothing without the inward spirit; nay, it is worse than nothing; it is hypocrisy; it is an insult to heaven, and is more likely to bring a curse upon those who practice it, than it is to obtain for them a blessing. Inward worship, when it does not show itself outwardly, is acceptable to God, for “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”, and spiritual worship, when it does show itself outwardly, is equally acceptable to him, for he receives it for the sake of the spirit which gives it life. But outward religion without the inward spirit is ever to be classed under the list of offenses rather than of excellencies, for an outward worship which does not carry the heart with it we believe to be abhorrent to God.

**“For God abhors the sacrifice
Where not the heart is found.”**

Yet, understand, the outward is to be observed, but without the inward it is nothing whatsoever.

And now for our text. The apostle first speaks about the outward part of religion, and then he tells us what the inward part of it is. In the first place we will have a few words on: —

I. The Outward Part Of Religion.

Paul here speaks of it after that fashion. He says,

“In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision.”

Before our Savior came into the world, circumcision was a thing of meaning. It was the seal of the covenant. God had ordained it to be the outward token of the inward possession of certain remarkable privileges with which he had endowed the seed of Abraham. But after Christ came, circumcision lost its force, and availed nothing, for this reason only, namely, that it had lost all spiritual meaning, and was no longer the type of spiritual blessings and benefits. The Savior had been pleased to institute other ordinances which better set forth the spiritual truth which he came to reveal, and circumcision, therefore, having no more any spiritual teaching in it, became a dead thing, and the apostle says that it avails nothing. Of course, it was in Paul's day the outward mark of firm believer in Judaism. The man who still held to the old faith was not to be led away by the innovations, as he supposed! them to be, of Jesus of Nazareth, but still held that it was essential, first and foremost, that the seed of Israel should bear in the flesh the ordained mark. But the apostle says that “circumcision availeth nothing.” He put it on one side. But what is remarkable, as showing the force of the apostle's meaning, is that he should have added, “Nor uncircumcision,” for while there were some who said, “I have received the seal of the covenant; I am circumcised,” the apostle says to them, “It availeth nothing.” “Oh!” says

another, but I, being a Jew, refuse to be circumcised; I, as a Jew, have come out, and said that my children shall no longer be initiated into the Jewish faith, according to the Jewish custom; I have repudiated it; shall not I be saved? I have no faith in the customs of my fathers; surely it is well with me, for by this I have declared myself to be a follower of the Savior." "No," says the apostle; "it makes no difference; you who are circumcised get no good by it; and you who are uncircumcised get no good; neither the one nor the other is of any good to you." He sweeps away the whole of the Jewish ceremony, both in its observance, and in its non-observance, and so he gives it a twofold blow, and lays it dead.

Now I do not think that the apostle meant here to speak merely of circumcision, but of all other rites and ceremonies whatsoever. I believe he would have us understand that, while there is any spiritual meaning connected with them, they are valuable just as a circumcision might have been valuable whilst there was any spiritual meaning connected with it; but that when we are not believers, when we merely receive them outwardly, without knowing their spiritual meaning, or comprehending and receiving the spiritual grace which they typify, they avail nothing, that they are of no service, and that, indeed, in and of themselves they are of no use whatsoever apart from that "faith which worketh by love."

Whether you were sprinkled in your infancy, or have been immersed as believers, supposing you not to have been believers, that immersion is as much a mistake as your previous sprinkling; you have not received any benefit from either, for there is nothing in either. The true essence of the thing lies in the faith which worketh by love, and if you have received it without faith, you have received nothing at all. You have received only the mere outward ceremony, and there has no good come to your soul.

You may have come to the Lord's Supper; you may have received it kneeling, or received it standing, or received it sitting; if you have received it by faith, you have been enabled by faith to feed upon Christ to eat his flesh, and to drink his blood; but if you have received it without faith, you have received nothing; nay, you have done worse than that, for you have eaten, and you have drank condemnation unto yourselves; you have taken the bread of the children, not being a child, and so you have stolen from the Father's table; you have entered into the court of the priests without being a priest, and so you have committed the sin of Uzza; you have ventured to perform a sacrifice for which you were not fit, and it is a marvel of God's long-suffering mercy that you have not received a curse for having intruded where you were never called.

If you have come to baptism and to the Lord's Supper with the faith which works by love, you have doubtless received benefits by the ordinances; but if you have come without that faith, baptism or no baptism availeth nothing whatsoever. There is nothing in any of those outward forms and ceremonies in themselves; they are only a dead and killing letter, a mystifying ceremony, which drags men down to the things which are apparent; but when faith comes, it quickens them, and makes them live, transforms them into blessed means of grace, and then God, in them, communes with the soul. I think it would be difficult to say too broadly or too strongly that outward ceremonies profit nothing in themselves. I know we are likely to be misunderstood, and that there are some who say that they will neglect these things utterly. If you wish to misunderstand us, you must. We wish to speak very plainly, but if we were misunderstood in that point, we should not regret it no much as we should if we were misunderstood upon the other, namely, that the outward form of religion is nothing but death, the mere letter, and not the spirit, and that only true vital faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can really bless the soul.

Now let us try to bring out this thought more fully still, that "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision "; that is to any, that outward form do not avail to change the life.

The change of the outward life is a very great part of salvation. A man cannot be saved from a sin in which he still indulges. It is clear that if a man be saved, in the Scriptural sense, he is saved from his sins. The drunkard becomes sober; the harlot becomes chaste; the unrighteous become religious. Now it is a matter of common-sense, which I will put to anybody, whether there is any tendency in an outward ceremony to make a thief honest, or to make a drunkard sober; whether, in fact, sprinkling, or immersion, or receiving bread, or drinking of wine. These have no tendency in themselves to produce any sort of moral effect upon the man.

When St. Francis Xavier went to India, he converted thousands of people, and made them Christians; and how do you think he did it? Why, by having in his girdle a little pot of water and a large brush, and as he went along he sprinkled the people with the water, and they were christened, Christianized, baptized, and he put them all down as converts. Very well, legitimately so; they were, I have no doubt, as much benefited by that as people are by infant baptism, and as much as people are by immersion, if they are immersed without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We laugh at the thing when it is done on a large scale, and wonder that people can receive it; but we may equally scout it with scorn in any one individual instance. My dear hearer, if you could really prove that an outward ceremony changed men, oh! how diligently would we practice it! If the consecrated wafer really does make men holy, oh! turn your houses into ovens, and let there be bakers in every street. Happy bakers who can transmogrify (to change or alter greatly and often with grotesque or humorous effect) the minds of men! Happy wheat that can be ground so as to change sinners into saints! But where is the connection? Where is the connection between bread and the conscience? Where is the connection between water, either in drops or in floods, and the heart, the affections, and the reason of man? Oh! beloved, we know better than this; how is it, then, that men's minds can cling to

such superstitions?"

"Ye must be born again" in order that an effect may be produced upon your minds and hearts. You must know another influence than that which is outward. There must come upon you an unseen and invisible power, which shall enlighten your understandings, and so control your souls, and change your affections, and so make your lives to be different from what they were. But oh! these outward things are but clumsy appliances! You might as well turn gas upon a fire to put it out, as try to save a soul by these outward forms. Circumcision and uncircumcision, neither of them avail anything in the moral life of man, and everybody knows that.

But, then, it is equally true that they do not do anything to comfort a real-awakened and quickened conscience. I have no doubt that a great many people do derive a degree of comfort from going to church and chapel. You come here and sit in your pews and are very comfortable; perhaps some of you go to sleep, but that does not lessen your comfort, but rather increases it. If the sermon were never so dull, perhaps it would be all the better for you, but it prevents your being quite so comfortable, because it happens to be personal, and to be plainly and boldly spoken.

I know there are hundreds and thousands of people in this country who would be greatly troubled in their minds if they did not go to church or chapel twice on Sundays, and they get comfort in this because their conscience is dead. If their conscience were really awakened, they would understand that there is no connection between conscience and outward forms. A conscious sinner, an awakened sinner, never can be lulled to sleep again, except by that same voice which first awakened it. Conscience finds peace concerning sin when it finds sin laid upon the Savior; it gets peace concerning guilt when it sees Him smarting, and bleeding unto death. When faith comes, conscience has peace with God through Jesus Christ, but I am certain that no conscience which God ever awakened from the dead found peace through baptism, or through the Lord's Supper, or through any outward form. The conscience which is once awakened cries,

"These things are good enough for saints; they may minister comfort to them, but I want salvation itself; I want Christ Him self; not things about Christ, but Christ; not merely to worship with His people, but to be one of them."

Putting aside the crucifix as it was held up to his eyes in his dying moments, and refusing the Chrism and the last unction, a dying monk cried out,

"Tua vulnera Jesu! Tua vulnera Jesu!" —
"Thy wounds, O Jesus! Thy wounds, O Jesus!"

and this is what every awakened conscience will have to cry. It must be the blood of Jesus, not the sacramental wine; the washing of the bath that was filled with his atonement, not any outward washing for the cleansing of the flesh; the reception of God the Holy Ghost into our souls, as a priest coming into a temple; the receiving of the love of Jesus into our hearts as an altar-fire into a censor; the receiving of the love of God himself, our Father, so that we can: —

"Abba Father! cry

With an unfaltering tongue."

It is all this which the conscience wants, and it will not be satisfied with anything short of this.

"Faith which worketh by love" will quiet the conscience, but all else that you can do is but as singing a song to one that is of a sad heart; it yields no comfort to the soul. If a man were very hungry, very hungry indeed, I can imagine that if a person should say to him,

"Sit down; I am going to play you a tune," he would answer,

"Oh! but give me something solid; give me something substantial!"

What says the other? "Not pleased with music! Come, then; I will give you some painting; look at that window there; is not that finely done?"

"Give me something solid! Oh! give me something solid!"

"Well, but here comes a procession; are not these gentlemen very prettily arrayed? Is it not a gaudy show, worthy of any baby?"

"Yes," replies the man, "but I want something solid; I can eat neither processions, nor painted windows, nor music; I want something solid."

"Oh!" says the man, "but I must give you a rule to live by; here is one which was settled long ago by bishops; will not that satisfy you?"

“No; your rules and regulations may be all very good, but I want something solid, something to receive now.”

Now the guilty conscience has an awful hunger within itself that cannot be satisfied with ritualism of the best, and finest sort, but the conscience cries,

“I want something to satisfy me; tell me; how can God be just, and yet be the justifier of the ungodly? That is the question. Tell me, how can God punish sin, and yet forgive it? Tell me, what is to become of me while I am covered with all these iniquities? Tell me how I can get free from them.”

Well, the gospel comes and says,

“The Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the room, place, and stead of all who believe on him, and the moment you believe in him you are completely saved; your sin is gone; you are a child of God; your feet are on the Rock of Ages, and you can never perish.”

“Oh!” says the conscience, “that is what I want; that is the very thing I have been longing for; here is the gracious God turning to me and saying, ‘I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thine iniquities.’”

Ah! may God give us such a spiritual hunger as that, and there will be no fear that we shall ever be mystified about circumcision or uncircumcision, for we shall feel that neither of them avail anything, but if we once get the faith that works by love, we shall be satisfied with favor and filled with the goodness of the Lord.

But now it remains for us to say that, as outward religion neither changes the morals of men, nor gives peace to an awakened conscience, so neither can these outward things avail to take us to heaven.

You will be deceived at the last, rest assured of that, if you rest on anything which only concerns these eyes of ours, these hands, and these feet. If you are depending upon the things which are seen, they are, every one of them, temporal; they cannot be of any use to you when you come into the land of the things that are not seen, which are eternal. Oh! soul, if you rest upon a mortal hope, or a mortal thing, or an outward ceremony, or an outward form, you are resting on that which cannot have any efficacy in the unseen world, and when your soul comes to the grave, and you look across the narrow stream of death into the dim eternity, you will have no hope then.

