

Spurgeon on Galatians 2

C H SPURGEON SERMON ON GALATIANS

Galatians 6:6: Life's Inevitable Burden

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“For every man shall bear his own burden.” — Galatians 6:6.

IN pondering Scripture truth, we must not strain metaphors, nor use figures of speech as though they were literal statements. You have an instance of the truth of this remark in this chapter. In one verse the apostle says, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ “; whilst in the verse of our text, he says, “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Still, he is not contradicting himself. He would be, if he were speaking literally’ of burdens, but he is speaking metaphorically, and consequently he uses the figure first in one way and then in another. It may be useful to us, brethren, to learn never to draw arguments and doctrines from metaphors. Many do so, and there are many supposed doctrines which really have no better ground-work than mere metaphors. I remember hearing one contending against the chastening of God’s people, and he urged that the Church was the bride of Christ, and that it was impossible that Christ, as the husband of the Church, should in any way chasten or strike his own spouse, which would be a very reasonable thing to say of a man. If the metaphor ran on four legs, the argument might have been correct, but as no metaphor is intended so to do, and is only to be understood in the sense intended by the person employing it, the argument is fallacious and valueless. I have heard others say that true Christians are citizens of heaven, and consequently we ought not to exercise our votes in political matters; another piece of utterly illogical reasoning, because we might as well say to Christian men that they ought not to eat animal food as they form the Lord’s flock, and sheep must not, and cannot, eat animal food. The fact is, the reasoning from metaphor is always risky, and sometimes proves quite absurd.

I mention this because I am quite sure that very much of it does prevail in the Christian world, and that people use the language of Scripture in a manner in which they would not use the same language if found in other books. The Word of God is, however, not to be treated with less, but more veneration in our reading and study of it, and yet in the same simple, common-sense fashion as that in which we would treat any other book. The truth is there are burdens which may be shared, and which should be shared. The burden of grief, the burden of pecuniary need, the burden of heart trouble, may sometimes be borne; but, on the other hand, there are burdens which no man can share with his fellow, nor ought he even to think of sharing, but where each man must stand apart and alone before God, and no one can assist him.

Of these burdens, we shall speak to-night, and they shall be our first point; then, lest we should become burdensome to you, we shall offer some few considerations which may tend to take out the weight of the burdens which we must unavoidably carry, each one for himself; and then we shall close by endeavoring to find something practical to be done to-night as the result of the text. First, then, we have to speak of: —

I. Certain Burdens Which Each Man Will Be Quite Certain To Have To Bear For Himself Alone.

In speaking of the three first burdens which I shall have to mention, I shall address myself to you all, whether saints or sinners, for there are some truths which are common to all men as men; and so is the first burden — the burden of original sin. The burden of our natural depravity, the burden of our fallen nature, the burden of our constitution, which is perverted by evil — these we shall, each one of us, have to carry for himself. It may be said that this is not our burden, but Adam’s, but the burden of the father, if he bring the whole household into poverty, becomes the burden of the family, and each individual member of it. If the head should ache, it is no use for the hand to say, “It is no business of mine.” There is, too, so vital and intimate a connection between the whole body of humanity, between Adam the head, and all the members of the body corporate, that Adam’s fall becomes ours, Adam’s ruin our ruin, and the taint in the blood is to be found in us all. Some of you are “dead in trespasses and sins,” and therefore this burden is no

more a burden to you than the heavy clods of the churchyard are to the bodies that lie beneath them. But if ever you are quickened by divine grace, you will soon find that “the body of this death,” as Paul calls indwelling sin, is a very heavy burden to battle with, and you will have personally to fight out the conflict within your own soul. You will have to call in the aid of divine power, or you will never get the victory, but — mark you — in the conquest of your own corruption, in the overcoming of your own besetting sins, and of those evils which are more powerful in you than they are in others, because you are constitutionally inclined to them — in that battle you will have to fight yourselves. You may get some assistance from other people’s experience; but still the struggle and the conflict must be with you. Young people, never imagine that all the training in the world can rid you of your evil without an earnest struggle on your own part. Don’t conceive that a mother’s prayers will give you tenderness of conscience unless you also learn of Christ for yourselves. Do not conceive that the rebukes of a father can conquer that evil temper unless you struggle against it; and if you habitually have a tendency to pride, do not conceive that the preacher’s homilies against pride can overcome pride in you. No, in the name of God, you must go to the armory and ask for the sword of the Spirit, that you may, personally girded with divine strength, which you may obtain by earnest prayer, overcome in your own soul your besetting sins. In this respect, then, you will have to bear your own burden. I know I have to bear mine, and I do not know that any of you could help me, and I believe that