It is very strange how God makes liars tell the truth. The priests do not pretend to offer you any hope, for what do they tell you? Do they ever say that these ceremonies will take you to heaven? Not they! It seems as if God would not let Satan fabricate the lie perfectly, for he has left a weak part in it. Where does the best believer in outward ceremonies go to? Ask the priest, and he will tell you that he goes to purgatory. Did not Cardinal Wiseman go there? Did they not put upon his coffin-lid, “Pray for the repose of his soul,” and was not that a proof that they believed he went where he wanted to be prayed for, and where he had no repose for his soul? Do not all the mightiest and greatest men of that church go there? Do not ever, the Popes go there? It is a poor look-out, very! That is all you can get, even if you get anything; they cannot offer you anything better than this! But oh! if you get the “faith which works by love,” I will tell you what you will have. You shall have a good hope through grace, not of purgatory, not of the limbo patrum, but of being with Christ in paradise as soon as your eyes are closed in death, and, confident of this, you shall come to your dying-bed, you shall lie shore as long as God is pleased to spare you in your sickness, without doubt or fear, and when the last hour comes you shall have grace to die, if not triumphantly, at least hopefully. You shall have preludes of the everlasting song, foretastes of the coming glory, and you shall die with some such song as this in your lips: —

“Jerusalem, my happy home,

Name ever dear to me

Near shall my labors have an end In joy, and peace, and thee!”

It is singular, and strangely indicative of a trembling conscience, that those who preach up circumcision and uncircumcision dare not offer heaven; but those who declare that salvation is by faith in Jesus can boldly say to every trembling sinner, “Fear not; if thou believest in Jesus when thou diest, yet shalt thou be with him in paradise, ‘for there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus’; for they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand; beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” We shall not be in purgatory, but we shall be with him, for his prayer to his Father for us was, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.”

Thus have we said enough to show you that the outward form of religion avails nothing. Now we come to speak, in the next place, concerning: —

II. The Inward Part Of Religion.

The text tells us that the inward part of religion is “faith which works by love.” Now what is faith? In one word, it is trust — the trusting of the soul in God’s promise made in Christ Jesus. My faith is that which enables me to believe that God is true, to believe that he sent his Son in the flesh to suffer for my sins; to believe that, through the merit of his blood and the virtue of his holy life, I am saved. To trust in him to save me — this is faith. It is not the faith of God’s elect to believe dogmas and truths merely, to believe them to be true, but to rest upon them, to trust in them, to repose one’s soul thereon. The very essence of Christianity is trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But mark, we are told that this is faith of a certain kind; it is “faith which works by love” — not a faith that merely talks, much less a faith that goes to sleep, or a faith that bolsters men up in presumption, and makes them live in sin; but a faith which works by love, a practical faith, a faith which has arms and hands; not a crippled faith, but a living thing, which cannot help working; not a frozen river that is like stone in its bed, but rolling on, increasing, and swelling until it comes to the sea. It is a living thing, a working thing. My faith is no faith at all if it does not operate upon my daily life. If I believe that Jesus Christ has saved me, and I trust in him, there are a great many things I cannot do which other people can do, and many things that I love to do which other people would not do, and do not wish to do. If my religion never comes across me when I am in the shop, and stops me, and never comes to me when I am in the market-place, then it is a religion which is not worth a button, and the sooner I am rid of it the better. It must be a working religion, practically operating upon the entire man. And this is the way in which it operates — it operates by love. It works by making us love Christ for what he has done for us. It works by making us love God, so that we say, “Lord, what is thy will, for we wish to submit to it?” and this makes us cheerful, happy, and resigned. It works, in fact, by making us love the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do not love Jesus, then your faith is no faith, for the very sound of his name is precious to those who have true faith. It errors by love to him who himself saved us, and gave himself for us; it works by love to God, who gave his Son.

“Loved of my God, for him again

With love intense I burn;

Chosen of him ere time began,

I choose him in return.”

Then faith also works by love to the brethren. A man has no faith if he does not love faithful men. It is a mark of the child of God that he loves the rest of the family. “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren” — not only the brethren who happen to be called by our denominational name; that is very easy; a hypocrite can do that — but all the saints. Whenever, as St. Basil used to say, we can see anything of Christ, there we ought to give something of Christian love, so that genuine faith loves all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and desires the good and prosperity of all the branches of the vine. And, mark you, this faith will work by love, even to your enemies. If you are a genuine Christian, you will love those who do not love you. It is very little to love our own relatives, though there are some who do not do even that; but to love our enemies is the mark of a true Christian — to be prepared to bear and to forbear, to endure, but never to inflict, to be reviled, but not to answer, not to rebuke, but to heap coals of fire upon the head of our foes by endeavoring to do all that we can for the good of those who do us ill. It was said of Thomas Cranmer, “Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn, and he will be your friend, and give you help”; and it was said of another, that if you wanted to get a favor from him, the best thing you could do was to do him an injury, because then, when you asked him for anything, he was quite certain to say, “I will do it for you because you have been my enemy.” Let us seek for something of the same spirit; let us love even those who are unloveable, and who love us not.

Then I may say that one mark of this faith is that it loves sinners. God deliver you, as a church and congregation, from that unloving spirit which never cares for the souls of men! I believe that to be an accursed theology which makes a preacher say, “I have preached to the living people of God; as for the dead, I have nothing to say to them.” A theology which dries up the milk of human kindness makes a man a cynic towards his own kind, and to have no care for his own flesh and blood, is a theology that never came from heaven, but from a very different quarter. I have seen the dupes of this theology callous about the conversion of even their own children, and heard them boast that they never speak to their children about religion — boasting of it as though it were not the most disgraceful thing that could be said, for the Christian that careth not for his own household is worse than a heathen man and a publican. We have heard some of these say that God will do his own work and, therefore, they never speak about Christ, as though this were not degrading themselves below the very basest idolaters, for even an idolater will speak well of his god, and endeavor to bring others to bow before his blocks of wood and stone, but these persons, stupified by a fatalism which is far more Mahometan than Christian, leave undone the work which God would have them do, and which, if they had genuine faith in their souls, they would do. May God give us, not a frozen faith like that, but a faith which works by love to the souls of sinners. You do not love Christ if you do not love sinners. He came into the world to seek and to save them, and if you do not try to bring them to him, you do not know Christ. How dwelleth the love of God in you, if you have never cared for poor dying men?

So, then, it see that the very soul and essence of true religion is this — the possession of a trust in Christ which, through the Passion called “love,” affects my whole being, moves me to the greatest activity, or restrains me from sin. Now, dear friends, have you got this faith that works by love? “Oh! I am not baptized,” says one. Now I never asked you that question; I did not indeed. I only asked you, Have you got the faith which works by love? “Oh! sir, I have been baptized.” I did not ask you that; I asked if you have got the faith which works by love? “Well, sir, I am a member of the church.” What does that matter; that is not the point; the point is, have you the faith which works by love? If you have got that, you are going to heaven; if you have not, you are on the high-road to perdition. If you have the faith which works by love you may have a great many errors, you may make a great many mistakes, but your face is towards Jerusalem, and you will get there. But if you have not the faith which works by love, you may be as orthodox as the Bible itself, and you may be sound in theology as the Holy Spirit, and yet, even if all this were possible, you could never enter heaven if you have not the faith which works by love. That is the essential thing, the one thing needful.

I was struck, when thinking over this text, to find that in the next chapter (Galatians 6:15) you get this truth in another shape. By comparing one text with another, you often get fresh light, and here you have it: “For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth, anything, nor uncircumcision, but” — but what? The faith which works by love? No, “but a new creature.” Well, then, these two things must be the same. My having the faith which works by love implies that I am a new creature. Now some of you have been puzzling yourselves about whether you have been born again, whether you are new creatures. Have you got the faith that works by love? If so, you are a new creature, for you never saw a man in a natural state who had faith that works by love. He may have faith, a faith which makes him tremble, like the devil; but the faith that works by love to Jesus Christ no hypocrite ever did have or ever could have. What are you to apprehend, my dear friends, if you love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are trusting in him? Do not let the devil perplex you by saying that perhaps you have not experienced regeneration, perhaps you have not felt this, and have not felt that. You are right, and must be right, if you have the faith which works by love, for, according to the Scriptures, that is so evident a proof of being a new creature that it is tantamount to it. Hear how our Savior puts it. There were some who wanted to do the work of God, and who said, “What shall we do that we may work the works of God?” What do you think Christ said to them? Did he say, “You must feel this, or feel that,” and so on? No; said he, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.” This is the greatest work that God ever does, to make a man believe in his Son. Wherever a man is made to believe in Jesus Christ, and to trust him, you may see the finger of God. You may imitate twenty things in religion, but you cannot give a man true faith; it must be an act of grace. No dead sinner ever did trust Christ; no unregenerate soul ever possessed the faith which works by love, and it may stand to you as a certain evidence of the new birth, if you have got the faith which works by love.

As I studied the subject farther, I was struck to find that in another text (see note Colossians 3 :11) you get the same sentiment:

“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian;, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”

Now there are some who say, “I hope I am a new creature, but I am sometimes afraid whether Christ is mine.” Well, but It is the same thing. Christ is all and in all to you, and you are the very same people who are new creatures, and who have the faith that works by love. Then, hear heart, if thou art trusting in Christ, Christ is shine All-in-all, and thou needest not say: —

“‘Tis a point I long to know,

Of it causes anxious doubt;

Do I love the Lord or no,

Am I his or am I not?”

Thou art his, if thou art trusting in him with the faith that works by love. Oh! I think there are some of you who can say,

“Well, I do trust him; I have nowhere else to trust; I cannot trust in myself; I dare not rely on my prayers; I cannot depend upon any mortal thing, but the Lord knows that I do rest upon the blood of Jesus Christ; I am not deceived about that; and, what is more, I do love him, not as I want to love him, not as I ought to love him, but I do love him; the sound of his name is sweet to me; I could not live without it, and when I am at a distance from him I cannot be happy; there was a time when I could be very happy and very contented without the Savior; when I could enjoy the theater, the ballroom, and All the pleasures of the world, but I cannot now; it is all emptiness and vanity — vanity of vanity; I must have Christ; if others can do without him, I cannot; I must have him.”

Well, then, dear soul, He is yours; He is your all-in-all. I spoke last Sunday of the limpets at the seaside, sitting on the rocks. It does not prove that the rocks belong to the limpets because the limpets sit there, but in your case you are just like a poor little thing flying to Christ, and that proves that Christ belongs to you, that he is yours in this world, and will be yours in the world to come. Then if I take hold of Christ, I know that He is mine. There was never a sinner who took Christ, and then found that He had made a

mistake. The woman who came to the Savior, and touched the hem of his garment, and asked to receive a cure of the Savior, did not take the cure away, but he said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

If thou canst get Christ, Christ is thine. Trust Him with thy soul now, sinner. Thou hast no qualification; thou hast no goodness; thou hast no merits; perhaps thou hast no good feelings, nor anything that is commendable. Well now, trust Him. Dost thou believe that He can save such a sinner as thou art? Canst thou do Him the credit, sinner, that such a lost and almost condemned sinner as thou art can be saved by Him? If thou hast the power thus to believe in Him, it proves that thou art saved, for thou couldst not thus have believed unless He had visited thee, and given thee grace to do it. Canst thou do it now? The greater thou feelest thy sin to be, the blacker thou persuadest thyself that thou art to-night, the more canst thou honor Christ by casting thyself wholly on Him.

He who has no disease cannot honor the physician by saying he believes he can cure him; but he who has a disease through and through him, so that he is given up — when he says to the physician, "Sir, I believe that you can exterminate this disease, and make me a healthy man" — does honor to his physician by his faith.

You great sinners, you black sinners, you lost, ruined, and undone sinners, the Lord help you now to trust Christ, and then you will honor Him, and give Him glory, and that is the best proof that He is in you, and that you shall be with Him in the day of His appearing. It is faith that works by love that is the grand thing, and that is the same thing as being a new creature, and the same thing as having Christ to be our all-in-all.

May God give this to those of you who are seeking it, so that, having begun in the spirit, you do not end in the flesh, but walk in the liberty wherewith Christ shall make you free. Amen.

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Galatians 5:6: The Luther Sermon at Exeter-Hall

NO. 1750

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1883,

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT EXETER-HALL.

**"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." —
Galatians 5:6.**

Paul makes a clean sweep of that trust in the externals of religion which is the common temptation of all time. Circumcision was a great thing with the Jew, and oftentimes he trusted in it; but Paul declares that it availeth nothing. There might be others who were glad that they were not Jews, but Paul declares that their uncircumcision availeth no more than its opposite. Certain matters connected with godliness are external, and yet they are useful in their places: especially is that the case with baptism and the Lord's supper, the assembling of ourselves together, the reading of the word, and public prayer and praise. These things are proper and profitable; but nonethem must be made in any measure or degree the ground of our hope of salvation; for this text sweeps them all away, and plainly describes them as availing nothing if they are made to be the foundations of our trust.

In Luther's day superstitious confidence in external observances had overlaid faith in the gospel; ceremonies had multiplied excessively under the authority of the Pope, masses were said for souls in purgatory, and men were actually selling indulgences for sin in the light of day. When God raised up Martin Luther, who was born four centuries ago, he bore emphatic testimony against salvation by outward forms and by the power of priestcraft, affirming that salvation is by faith alone, and that the whole church of God is a company of priests, every believer being a priest unto God. If Luther had not affirmed it, the doctrine would have been just as true, for the distinction between clergy and laity has no excuse in Scripture, which calls the saints, "God's kleros" — God's clergy, or heritage. Again we read, "Ye are a royal priesthood." Every man that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is anointed to exercise the Christian priesthood, and therefore he need not put his trust in another, seeing the supposed priest is no more than any other man. Each man must be accountable for himself before God. Each one must read and search the Scriptures for himself, and must believe for himself, and when saved, he must offer himself up as a living sacrifice unto God by Jesus Christ, who is the only High Priest of our profession. So much for the negative side of the text, which is full of warning to this Ritualistic age.

The chief testimony of our great Reformer was to the justification of a sinner in the sight of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Not by that alone. He could fitly have taken this as his motto 'In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision but faith which worketh by love.' He was in the Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg troubled and perturbed in mind and he had there, in an old Latin Bible, this text, "The just shall live by faith." It was a new idea to him, and by its means spiritual light entered his soul in some degree but such were the prejudices of his up-bringing and such the darkness of his surroundings, that he still hoped to

find salvation by outward performances. He therefore fasted long, till he was found swooning from hunger. He was exceedingly zealous for salvation by works. At last he made a pilgrimage to Rome, hoping to find there everything that was holy and helpful. He was disappointed in his search, but yet found more therein he looked for. On the pretended staircase of Pilate, while in the act of climbing it upon his knees, the Wittenberg text again sounded in his ear like a thunder — clap: “The just shall live by faith.” Up he started and descended those stairs, never to grovel upon them again. The chain was broken, the soul was free. Luther had found the light; and henceforth it became his life’s business to flash that light upon the nations, crying evermore, “The just shall live by faith.” The best commemoration which I can make of this man is to preach the doctrine which he held so dear, and you who are thus saved can best assist me by believing the doctrine, and proving its truth in your own cases. May the Holy Ghost cause it to be so in hundreds of instances.

I. First, let us inquire What Is This Faith?

We are always talking about it; but what is it? Whenever I try to explain it, I am afraid lest I should confuse rather than expound. There is a story told concerning John Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress.” Good Thomas Scott, the Commentator, wrote notes to it: he thought the “Pilgrim’s Progress” a difficult book, and he would make it clear. A pious cottager in his parish had the book, and she was reading it when her minister called, he said to her, “Oh, I see, you are reading Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress. Do you understand it?” She answered innocently enough,

“Oh, yes, sir, I understand Mr. Bunyan very well, and I hope that one day I shall be able to understand your explanations.”

I am afraid lest you should say when I have done, “I understand what faith is, as I find it in the Bible, and one day, perhaps, I may be able to understand the preacher’s explanation of it.” Warned by this, I will speak as plainly as I can.

And first, it is to be remembered that faith is not a mere creed-holding. It is very proper to say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,” and so forth; but you may repeat all that and be no “believer” in the Scriptural sense of that term. Though the creed be true, it may not be true to you; it would have been the same to you if the opposite had been true, for you put the truth away like a paper in a pigeon-hole, and it has no effect upon you. “A very proper doctrine,” you say, “a very proper doctrine,” and so you put it to sleep. It does not influence your heart, nor affect your life. 1) Do not imagine that the professing an orthodox creed is the same thing as faith in Christ. A truthful creed is desirable for many reasons; but if it be a dead, inoperative thing, it cannot bring salvation. Faith is belief of the truth; but it is more.

Again, faith is not the mere belief that there is a God, though that we must have, for we cannot come to God except we “believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” We are to believe in God — that he is good, blessed, true, right, and therefore to be trusted, confided in, and praised. Whatever he may do, whatever he may say, God is not to be suspected, but believed in. You know what it is to believe in a man, do you not? to believe in a man so that you follow him, and confide in him, and accept his advice? In that same way faith believes in God — not only believes that he is, but finds rest in his character, his Son, his promise, his covenant, his word, and everything about him. Faith livingly and lovingly trusts in her God about everything. Especially must we believe in what God has revealed in Scripture — that it is verily and indeed a sure and infallible testimony to be received without question. We accept the Father’s witness concerning Jesus, and take heed thereto “as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.”

Faith has specially to believe in him who is the sum and substance of all this revelation, even Jesus Christ, who became God in human flesh that he might redeem our fallen nature from all the evils of sin, and raise it to eternal felicity. We believe in Christ, on Christ, and upon Christ; accepting him because of the record which God has given to us concerning his Son, that he is the propitiation for, our sins. We accept God’s unspeakable gift, and receive Jesus as our all in all.

If I wanted to describe saving faith in one word, I should say that it is trust. It is so believing God and so believing in Christ that we trust ourselves and our eternal destinies in the hands of a reconciled God. As creatures we look up to the great Father of spirits; as sinners we trust for the pardon of our sins to the atonement of Jesus Christ; as being weak and feeble we trust to the power of the Holy Spirit to make us holy and to keep us so; we venture our eternal interests in the vessel of free grace, content to sink or swim with it. We rely upon God in Christ. The word employed to set forth faith in the Scriptures sometimes signifies to lean. We lean with all our weight upon our God, in Jesus Christ. We hang upon Christ as a vessel hangs upon the nail. “Recumbency” was a term by which the old Puritans used to describe faith — a lying, or leaning upon, something out of ourselves. Guilty as I am, I believe God’s word, that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin:” trusting to that blood I know that I am cleansed from all sin. God sets forth Christ to be a propitiation; we believe that he is a propitiation, and we take him to be our propitiation; by that appropriation our sin is covered and we are free. Faith is the grasping, the appropriating, the receiving into one’s self, of the Lord Jesus Christ. I sometimes illustrate it by that passage of Paul where he says, “The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth.” When a

morsel is in your mouth, if you desire to possess it so as never to lose it, what is the best thing to do? Swallow it. Let it go down into the inward parts. Now the word that we preach is, according to the Apostle, “in thy mouth”; suffer it then to go down into thy heart, and thou shalt find it true that “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” This is the faith which saves the soul.

II. In the second place we will consider, Why Faith Is Selected As The Way Of Salvation?

I would remind you that if we could not answer this question it would not matter; for since the Lord has appointed believing as the way of grace it is not ours to challenge his choice. Beggars must not be choosers: let us trust, if so the Lord ordains.

But we can answer this question in a measure. First, it is clear that no other way is possible. It is not possible for us to be saved by our own merits, for we have broken the law already, and future obedience, being already due, cannot make up for past defects.

“Could my tears for ever flow,

Could my zeal no respite know,

All for sin could not atone

Thou must save, and thou alone.”

The road of good works is blocked up by our past sins, and it is sure to be further blocked up by future sins: we ought therefore to rejoice that God has commended to us the open road of faith.

God has chosen the way of faith that salvation might be by grace. If we had to do anything in order to save ourselves, we should be sure to impute a measure of virtue to our own doings, or feelings, or prayers, or almsgivings, and we should thus detract from the pure grace of God. But salvation comes from God as a pure favor — an act of undeserved generosity and benevolence, and the Lord will, therefore, only put it into the hand of faith, since faith arrogates nothing to herself. Faith, in fact, disowns all idea of merit, and the Lord of grace therefore elects to place the treasure of his love in the hand of faith.

Again, it is of faith that there may be no boasting; for if our salvation be of our doings or feelings, we are sure to boast; but, if it be of faith, we cannot glory in self “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.” Faith is humble, and ascribes all praise to God. Faith is truthful, and confesses her obligation to the sovereign grace of God.

I bless the Lord that he has chosen this way of faith, because it is so suitable for poor sinners. Some among us to-night would never have been saved if salvation had only been prepared for the good and righteous. I stood before my God guilty and self-condemned. No youth ever had a keener sense of guilt than I had. When I was convinced of sin I saw my thoughts and desires to be vile in the sight of God, and I became vile in my own eyes also. I was driven to despair; and I know that I could never have been cheered by any plan of salvation except that which is of faith. The covenant of works by reason of our weakness affords us no suitable way of hope at any time, but under certain circumstances we see this very vividly. Suppose that you were in the last article of death, what good works could you do? Yonder dying thief found it a happy thing that by faith he could trust the Crucified One, and before set of sun could be with him in Paradise. Faith is a way suitable for sinners, and especially for sinners who are soon to die; in some sense we are all in that condition, and some of us peradventure are especially so; for what man among us knows that he will see to-morrow’s dawn?

I bless God again that the way of salvation is by faith, because it is a way open to the most unlearned. What fine theology we get nowadays — deep thinking they call it. The men go down so deep into their subjects, and so stir the mud at the bottom, that you cannot see them and they cannot see themselves. I apprehend that teachers of a certain school do not themselves know what they are talking about. Now, if salvation were only to be learned by reading through huge folios, what would become of multitudes of poor souls in Bow, and Bethual Green, and Seven Dials? If the gospel had consisted of a mass of learning, how could the unlearned be saved? But now we can go to each one of them and say, “Jesus died.”

“There is life in a look at the Crucified One; There is life at this moment for thee.”

However little you may know, you know that you have sinned; know, then, that Jesus has come to put away sin, and that whosoever believeth in him is immediately forgiven, and enters into life eternal. This brief and blessed gospel is suitable to all cases, from princes to peasants, and we wonder not that faith was selected as the way of salvation.

III. But now, thirdly, I want to say a good deal to-night upon another question, How Does Faith Operate?

For according to our text, it is" Faith which worketh by love." It is a living, laboring, loving faith which alone saves the soul. I cannot tell you what hard things I have heard about this doctrine of salvation by faith. They say that it is immoral. I have heard immoral men say so, and surely they ought to know. They say that it will lead to sin; and those who say so would, I should think, be rather pleased with it for that reason if they believed their own statement. I have never heard a holy man charge faith with leading him into sin. I know no man that follows after God and lives near to him who is under fear that faith in God will tempt him to transgress. The fact is, faith does nothing of the kind; its action is most distinctly the reverse. Like the prudent wife in the Proverbs, faith will do a man good and no harm all the days of his life.

First, it touches the mainspring of our nature by creating love within the soul. What is wanted now for the degraded classes in London? Sanitary regulations? Certainly, if they are not allowed to be a dead letter for the want of some one to carry them out. New houses? By all manner of means: the more the better. Lower rents? Assuredly, for no one has a right to get an excessive rent for unhealthy accommodation. Higher wages? Certainly, we could all of us do with a little more. Many other things are wanted. While yonder gin-palaces remain at the corners of the streets you will not make much headway in uplifting the masses; and I suppose the drink-shops will always flourish while the taste for drink remains. Suppose the licensed poison-shops were shut up, would that suffice? I think not. There are men and women in London, and thousands of them, who, if they were put into the cleanest houses, and were a mile off a gin-shop, would still drink and still turn their houses into piggeries. What is wanted? Oh, if you could make Christians of them! Suppose they could be born again. Suppose they could be made to love the things which they now hate, and hate the things which they now love. New hearts and right spirits are the need of London's outcasts. How can these be produced? In the hand of God the Holy Ghost, this is exactly what faith works in the heart. Here is a watch. "It wants cleaning." Yes, clean it. "It does not go now. It wants a new glass." Well, put in a new glass. "It does not go any the more. It wants new hands." Get new hands by all means. Still it does not go. What is the matter with it? The maker says that it needs a mainspring. There's the seat of the evil: nothing can be right till that is rectified. Set all other matters going, but do not forget that the mainspring is the chief part of the business. Faith supplies the soul with a powerful spring of action. It says to the man, "Thou art forgiven through the blood of Christ who died for thee: how dost thou feel towards him?" The man replies, "I love the Lord for redeeming me." Loving Jesus, the man has now within his soul the seed of every good. He will become a holier and a better being; for he has begun to love, and love is the mother of holiness. Is any service in the world like the service of love? You have a servant in your house, fawning and obsequious; but if you were to reduce his wages, he would show you the rough side of his tongue and seek another situation. You do not expect any more of him than that, and if you did, you would not get it. How different was an old servant I have heard of, who, when his master went down in the world, was content with half-pay; and when he was sorrowfully told that he must go, for his master could not afford him clothes, he made his old ones last him, for he would not leave his master in his old age. He would rather have earned bread for his old master than have left him. He was an attached servant worth his weight in gold: there are few such servants now-a-days, for there are not many such masters. This kind of service cannot be purchased; but its price is above rubies. When the Lord leads us to believe in Jesus, we become henceforth his loving servants, and serve him not for reward, but out of gratitude. It is no longer with us so much work and so much pay; we do not fear the threat of hell for disobedience, nor do we look to heaven as won by works. No, no; our salvation is a free gift. It is furnished for us through infinite love and supreme compassion, and therefore we return our heart's warmest affection. Our heart clings to that dear side which was opened for us. We feel a tender love to those dear pierced feet; we could kiss them every day. Those blessed hands of the Crucified! If they do but touch us, we are strengthened, honored, comforted. Jesus is altogether lovely to us, our bosom's lord. Faith, instead of being a poor, paltry thing, as some imagine, is the grandest cause of love, and so of obedience and holiness.

Know, again, that faith puts us into a new relation. We are bound by nature to be the servants of God; but faith whispers in our ear," Say 'Our Father,'" and when the heart has received the Spirit of adoption, the aspect of service is entirely changed: mercenary service is succeeded by loving obedience, and our spirit is altered. To become an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus, is to elevate work into delight, labor into fellowship with God. The law is no fetter to a child of God: it is his delight.

Faith removes from the sordid form of selfishness which aforetime seemed necessary. So you hope to be saved by what you do, do you? May I ask you, friend, whom you are serving in all this? I will tell you. You are serving yourself. All that you do is to win happiness for yourself. How, then, are you serving God? You are living a selfish life, though it be tinged with the color of spirituality. What is done by you in the matter of religion has no object but that you may be saved, and go to heaven. Your most zealous work is all for self Suppose I say to you, "I know that I am saved: I know that Jesus has put away my sin: I know that he will not permit me to perish;" — why, then there is room in my case for the service of the Lord because of what he has done for me. Now I have not myself to save I have Christ to serve. Gratitude is the motive of the gospel, and under its power unselfish virtue is possible, but not upon the ground of legal service. Pure virtue, it seems to me, is a sheer impossibility till a man is saved, because it always must partake till then of the low and grovelling view of benefiting himself by what he is doing. When once the great transaction is done, and you are saved, then you are lifted up into a nobler sphere, and you say,

**"Then why, O blessed Jesu Christ,
Should I not love thee well?"**

**Not for the hope of winning heaven,
Nor of escaping hell;**

**“Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward:
But as thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord,**

**“So would I love thee, dearest Lord,
And in thy praise will sing;
Solely because thou art my God,
And my Eternal King.”**

Hence faith inspires us with a higher motive than the law can suggest. Faith soon creates love to man; for, if the Lord Jesus has saved you, my brother, you will speedily desire that others may be saved also. You have tasted of this honey, and the sweetness upon your own tongue constrains you to invite others to the feast. He who has been brought into the liberty of free grace would set free every captive sinner if he could.

When well worked out, faith means harmony with God. It creates an agreement with the divine will, so that whatever pleases God pleases us. If the Lord should set the believer on a dunghill with Job, he would still bless his name. Faith agrees with the divine precept which it desires to obey, with the divine doctrine which it desires to know and publish; yea, whatsoever is of God faith saith, “It is the Lord, let him command, teach, or do what seemeth him good.”

I have shown you that faith is not the trifling principle which its deprecators describe as “Only believe.” Oh, that they knew what it is only to believe. it is the setting free of the mind from fetters. It is the dawn of heaven’s own day. It is a lifelong struggle, this “Only believe.” It is “the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

Brethren, I believe that a humble, persevering faith in God is one of the highest forms of adoration that ever reaches the throne of God. Though cherubim and seraphim salute the Lord with their “Holy, holy, holy”; though the whole host of shining ones surround the throne with perpetual hallelujahs, there is no more hearty reverence given to God thereby than when a poor sinner, black as night, cries believingly, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” To believe in the pardon of sin is a wonderful adoration of the mercy and power of God. To believe in a constant providence is a sweet way of worshipping God in his power and goodness. When a poor laborer in his cottage, needing bread for his children, kneels down and cries, “Lord, it is written, ‘Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure,’ I believe thy word, and therefore I look to thee in my necessity,” he renders a homage to the truth and faithfulness of God such as Gabriel could not give, for he never knew the pinch of hunger. To believe that God will keep us to the end and raise us to his glory is more honoring to God than all the hymns of the glorified. From us dying sons of earth, when we confide in his promise, there arises up to heaven incense of a sweet smell, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

To my mind there is also this about faith — that it has a marvellous power over God. Do you ask me to retract that expression? Let it stand. I will explain it. Faith overcomes the Highest upon his throne. Faith in an inferior can hold a superior fast. Some years ago I was walking in the garden one evening, and I saw a stray dog about whom I had received information that he was in the habit of visiting my grounds, and that he did not in the least assist the gardener, and therefore his attentions were not desired. As I walked along one Saturday evening meditating upon my sermon, I saw this dog busily doing mischief. I threw my stick at him, and told him to go home. But what do you think he did? Instead of grinding his teeth at me, or hurrying off with a howl, he looked at me very pleasantly, took up my stick in his mouth and brought it to me, and then, wagging his tail, he laid the stick at my feet. The tears were in my eyes: the dog had beaten me. I said, “Good dog! Good dog; you may come here when you like after that.” Why had the dog conquered me? Because he had confidence in me, and would not believe that I could mean him any hurt. To turn to grander things: the Lord himself cannot resist humble confidence. Do you not see how a sinner brings, as it were, the rod of justice to the Lord, and cries, “If thou smite me, I deserve it; but I submit to thee.” The great God cannot spurn a trustful heart. It is impossible. He were not God if he could cast the soul away that implicitly relies on him. This is the power of faith, then, and I marvel not that the Lord should have chosen it, for believing is a thing most pleasing to God. O that you would all trust him! God lifts his sword against you — run into his arms. He threatens you — grasp his promise. He pursues you — fly to his dear Son. Trust at the foot of the cross in his full atonement, and you must be saved.

IV. Now, I am going to finish in a way suitable to this Luther memorial. You have heard a great deal about Luther’s preaching salvation by faith alone. Now, Let Us Turn To Luther’s Tape, and see what Luther himself meant by it. What kind of faith did Luther himself exhibit by which he was justified?

First, in Luther’s case, faith led him to an open avowal of what he believed. Luther did not mean to go up to heaven by the back

stairs, as many young men hope to do. You wish to be Christians on the sly, so as to escape the offense of the cross. Luther did not refuse to confess Christ and take up his cross and follow him. He knew that he who with his heart believeth, must also with his mouth make confession, and he did so right nobly. He began teaching and preaching the truth which had enlightened his own soul. One of his sermons displeased Duke George of Saxony; but as it saved a lady of high rank Luther did not fret. He was not the man to conceal truth because it was dangerous to avow it. Tetzel came with his precious indulgences, and his releases for souls in purgatory. Thousands of good Catholics were indignant; but no one would bell the cat. Luther called Tetzel "servant of Pope and of the devil," and declared, "As he came among us practising on the credulity of the people, I could not refrain from protesting against it, and opposing his odious career." Without mimicking words, or attempting to speak politely, Luther went at him fearless of consequences. He believed in the blessings of grace "without money and without price," and he did not conceal his convictions. He nailed his theses to the church door where all might read them. When astronomers require a new constellation in the heavens let it be "the hammer and nails." O you who make no profession, let this man's outspoken faith rebuke you!

His dauntless valor for truth caused him to be greatly hated in his own day with a ferocity which has not yet died out. Luther is still the best hated man in certain quarters. Witness the vile tracts which have been produced during the last fortnight, to the disgrace of the press which they defile. I can say no worse nor better of them than that they are worthy of the cause in whose interest they are issued. Mention the name of Luther and the bond-slaves of Rome gnash their teeth. This intense ill-feeling proves Luther's power. Young men, I do not know what your ambition may be; but I hope you do not wish to be in this world mere chips in the porridge, giving forth no flavour whatever. My ambition does not run in that line. I know that if I have no intense haters, I can have no intense lovers; and I am prepared to have both. When right-hearted men see honest love of truth in a man, they cry, "He is our brother. Let him be our champion." When the wrong-hearted reply, "Down with him!" we thank them for the unconscious homage which they thus pay to decision of character. No child of God should court the world's approbation. Certainly Luther did not. He pleased God, and that was enough for him.

His faith was of this kind also — that it moved him to a hearty reverence for what he believed to be Holy Scripture. I am sorry that he was not always wise in his judgment of what the Bible contains; but yet to him Scripture was the last court of appeal. If any had convinced Luther of error out of that book, he would gladly have retracted; but that was not their plan, they simply said, "He is a heretic; condemn him or make him retract." To this he never yielded for an instant. Alas, in this age numbers of men are setting up to be their own inspired writers. I have been told that every man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client; and I am inclined to think that, when any man sets up to be his own Savior and his own revelation, much the same thing occurs. That conceited idea is in the air at this present: every man is excogitating his own Bible. Not so Luther. He loved the sacred book! He fought by its help. It was his battle-axe and his weapon of war. A text of Scripture fired his soul; but the words of tradition he rejected. He would not yield to Melanethon, or Zwingle, or Calvin. or whoever it might be, however learned or pious; he took his own personal faith to the Scripture, and according to his light he followed the word of the Lord. May many a Luther be in this place!

The next thing I note was the intense activity of his faith. Luther did not believe in God doing his own work, so as to lie by in idleness himself. Not a bit of it. A disciple once said to Mahomet, "I am going to turn my camel loose, and trust in providence." "No," said Mahomet, "trust in providence, but tie up your camel carefully." This resembled Oliver Cromwell's Puritan precept, "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry." Luther believed above most men in keeping his powder dry. How he worked! By pen, by mouth, by hand; he was energetic almost beyond belief. He seemed a many-handed man. He did works which would have taxed the strength of hundreds of smaller men. He worked us if everything depended upon his own activity, and then he fell back in holy trust upon God as though he had done nothing. This is the kind of faith which saves a man both in this life and in that which is to come.

Again, Luther's faith abounded in prayer. What supplications they were! Those who heard them tell us of his tears, his wrestlings, his holy arguments. He would go into his closet heavy at heart, and remain there an hour or two, and then come forth singing, "I have conquered, I have conquered." "Ah," said he one day, "I have so much to do today that I cannot get through it with less than three hours' prayer." I thought he was going to say, "I cannot afford to give even a quarter of -an hour to prayer;" but he increased his prayer as he increased his labor. This is the faith that saves — a faith that lays hold on God and -prevails with him in private supplication.

His was a faith that delivered him entirely from the fear of man. Duke George is going to stop him. "Is he?" said Luther. "If it were to rain Duke Georges I would go." He is exhorted not to go to Worms, for he will be in danger. If there were as many devils in Worms as there were tiles on the house-tops he would be there, And he was there, as you all know, playing the man for the gospel and for his God. He committed himself to no man, but kept his faith in God pure and unmingled. Popes, emperors, doctors, electors were all us nothing to Luther when they stood against the Lord, Be it so with us also.

His was a faith that made him risk all for the truth. There seemed no hope of his ever coming back from Worms alive. He was pretty sure to be burned like John Russ; and the wonder is that he escaped. His very daring brought him safety from peril. He expressed his regret that the crown of martyrdom would, in all probability, be missed by him; but the faith which is prepared to die for Jesus was within him. He who in such a case saves his life shall lose it, but he that loses his life for Christ's sake shall find it

unto life eternal.

This was the faith that made Luther a man among men, and saved him from priestly affectations. I do not know whether you admire what is thought to be very superior religion it is a thing of beauty, but not of use; it ought always to be kept in a glass case; it is made up for drawing-rooms and religious meetings, but would be out of place in a shop or on a farm. Now, Luther's religion was with him at home, at the table as well as in the pulpit. His religion was part and parcel of his common life, and that life was free, open, bold, and unrestrained. It is easy to find fault with him from the superfine standpoint, for he lived in an honest unguardedness. My admiration kindles us I think of the hearty openness of the man. I do not wonder that even ungodly Germans revere him, for he is all a German, and all a man. When he speaks he does not take his words out of his mouth to look at them, and to ask Melanethon whether they will do; but he hits hard, and he has spoken a dozen sentences before he has thought whether they are polished or not. Indeed, he is utterly indifferent to criticism, and speaks what he thinks and feels. He is at his ease, for he feels at home: is he not everywhere in his great Father's house? Has he not a pure and simple intent to speak the truth and do the right?

I like Luther with a wife and children. I like to see him with his family and a Christmas-tree, making music with little Johnny Luther on his knee. I love to hear him sing a little hymn with the children, and tell his pretty boy about the horses in heaven with golden bridles and silver saddles. Faith had not taken away his manhood, but sanctified it to noblest uses. Luther did not live and move as if he were a mere cleric, but as a brother to our common humanity. After all, brethren, you must know that the greatest divines have to eat bread and butter like other people. They shut their eyes before they sleep, and they open them in the morning, just like other folks. This is matter of fact, though some stilted gentleman might like us to doubt it. They feel and think like other men. Why should they seem us if they did not? Is it not a good thing to eat and drink to the glory of God, and show people that common things can be sanctified by the word of God and prayer? What if we do not wear canonicals, and so on? The best canonicals in the world are thorough devotion to the Lord's work; and if a man lives aright, he makes every garment a vestment, every meal a sacrament, and every house a temple. All our hours are canonical, all our days holy days, every breath is incense, every pulse music for the Most High.

They tell us that Luther ignored good works. It is true he would not allow good works to be spoken of as the means of salvation; but of those who professed faith in Jesus he demanded holy lives. Luther abounded in prayer and charity. What an almsgiver Luther was! I fear he did not at all times dimly regard the principles of the Charity Organization Society. As he goes along, if there are beggars he empties his pockets for them. Two hundred crowns have just come in, and, though he has a family about him, he cries, "Two hundred crowns! God is giving me my portion in this life." "Here," says he to a poor brother minister, "take half. And where are the poor? Fetch them in. I must be rid of this!" I am afraid that his Catherine was forced at times to shake her head at him; for, in truth, he was not always the most economical husband that might be. In almsgiving he was second to none, and in all the duties of life he rose far beyond the level of his age. Like all other men he had his faults; but as his enemies harp on that string, and go far beyond the truth, I need not dwell upon his failings. I wish that the detractors of Luther were half as good as he. All the glory of his grand career be unto the Lord alone.

Lastly, Luther's faith was a faith that helped him under struggles that are seldom spoken of. I suppose that never man had soul-greater conflict than Luther. He was a man of heights and depths. Sometimes he went up to heaven and he sang his hallelujahs; and then he went down again into the abyss with his "misereres." I am afraid that, great, vigorous man that he was, he had a bad liver. He was grievously afflicted in body in ways which I need not mention; and he was sometimes laid aside for months together, being so racked and tortured that he longed to die. His pains were extreme, and we wonder how he endured them so well. But ever between the attacks of illness Luther was up again preaching the word of God. Those desperate struggles with the devil would have crushed him but for his faith. The devil seems to have been constantly assailing him, and he was constantly assailing the devil. In that tremendous duel he fell back upon his Lord, and, trusting in Omnipotence, he put Satan to rout.

Young men, I pray that a Luther may spring up from your ranks. How gladly would the faithful welcome him! I, who am more a follower of Calvin than of Luther, and much more a follower of Jesus than of either of them, would be charmed to see another Luther upon this earth. God bless you, brethren, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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Galatians 6:2, 5: Burden Bearing

NO. 2831

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 17TH, 1903,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ ... Even man shall bear his own burden.” — Galatians 6:2, 5.

OBSERVE, dear friends, that the apostle says, in the second verse of this chapter, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” These Galatians had been trying to bear the heavy burden of the law of Moses. They had, as far as they could, put themselves again under the old ceremonial law. They had forsaken the gospel way of justification by faith, and had sought to be made perfect by their personal obedience to the law. Now, the apostle, as though he would expel one affection by another, says, “You want a law; you wish to be under a law; well, here is the law of Christ, yield yourselves to it. Instead of observing the outward ceremonials of the Levitical law, here is a living law, which touches the heart, and influences the life, obey that law. You are Christians; you have come under law to Christ by the very fact that you are not your own, but have been bought with a price by him; now see to it that you yield implicit obedience to the law of Christ.”

It is somewhat remarkable, I think, that many of those who are self-righteous, and apparently pay much regard to the law of Moses are usually quite forgetful of that which is the very essence and spirit of that law. They are so righteous that they become stern, severe, censorious, which is being unrighteous, for the righteousness even of the law is a righteousness of love, “for all the law is fulfilled in one word,” that is, “love.” A self-righteous man is not generally a man with a tender spirit. He looks at that which is hard and stern in the law, and he begins to be himself hard and stern; but there is none of the softness, and sweetness, and gentleness, and graciousness which even the law itself required when it said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Paul did well, in the mood in which the Galatians were, — as they wanted to be under law, to remind them of what is the essence of the law; and he did better still by reminding them that they were under law — to Christ, whose law emphasizes the love which even Moses himself had taught under the old dispensation.

These Galatians had most foolishly sought to burden themselves with a load which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. After being set free by the gospel, they had gone back to the yoke of bondage, so the apostle, in effect said to them, “As you have been so bewitched and fascinated that you want burdens to rest upon you, here are burdens for you: ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens.’ And, as you want law, here is law for you: so fulfill the law of Christ.” It was characteristic of that sacred craftiness, that holy ingenuity, which was so conspicuous in the apostle Paul that he worded his argument thus, that he might draw the attention of these Galatians to it, fix it upon their memories, and, if possible, reach and influence their consciences.

Should there be any of you here who desire to come under the yoke of bondage, or who wish to be burden-bearers, or who find great music in the word “law”, I hope you will discover all these things in the text. I see in it, first of all, community: “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” Then the latter part of the text teaches us immunity. You are not bound to consider other people’s burdens as so much your own that you become responsible for them. No, “every man shall bear his own burden.” Then the third point, which will be a further opening up of the fifth verse, will be personality: “Every man shall bear his own burden.”

I. First, I see, in the text, A Marvelous Community: “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” What does this mean?

Well, dealing with it first negatively, it does not mean that we are to burden one another. There are some, whose religion consists in laying heavy burdens upon other men’s shoulders, while they themselves will not carry them for a single yard. You recollect that sect of Pharisees, with whom our Master was always in conflict; they have their representatives in these modern times. Why, even this text itself is twisted by some into a reason for burdening others. “Bear ye one another’s burdens,” say they; “do you not see, friend, that you have to help me?” Yes, friend number one, but do not you see that you are not to go and burden that other friend? It is true that you have to bear his burdens. Let the first application of this passage be to yourself, and be not eager to apply it to your neighbor from whom you want to draw something. You have begun by violating the spirit of the text, not only by not bearing your brother’s burden, but also by thrusting upon him your own burden without taking his in exchange. I say this because I have often found that men naturally draw this inference: “We are to help one another; therefore, please help me.” The proper inference would be, “We are to help one another; where is the man whom I am to help?” Is not that the most logical conclusion from the text? Yet such is the selfishness of our nature that we begin straightway to say, “This text is a cow, I will milk it;” not, “this text gives me something to do, and I will do it;” but, “This text gives me a chance of getting something, and I am going to get it.” If you talk like that, it proves that you are out of gear with the text, and have not entered into the spirit of it at all.

The text does not mean that we are to spy out our brother’s faults. Its connection shows that the word “burdens” here means “faults.” “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens.” To a good man, a fault is a burden. The worst burden that he has to carry is the fact that he is not perfect; that is what troubles him. Now, you and I are not to go about the world spying out everybody else’s faults. “He is an excellent man,” says one, “but”. — Now stop there, you have said quite enough

already, you will spoil it if you say another word. “Ah!” says another, concerning someone else, “she is an admirable woman, an earnest worker for the Savior.” Stop there; I know what you are going to say, — something that might make it seem that you were about as good as she is, and perhaps a little better, and you were afraid that the light of your star would not be seen unless you first covered up that other star. But it must not be so: “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” Bear with one another’s faults, but spy not out one another’s faults.

I think I have heard a story of Mr. Wesley going several times to a certain town, where he thought that there was a band of earnest Christian people; but he was met by a brother, who told him how dead they all were, what a little life there was in their meetings for prayer, and how much of inconsistency there was amongst them. When he got there, he did not notice anything of this; so, the third time he went, he said to this brother, “How is it that you always meet me, and tell me of these things about the brethren! Nobody else ever seems to say it.” “Well, you see,” he said, “Mr. Wesley, I have a rare gift of discerning spirits.” “Oh!” said the good man, “then wrap that talent up in a napkin, and bury it, and you will have done the best thing possible with it. The Lord will never ask you what you have done with it if you will only keep it to yourself.” I believe that there was great wisdom in that advice. There are still some who have only that gift of spying out other men’s faults. That is shocking, dreadful, horrible; so, after all that, my brother. Shut your eye, and bend your back. If you know that the burden is there, bow down to help bear it; but do not stand, and point at it, and seem as if you wished to do that brother a discredit.

Further, the text does not mean that we are to despise those who have heavy burdens to bear; for instance, those who have the grievous burden of poverty. “Oh!” say some, “there is a large number of persons attending at such-and-such a place, but they are all poor people.” So you think little of poor people, do you? Then, what poor souls you must be! “Oh, but!” says one, “such-and-such a person is always afflicted, and very sad.” And do you despise the afflicted, especially the mentally afflicted, the desponding, the sorrowful among God’s people! Do you turn away from them, and say, “I cannot endure talking with persons of that sort; they are so sad in temperament and disposition.” But the apostle says, “Bear ye one another’s burdens;” which means, do not run away from other people because you see that they are burdened. If you say, “I like to be with the cheerful and the gay, I cannot go and spend my life in comforting the mourners in Zion,” is that mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who was meek and lowly, and who did not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax? O brothers and sisters, we need to be schooled in this matter of showing sympathy with the sorrowful! No doubt, it will drag our own spirit down if we really have fellowship with those whom God has sorely afflicted in mind; but we must be willing to be dragged down, and it will do us good. If the Lord sees that we are willing to stoop to the very least of his people, he will be sure to bless us. I like sometimes to sing that verse that Dr. Doddridge wrote, and I hope I can sing it truly, —

“Hast thou a lamb in all thy flock I would disdain to feed?

Hast thou a foe, before whose face I fear thy cause to plead?”

The second half of the verse is much easier than the first half. You might be able to stand up, like young David, before Goliath himself, for there is something grand and noble in such an action as that; but to go looking after the poor little lambs of the flock, that scarcely seem as if they are alive, is quite another matter. Yet that is what the text means: “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” Carry the lambs in your bosom, be tender to such as are afflicted; be, as your Master was, of a gentle, loving spirit, seeking to bear the infirmities of the weak, especially you who are strong; for, if you are like those fat cattle described by the Lord in the prophecy of Ezekiel, that thrust the lean cattle with side and with shoulder, and pushed with their horns those of the herd that were sickly, then the Lord will order you to be taken to the slaughter-house, for that is the lot of the fed beasts that are so big and brutal. The tall tree is uprooted in the breeze which only bends the lowly willow. Blessed are they who never exalt themselves over the weak and afflicted among the children of God.

Nor do I think, dear friends, that our text could be made to mean that any of us may dare to live as if all things existed for our own use. Are there not some people, who seem to feel that they are the center of all creation, and that all things were created for their honor and glory? The working people, round about them, are so many “hands” to be employed by them at the lowest possible rate. The whole stream of trade must be so directed as to conduct the golden liquid into their capacious reservoirs. Politics and everything else must be so arranged that they shall prosper, whoever else may suffer loss. As they go through the world, their great concern is to mind the main chance. “Every man for himself,” is the motto of their lives; and they try to get as much as they can, and to keep as much as they can. Perhaps even their benevolence is only self-indulgence thinly veiled, for they give alms, that they may be seen of men.

There are some Christian people, — at least, I call them Christians by courtesy, — whose main thought is about saving their own souls. Their favourite hymn is not in “Our Own Hymn Book,” —

A change to keep I have,

A God to glorify;

A never dying soul to save,

And fit it for the sky

That is nothing but a kind of spiritual selfishness, — living unto yourself. There is something that you want to get, and that something is what you strive after. Blessed is that man who is saved beyond all fear, and who for the love he bears his Lord, lives wholly and only to prove the power of the grace of God that has been bestowed upon him, and who earnestly seeks to be the means of saving the souls of others. The doctrines of grace do this for us, by delivering us from all fear with regard to the future, and fixing us firmly upon the Rock of Ages, they turn our thoughts away from self to the service and the glory of our God. I delight to sing, —

'Tis done! the great transaction's done;

I am my Lord's, and he is mine

and to feel that, as he will never lose me, nor permit me to lose him, I can turn all my thoughts to the rescue of my fellow-sinners who are going down into the pit. If God shall grant us grace to enter into the true spirit of the gospel, having been delivered from every burden, both of this life and of that which is to come, we shall be prepared to bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfill the law of that Christ who hath set us free from the law of sin and death which was in our members.

I have thus shown you, negatively, what the text does not mean.

But, dear friends, to take our text positively, we can see that it must mean, first, that we are to have great compassion upon those who are bearing the burden of sin. You cannot bear the burden of their sins for them; — only Christ can do that; — but you can help them to bear their burden. I mean this. Here is a troubled soul who has begun to seek the Lord, and the poor creature is in great sorrow of heart. Get alongside that burdened one, and say, "Now, dear friend, I am very sorry for you; I feel as burdened about you as if it were my own soul, not yours, that was in trouble." Ask the Lord to help you when you have left that person; after speaking with much prayer and many tears, go home so grieved that you cannot sleep, and keep on crying to God in secret about that soul. Then, when you get up in the morning with no burden concerning your own soul, because God has saved you, still feel that you have to carry the burden of this poor soul who does not know the Lord, and, at last, you get to feel as if you could not live if that soul did not also live. If it will not repent, you seem to feel the burden of its guilt. If it will not believe in Christ, you wish you could believe for it.

Of course, you cannot repent and believe for it, but you can believe about it; and you can, by faith and prayer, bring it to Jesus' feet, and lay it there. The Holy Ghost often draws sinners to the Savior by means of the love of Christians. We can love them to Christ; and if we love them as the apostle Paul did when he travailed in birth for them until Christ was formed in them, it will not be long before we shall see them converted. I am sure that it is so; and that one great secret of soul-winning lies in the bearing of the burdens of the unconverted.

But we must take special care, dear friends, that we do this in the case of backsliders, because the text, in its connection, alludes to them most particularly: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens." If that backslider has been awakened to a sense of his true condition, he will feel very unhappy; so be you very sympathetic towards him. He may be afraid to come back into membership with the church; if so, go after him, and encourage him to return. If he says, "I have brought disgrace upon the name of Christ," try to bear part of the shame that he feels. If he says, "I cannot face So-and-so," say to him, "I will stand between you; or I will go and plead for you." Take to yourself, as far as you can, the shame and the disgrace which belong to the backslider. Try to get right into his place. I am sure that there is no other way of setting broken bones that is equal to this. There is no way of bringing back the wandering sheep like that which the good Shepherd took when he lifted the poor creature right up on his own shoulders. It was too worn, and weak, and weary, for him to lead it back, or drive it back, so he carried it all the way; and, brethren, let us carry the backsliders on our own shoulders in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. As far as it is possible to us, let us compel them to come in once more that God's house may be filled, and let us take the burden of their grief, and of their shame, upon ourselves. Thus shall we carry out the injunction of the text: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Next, the text seems to me to mean, "Be very patient with the infirmities of your brethren." "Oh, but, So and-so is very quick tempered!" I hope that it is a burden to him to be quick tempered, and if so, that is an additional reason why you should bear with him. "But So-and-so is really very bitter in spirit." Yes, alas! there are still some people of that sort, and you are to bear with them. I hope it is a burden to them if they have even a tinge of bitterness in their nature, so bear with it. "I do not see why I should," says one. Well, then, open your eyes, and read the text: "and so fulfill the law of Christ." If the Lord Jesus Christ can put up with you, you ought to be able to put up with anybody. "Oh, but some people are so exacting!" Yes, some of you know that I am sometimes very exacting. When I am suffering very greatly from gout, if anybody walks heavily and noisily across the room, it gives me pain. Well,

then, what do you think happens? Why, they go across the room on tiptoe; they do not say to one another, "We cannot help it that he is ill, and that our noise gives him pain; we shall walk just as we always do; we have a right to walk like that." No, no, they do not need even to be asked to move about quietly, but they say, "Poor man, he is so ill that we must be as gentle as ever we can with him." Could not you look in that kind of spirit upon brothers and sisters, who are not quite all that you would like them to be, and say, "They are not well spiritually," and deal very gently with them, "and so fulfill the law of Christ." We who are Christians are to live together in heaven for ever, so do not let us fall out by the way. Come, my brother, I have to bear a great deal from you, and you have to bear a great deal from me; so let it be give and take all the way through. "Bear ye one another's burdens," not I bear yours without you bearing mine, but I bear yours and you bear mine; you put up with me, and I put up with you; and in that way we shall both "fulfill the law of Christ."

Does not the text also mean that we are to bear one another's burdens by having a deep sympathy with one another in times of sorrow? Oh, for a sympathetic heart! Seek after it, beloved Christian men and women. Seek to have large hearts, and tender hearts, for the world is full of sorrow; and one of the sweetest balms to sorrow is the sympathy of Christ flowing through the hearts of his own redeemed ones. Be tender, be pitiful, be full of compassion.

But this sympathy must show itself by actual assistance, rendered wherever it is possible. "Bear ye one another's burdens." Let the burden of poverty be borne by those of you who have no poverty of your own. Succour your brethren in their times of need. Light their candle when their house grows dark. Blessed are those men and women who addict themselves to the ministry of the saints, and who seek, wherever they can, to lighten the burdens of life for their fellow-Christians, lending their shoulders whenever they can give support to the weak.

Brothers and sisters, we should also bear one another's spiritual burdens by helping one another in our soul-struggles. I am afraid that, in some places of worship, Christian men and women come up to the house of prayer, and go home again, without ever speaking to one another. I do not think that is the case here, but it is the case in many places, especially in very respectable places of worship. There, they go in and out as if they were all self-contained, and could not speak to one another, especially if they happen to be half-sovereign people and a half-crown person is anywhere near; they cannot speak to him at all. This is all contrary to the mind of Christ. In our church-fellowship, there should be real communion, and we should converse with one another. In the olden times "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another," and Christian people should do the same still; and you, who are elders in the church, might often say a word that would help a poor young friend who is struggling to do right. You, who are joyous, might often lend some of your sunbeams to those who are in the dark, and you ought to do so; and it would be to your own profit as well as to the profit of others. Trade produces wealth, and the inter-trading of Christians, exchanging their good things one with the other, would tend to the spiritual enrichment of the entire body. God help you so to do by communion with one another!

"Bear ye one another's burdens" also by much prayer for the other. When you have prayed for yourself, end not your supplication there. Keep a little list of people to be prayed for, and try to put down, on your list, certain things which you know trouble them, and which also trouble you, and bring them before the Lord. In some way or other, bear ye those burdens which God lays upon your brethren.

II. The time flies so quickly that I can only speak very briefly upon the second point, that is, UNITY: "For every man shall bear his own burden."

Let us always, for our comfort, recollect that there is a point beyond which we cannot go in being one another's burdens. After you have prayed for anyone, and conversed with him, and he still continues in sin, you are ready to break your heart about him. Yes, it is right to feel like that; but do not be so unwise as to take his sin actually to yourself. If you have warned, prayed, instructed, and set a godly example, and men will still sin, their sin is their own, and their blood will be upon their own head.

And, next, do not take the shame of other people's sins upon yourself beyond a certain point. I have known a good man ashamed to come to the house of God because his son had disgraced himself well, his sin does dishonor his father; but, still, as you did not commit the sin, and you did not do anything to contribute to it, do not feel so ashamed as that. I have known some Christian people very seriously injured by the shame which they have felt because some distant relative or some near relative has misbehaved himself. Go to God with it; but recollect that it is not your sin, and it is not your shame either. Bear it so as to sympathize and pray about it, but not so as to be yourself ashamed and depressed because of it.

Remember, also, that we cannot take other people's responsibilities upon ourselves. I am responsible for faithfully preaching the gospel, but I am not responsible for your reception of it. If I preach the truth, and there is not a soul saved by it, I am not responsible for that; and if you, dear teacher in the Sunday-school or if any of you Christian workers, have labored in vain, if you have been faithful to God, I do not think that will happen, — but if it does, and it may happen in some measure, — do not seem to bear that responsibility, for the text says, "Every man shall bear his own burden." I find it difficult to make young brethren, when they begin to

preach, feel sufficiently thine burden of souls; but, every now and then, I have met with a brother, who has felt the burden of souls so much that he has scarcely been able to preach at all. That is a pity; because, after all, the salvation of souls lies not with us, but with God; and if we have faithfully declared the whole counsel of God, and can call God to witness that we have not kept back anything of his truth that we knew, or failed in faithfulness or earnestness, we must leave the matter there, and fall back upon the eternal purpose of God, and throw the responsibility of the result upon our unbelieving hearers.

III. I have not time to speak as I should like upon the last point; that is, Personality: “Every man shall bear his own burden.”

That is to say, every man, if he has any religion at all, must have personal religion. You cannot get to heaven by your mother's godliness, or by your father's graciousness; there must be a work of grace in your own souls. No man can be a sponsor for another in spiritual things. There is no more gigantic falsehood than that one person should promise that another shall do this and that, which he cannot even do himself. No; “every man shall bear his own burden.” Every one must come, with his own sin, to his own Savior; and, by his own act of faith, must find peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. Do not trust to any national religion, for it is utterly worthless. It is personal religion alone that can save you. If the blood of saints be flowing in your veins, it brings you nothing except greater responsibility; for salvation is not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God, and of God alone.

And every man should bear his own burden by personal self — examination. I should never think of asking another man to give me his opinion of me; and I hope you will not do so. Search your own souls, “examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.” “Oh, I do not like self-examination!” says one. So the bankrupt said, he did not like casting up his accounts; but when a man in business does not cast his accounts up, his accounts will soon cast him up; and when a man does not like to examine, his own heart, depend upon it the time will come when another will examine him, and he will be found wanting, and be cast away as worthless.

Next, this text means that there must be personal service: “Every man shall bear his own burden.” That is, if you and I are saved, we must each one have a work of his own, and we must set to work, and do it personally. The Lord has put each one of us into a position where there is something we can do which nobody else can do, and we are bound to do it, and not to begin thinking of how little others do, or how much others do, but to say to our Lord, “What wilt thou have me to do?” Let each Christian Levite bow his shoulder, and carry some burden for the Lord's house.

And every man should make a personal effort to bear his own burden. We have a certain number of persons about, who seem as if they never can do anything for themselves, they have to be carried wherever they go. I think I have told you of a set of portraits that I have at home; it represents my two sons, taken on their birthdays while they were quite little boys, and then taken every birthday till they had grown to be young men. Well, at first, they are in a perambulator, and it is very interesting to see how they have grown every year. But there are some of you who have been in perambulators ever since I knew you, and you are in perambulators still, and I have to keep wheeling you about still. Oh, I wish you would grow! We are all pleased to have dear little children, and we do not mind how little they are at first; but if, after they were fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, or twenty years old, our boys were the same size as they were when they were a year old, we should feel that we were the parents of poor little dwarfs, and it would be a great trial to us. And it is a great trial to us, spiritual parents, when we are the fathers of dwarfs. Oh, that you would grow, brethren! God help you so to grow out of yourselves, and your inactivities, and your listlessness, that every man shall say, “I am big enough to bear my own burden. By the goodness of God, I will get so much grace, and so much help, that I will do some work for the Lord, and do it thoroughly. I will bear my own burden; not sit on the top of it, and fret and cry, and ask somebody else to bear it for me; but I will bear my own burden.”

I will finish by saying that the text indicates that everybody has own burden. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” You look at somebody else, and you say, “Ah, I wish I had his load to carry!” I do not think that I ever met with more than one person in the world with whom, upon mature consideration, I would change places in all respects. I have thought, once or twice, that I might do so; but, soon, there has been a hitch somewhere, and I have said, “No, I will go back into my own shell, after all.” I think, sometimes, that I would not mind changing places with George Miller for time and for eternity, but I do not know anybody else of whom I would say as much as that. But I daresay that even he, has his own burden, though he has not told me about it when I have talked with him. And that good woman, who always looks so smiling, God bless her! — she has a skeleton at home in the cupboard. And that good brother, who is always so bright and cheery, — yes, he has a burden, too. There is a cross for everyone; and I want you to feel that it is so, because it would take away all thought of envy whenever you meet with another who seems so much happier than yourself. That brother has the sense to turn the smooth side of his coat outside; he wears the rough side of it inwards, — a very sensible thing to do. Do not, therefore, begin to say, “Oh, but, I am so much worse off than he is!” You do not know what he has to endure, “for every man shall bear his own burden.” Let us end the whole matter by not envying others, or caring or wishing to be other people; but just saying, “What can I do to help anybody else? What I can do to help anybody, I will do

by the grace of God.”

But what can some of you do in carrying burdens for other people? Why, even while I have been talking, you have said, “I do not care to do that. What have I to do with other people?” You are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, while you talk like that! Any man who is selfish is an unsaved man, for the chief point in salvation is to save us from ourselves. As long as you live simply within your own ribs, you live in a dungeon. You will never come into the palace where the many mansions be, — the liberty of our great Father’s house, — until you can say, “I love others more than I love myself. Above all, I love the great Burden-bearer, who took my burden of sin upon his shoulders, and carried it up in the tree, and away from the tree; and now, through love to him, the love of self is gone, all I will live, glorify his name for ever and for ever.”

God bless you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

Galatians 6:2,5: Burden Bearing

NO. 2831

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 17TH, 1903,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 26TH, 1886.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ ... Even man shall bear his own burden.” — Galatians 6:2, 5.

OBSERVE, dear friends, that the apostle says, in the second verse of this chapter, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” These Galatians had been trying to bear the heavy burden of the law of Moses. They had, as far as they could, put themselves again under the old ceremonial law. They had forsaken the gospel way of justification by faith, and had sought to be made perfect by their personal obedience to the law. Now, the apostle, as though he would expel one affection by another, says, “You want a law; you wish to be under a law; well, here is the law of Christ, yield yourselves to it. Instead of observing the outward ceremonials of the Levitical law, here is a living law, which touches the heart, and influences the life, obey that law. You are Christians; you have come under law to Christ by the very fact that you are not your own, but have been bought with a price by him; now see to it that you yield implicit obedience to the law of Christ.”

It is somewhat remarkable, I think, that many of those who are self-righteous, and apparently pay much regard to the law of Moses are usually quite forgetful of that which is the very essence and spirit of that law. They are so righteous that they become stern, severe, censorious, which is being unrighteous, for the righteousness even of the law is a righteousness of love, “for all the law is fulfilled in one word,” that is, “love.” A self-righteous man is not generally a man with a tender spirit. He looks at that which is hard and stern in the law, and he begins to be himself hard and stern; but there is none of the softness, and sweetness, and gentleness, and graciousness which even the law itself required when it said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Paul did well, in the mood in which the Galatians were, — as they wanted to be under law, to remind them of what is the essence of the law; and he did better still by reminding them that they were under law — to Christ, whose law emphasizes the love which even Moses himself had taught under the old dispensation.

These Galatians had most foolishly sought to burden themselves with a load which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. After being set free by the gospel, they had gone back to the yoke of bondage, so the apostle, in effect said to them, “As you have been so bewitched and fascinated that you want burdens to rest upon you, here are burdens for you: ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens.’ And, as you want law, here is law for you: so fulfill the law of Christ.” It was characteristic of that sacred craftiness, that holy ingenuity, which was so conspicuous in the apostle Paul that he worded his argument thus, that he might draw the attention of these Galatians to it, fix it upon their memories, and, if possible, reach and influence their consciences.

Should there be any of you here who desire to come under the yoke of bondage, or who wish to be burden-bearers, or who find great music in the word “law”, I hope you will discover all these things in the text. I see in it, first of all, community: “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” Then the latter part of the text teaches us immunity. You are not bound to consider other people’s burdens as so much your own that you become responsible for them. No, “every man shall bear his own burden.” Then the third point, which will be a further opening up of the fifth verse, will be personality: “Every man shall bear his own burden.”

I. First, I see, in the text, A Marvelous Community: “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” What does this mean?

Well, dealing with it first negatively, it does not mean that we are to burden one another. There are some, whose religion consists in

laying heavy burdens upon other men's shoulders, while they themselves will not carry them for a single yard. You recollect that sect of Pharisees, with whom our Master was always in conflict; they have their representatives in these modern times. Why, even this text itself is twisted by some into a reason for burdening others. "Bear ye one another's burdens;" say they; "do you not see, friend, that you have to help me?" Yes, friend number one, but do not you see that you are not to go and burden that other friend? It is true that you have to bear his burdens. Let the first application of this passage be to yourself, and be not eager to apply it to your neighbor from whom you want to draw something. You have begun by violating the spirit of the text, not only by not bearing your brother's burden, but also by thrusting upon him your own burden without taking his in exchange. I say this because I have often found that men naturally draw this inference: "We are to help one another; therefore, please help me." The proper inference would be, "We are to help one another; where is the man whom I am to help?" Is not that the most logical conclusion from the text? Yet such is the selfishness of our nature that we begin straightway to say, "This text is a cow, I will milk it;" not, "this text gives me something to do, and I will do it;" but, "This text gives me a chance of getting something, and I am going to get it." If you talk like that, it proves that you are out of gear with the text, and have not entered into the spirit of it at all.

The text does not mean that we are to spy out our brother's faults. Its connection shows that the word "burdens" here means "faults." "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens." To a good man, a fault is a burden. The worst burden that he has to carry is the fact that he is not perfect; that is what troubles him. Now, you and I are not to go about the world spying out everybody else's faults. "He is an excellent man," says one, "but". — Now stop there, you have said quite enough already, you will spoil it if you say another word. "Ah!" says another, concerning someone else, "she is an admirable woman, an earnest worker for the Savior." Stop there; I know what you are going to say, — something that might make it seem that you were about as good as she is, and perhaps a little better, and you were afraid that the light of your star would not be seen unless you first covered up that other star. But it must not be so: "Bear ye one another's burdens." Bear with one another's faults, but spy not out one another's faults.

I think I have heard a story of Mr. Wesley going several times to a certain town, where he thought that there was a band of earnest Christian people; but he was met by a brother, who told him how dead they all were, what a little life there was in their meetings for prayer, and how much of inconsistency there was amongst them. When he got there, he did not notice anything of this; so, the third time he went, he said to this brother, "How is it that you always meet me, and tell me of these things about the brethren! Nobody else ever seems to say it." "Well, you see," he said, "Mr. Wesley, I have a rare gift of discerning spirits." "Oh!" said the good man, "then wrap that talent up in a napkin, and bury it, and you will have done the best thing possible with it. The Lord will never ask you what you have done with it if you will only keep it to yourself." I believe that there was great wisdom in that advice. There are still some who have only that gift of spying out other men's faults. That is shocking, dreadful, horrible; so, after all that, my brother. Shut your eye, and bend your back. If you know that the burden is there, bow down to help bear it; but do not stand, and point at it, and seem as if you wished to do that brother a discredit.

Further, the text does not mean that we are to despise those who have heavy burdens to bear; for instance, those who have the grievous burden of poverty. "Oh!" say some, "there is a large number of persons attending at such-and-such a place, but they are all poor people." So you think little of poor people, do you? Then, what poor souls you must be! "Oh, but!" says one, "such-and-such a person is always afflicted, and very sad." And do you despise the afflicted, especially the mentally afflicted, the desponding, the sorrowful among God's people! Do you turn away from them, and say, "I cannot endure talking with persons of that sort; they are so sad in temperament and disposition." But the apostle says, "Bear ye one another's burdens;" which means, do not run away from other people because you see that they are burdened. If you say, "I like to be with the cheerful and the gay, I cannot go and spend my life in comforting the mourners in Zion," is that mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who was meek and lowly, and who did not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax? O brothers and sisters, we need to be schooled in this matter of showing sympathy with the sorrowful! No doubt, it will drag our own spirit down if we really have fellowship with those whom God has sorely afflicted in mind; but we must be willing to be dragged down, and it will do us good. If the Lord sees that we are willing to stoop to the very least of his people, he will be sure to bless us. I like sometimes to sing that verse that Dr. Doddridge wrote, and I hope I can sing it truly, —

**"Hast thou a lamb in all thy flock I would disdain to feed?
Hast thou a foe, before whose face I fear thy cause to plead?"**

The second half of the verse is much easier than the first half. You might be able to stand up, like young David, before Goliath himself, for there is something grand and noble in such an action as that; but to go looking after the poor little lambs of the flock, that scarcely seem as if they are alive, is quite another matter. Yet that is what the text means: "Bear ye one another's burdens." Carry the lambs in your bosom, be tender to such as are afflicted; be, as your Master was, of a gentle, loving spirit, seeking to bear the infirmities of the weak, especially you who are strong; for, if you are like those fat cattle described by the Lord in the prophecy of Ezekiel, that thrust the lean cattle with side and with shoulder, and pushed with their horns those of the herd that were sickly, then the Lord will order you to be taken to the slaughter-house, for that is the lot of the fed beasts that are so big and brutal. The tall tree

is uprooted in the breeze which only bends the lowly willow. Blessed are they who never exalt themselves over the weak and afflicted among the children of God.

Nor do I think, dear friends, that our text could be made to mean that any of us may dare to live as if all things existed for our own use. Are there not some people, who seem to feel that they are the center of all creation, and that all things were created for their honor and glory? The working people, round about them, are so many "hands" to be employed by them at the lowest possible rate. The whole stream of trade must be so directed as to conduct the golden liquid into their capacious reservoirs. Politics and everything else must be so arranged that they shall prosper, whoever else may suffer loss. As they go through the world, their great concern is to mind the main chance. "Every man for himself," is the motto of their lives; and they try to get as much as they can, and to keep as much as they can. Perhaps even their benevolence is only self-indulgence thinly veiled, for they give alms, that they may be seen of men.

There are some Christian people, — at least, I call them Christians by courtesy, — whose main thought is about saving their own souls. Their favourite hymn is not in "Our Own Hymn Book," —

"A change to keep I have,

A God to glorify;

A never dying soul to save,

And fit it for the sky."

That is nothing but a kind of spiritual selfishness, — living unto yourself. There is something that you want to get, and that something is what you strive after. Blessed is that man who is saved beyond all fear, and who for the love he bears his Lord, lives wholly and only to prove the power of the grace of God that has been bestowed upon him, and who earnestly seeks to be the means of saving the souls of others. The doctrines of grace do this for us, by delivering us from all fear with regard to the future, and fixing us firmly upon the Rock of Ages, they turn our thoughts away from self to the service and the glory of our God. I delight to sing, —

"'Tis done! the great transaction's done;

I am my Lord's, and he is mine;"

and to feel that, as he will never lose me, nor permit me to lose him, I can turn all my thoughts to the rescue of my fellow-sinners who are going down into the pit. If God shall grant us grace to enter into the true spirit of the gospel, having been delivered from every burden, both of this life and of that which is to come, we shall be prepared to bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfill the law of that Christ who hath set us free from the law of sin and death which was in our members.

I have thus shown you, negatively, what the text does not mean.

But, dear friends, to take our text positively, we can see that it must mean, first, that we are to have great compassion upon those who are bearing the burden of sin. You cannot bear the burden of their sins for them; — only Christ can do that; — but you can help them to bear their burden. I mean this. Here is a troubled soul who has begun to seek the Lord, and the poor creature is in great sorrow of heart. Get alongside that burdened one, and say, "Now, dear friend, I am very sorry for you; I feel as burdened about you as if it were my own soul, not yours, that was in trouble." Ask the Lord to help you when you have left that person; after speaking with much prayer and many tears, go home so grieved that you cannot sleep, and keep on crying to God in secret about that soul. Then, when you get up in the morning with no burden concerning your own soul, because God has saved you, still feel that you have to carry the burden of this poor soul who does not know the Lord, and, at last, you get to feel as if you could not live if that soul did not also live. If it will not repent, you seem to feel the burden of its guilt. If it will not believe in Christ, you wish you could believe for it.

Of course, you cannot repent and believe for it, but you can believe about it; and you can, by faith and prayer, bring it to Jesus's feet, and lay it there. The Holy Ghost often draws sinners to the Savior by means of the love of Christians. We can love them to Christ; and if we love them as the apostle Paul did when he travailed in birth for them until Christ was formed in them, it will not be long before we shall see them converted. I am sure that it is so; and that one great secret of soul-winning lies in the bearing of the burdens of the unconverted.

But we must take special care, dear friends, that we do this in the case of backsliders, because the text, in its connection, alludes to them most particularly: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens." If that backslider has been awakened to a sense of his true condition, he will feel very unhappy; so be you very sympathetic towards him. He may be afraid to come back

into membership with the church; if so, go after him, and encourage him to return. If he says, "I have brought disgrace upon the name of Christ," try to bear part of the shame that he feels. If he says, "I cannot face So-and-so," say to him, "I will stand between you; or I will go and plead for you." Take to yourself, as far as you can, the shame and the disgrace which belong to the backslider. Try to get right into his place. I am sure that there is no other way of setting broken bones that is equal to this. There is no way of bringing back the wandering sheep like that which the good Shepherd took when he lifted the poor creature right up on his own shoulders. It was too worn, and weak, and weary, for him to lead it back, or drive it back, so he carried it all the way; and, brethren, let us carry the backsliders on our own shoulders in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. As far as it is possible to us, let us compel them to come in once more that God's house may be filled, and let us take the burden of their grief, and of their shame, upon ourselves. Thus shall we carry out the injunction of the text: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Next, the text seems to me to mean, "Be very patient with the infirmities of your brethren." "Oh, but, So and-so is very quick tempered!" I hope that it is a burden to him to be quick tempered, and if so, that is an additional reason why you should bear with him. "But So-and-so is really very bitter in spirit." Yes, alas! there are still some people of that sort, and you are to bear with them. I hope it is a burden to them if they have even a tinge of bitterness in their nature, so bear with it. "I do not see why I should," says one. Well, then, open your eyes, and read the text: "and so fulfill the law of Christ." If the Lord Jesus Christ can put up with you, you ought to be able to put up with anybody. "Oh, but some people are so exacting!" Yes, some of you know that I am sometimes very exacting. When I am suffering very greatly from gout, if anybody walks heavily and noisily across the room, it gives me pain. Well, then, what do you think happens? Why, they go across the room on tiptoe; they do not say to one another, "We cannot help it that he is ill, and that our noise gives him pain; we shall walk just as we always do; we have a right to walk like that." No, no, they do not need even to be asked to move about quietly, but they say, "Poor man, he is so ill that we must be as gentle as ever we can with him." Could not you look in that kind of spirit upon brothers and sisters, who are not quite all that you would like them to be, and say, "They are not well spiritually," and deal very gently with them, "and so fulfill the law of Christ." We who are Christians are to live together in heaven for ever, so do not let us fall out by the way. Come, my brother, I have to bear a great deal from you, and you have to bear a great deal from me; so let it be give and take all the way through.

"Bear ye one another's burdens," not I bear yours without you bearing mine, but I bear yours and you bear mine; you put up with me, and I put up with you; and in that way we shall both "fulfill the law of Christ."

Does not the text also mean that we are to bear one another's burdens by having a deep sympathy with one another in times of sorrow? Oh, for a sympathetic heart! Seek after it, beloved Christian men and women. Seek to have large hearts, and tender hearts, for the world is full of sorrow; and one of the sweetest balms to sorrow is the sympathy of Christ flowing through the hearts of his own redeemed ones. Be tender, be pitiful, be full of compassion.

But this sympathy must show itself by actual assistance, rendered wherever it is possible. "Bear ye one another's burdens." Let the burden of poverty be borne by those of you who have no poverty of your own. Succour your brethren in their times of need. Light their candle when their house grows dark. Blessed are those men and women who addict themselves to the ministry of the saints, and who seek, wherever they can, to lighten the burdens of life for their fellow-Christians, lending their shoulders whenever they can give support to the weak.

Brothers and sisters, we should also bear one another's spiritual burdens by helping one another in our soul-struggles. I am afraid that, in some places of worship, Christian men and women come up to the house of prayer, and go home again, without ever speaking to one another. I do not think that is the case here, but it is the case in many places, especially in very respectable places of worship. There, they go in and out as if they were all self-contained, and could not speak to one another, especially if they happen to be half-sovereign people and a half-crown person is anywhere near; they cannot speak to him at all. This is all contrary to the mind of Christ. In our church-fellowship, there should be real communion, and we should converse with one another. In the olden times "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another," and Christian people should do the same still; and you, who are elders in the church, might often say a word that would help a poor young friend who is struggling to do right. You, who are joyous, might often lend some of your sunbeams to those who are in the dark, and you ought to do so; and it would be to your own profit as well as to the profit of others. Trade produces wealth, and the inter-trading of Christians, exchanging their good things one with the other, would tend to the spiritual enrichment of the entire body. God help you so to do by communion with one another!

"Bear ye one another's burdens" also by much prayer for the other. When you have prayed for yourself, end not your supplication there. Keep a little list of people to be prayed for, and try to put down, on your list, certain things which you know trouble them, and which also trouble you, and bring them before the Lord. In some way or other, bear ye those burdens which God lays upon your brethren.

II. The time flies so quickly that I can only speak very briefly upon the second point, that is, UNITY: "For every man shall bear his own burden."

Let us always, for our comfort, recollect that there is a point beyond which we cannot go in being one another's burdens. After you have prayed for anyone, and conversed with him, and he still continues in sin, you are ready to break your heart about him. Yes, it is right to feel like that; but do not be so unwise as to take his sin actually to yourself. If you have warned, prayed, instructed, and set a godly example, and men will still sin, their sin is their own, and their blood will be upon their own head.

And, next, do not take the shame of other people's sins upon yourself beyond a certain point. I have known a good man ashamed to come to the house of God because his son had disgraced himself well, his sin does dishonor his father; but, still, as you did not commit the sin, and you did not do anything to contribute to it, do not feel so ashamed as that. I have known some Christian people very seriously injured by the shame which they have felt because some distant relative or some near relative has misbehaved himself. Go to God with it; but recollect that it is not your sin, and it is not your shame either. Bear it so as to sympathize and pray about it, but not so as to be yourself ashamed and depressed because of it.

Remember, also, that we cannot take other people's responsibilities upon ourselves. I am responsible for faithfully preaching the gospel, but I am not responsible for your reception of it. If I preach the truth, and there is not a soul saved by it, I am not responsible for that; and if you, dear teacher in the Sunday-school or if any of you Christian workers, have labored in vain, if you have been faithful to God, I do not think that will happen, — but if it does, and it may happen in some measure, — do not seem to bear that responsibility, for the text says, "Every man shall bear his own burden." I find it difficult to make young brethren, when they begin to preach, feel sufficiently thine burden of souls; but, every now and then, I have met with a brother, who has felt the burden of souls so much that he has scarcely been able to preach at all. That is a pity; because, after all, the salvation of souls lies not with us, but with God; and if we have faithfully declared the whole counsel of God, and can call God to witness that we have not kept back anything of his truth that we knew, or failed in faithfulness or earnestness, we must leave the matter there, and fall back upon the eternal purpose of God, and throw the responsibility of the result upon our unbelieving hearers.

III. I have not time to speak as I should like upon the last point; that is, Personality: "Every man shall bear his own burden."

That is to say, every man, if he has any religion at all, must have personal religion. You cannot get to heaven by your mother's godliness, or by your father's graciousness; there must be a work of grace in your own souls. No man can be a sponsor for another in spiritual things. There is no more gigantic falsehood than that one person should promise that another shall do this and that, which he cannot even do himself. No; "every man shall bear his own burden." Every one must come, with his own sin, to his own Savior; and, by his own act of faith, must find peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. Do not trust to any national religion, for it is utterly worthless. It is personal religion alone that can save you. If the blood of saints be flowing in your veins, it brings you nothing except greater responsibility; for salvation is not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God, and of God alone.

And every man should bear his own burden by personal self — examination. I should never think of asking another man to give me his opinion of me; and I hope you will not do so. Search your own souls, "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." "Oh, I do not like self-examination!" says one. So the bankrupt said, he did not like casting up his accounts; but when a man in business does not cast his accounts up, his accounts will soon cast him up; and when a man does not like to examine, his own heart, depend upon it the time will come when another will examine him, and he will be found wanting, and be cast away as worthless.

Next, this text means that there must be personal service: "Every man shall bear his own burden." That is, if you and I are saved, we must each one have a work of his own, and we must set to work, and do it personally. The Lord has put each one of us into a position where there is something we can do which nobody else can do, and we are bound to do it, and not to begin thinking of how little others do, or how much others do, but to say to our Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Let each Christian Levite bow his shoulder, and carry some burden for the Lord's house.

And every man should make a personal effort to bear his own burden. We have a certain number of persons about, who seem as if they never can do anything for themselves, they have to be carried wherever they go. I think I have told you of a set of portraits that I have at home; it represents my two sons, taken on their birthdays while they were quite little boys, and then taken every birthday till they had grown to be young men. Well, at first, they are in a perambulator, and it is very interesting to see how they have grown every year. But there are some of you who have been in perambulators ever since I knew you, and you are in perambulators still, and I have to keep wheeling you about still. Oh, I wish you would grow! We are all pleased to have dear little children, and we do not mind how little they are at first; but if, after they were fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, or twenty years old, our boys were the same size as they were when they were a year old, we should feel that we were the parents of poor little dwarfs, and it would be a great trial to us. And it is a great trial to us, spiritual parents, when we are the fathers of dwarfs. Oh, that you would grow, brethren! God help you so to grow out of yourselves, and your inactivities, and your listlessness, that every man shall say, "I am big enough to

bear my own burden. By the goodness of God, I will get so much grace, and so much help, that I will do some work for the Lord, and do it thoroughly. I will bear my own burden; not sit on the top of it, and fret and cry, and ask somebody else to bear it for me; but I will bear my own burden.”

I will finish by saying that the text indicates that everybody has own burden. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” You look at somebody else, and you say, “Ah, I wish I had his load to carry!” I do not think that I ever met with more than one person in the world with whom, upon mature consideration, I would change places in all respects. I have thought, once or twice, that I might do so; but, soon, there has been a hitch somewhere, and I have said, “No, I will go back into my own shell, after all.” I think, sometimes, that I would not mind changing places with George Miller for time and for eternity, but I do not know anybody else of whom I would say as much as that. But I daresay that even he, has his own burden, though he has not told me about it when I have talked with him. And that good woman, who always looks so smiling, God bless her! — she has a skeleton at home in the cupboard. And that good brother, who is always so bright and cheery, — yes, he has a burden, too. There is a cross for everyone; and I want you to feel that it is so, because it would take away all thought of envy whenever you meet with another who seems so much happier than yourself. That brother has the sense to turn the smooth side of his coat outside; he wears the rough side of it inwards, — a very sensible thing to do. Do not, therefore, begin to say, “Oh, but, I am so much worse off than he is!” You do not know what he has to endure, “for every man shall bear his own burden.” Let us end the whole matter by not envying others, or caring or wishing to be other people; but just saying, “What can I do to help anybody else? What I can do to help anybody, I will do by the grace of God.”

But what can some of you do in carrying burdens for other people? Why, even while I have been talking, you have said, “I do not care to do that. What have I to do with other people?” You are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, while you talk like that! Any man who is selfish is an unsaved man, for the chief point in salvation is to save us from ourselves. As long as you live simply within your own ribs, you live in a dungeon. You will never come into the palace where the many mansions be, — the liberty of our great Father’s house, — until you can say, “I love others more than I love myself. Above all, I love the great Burden-bearer, who took my burden of sin upon his shoulders, and carried it up in the tree, and away from the tree; and now, through love to him, the love of self is gone, all I will live, glorify his name for ever and for ever.”

God bless you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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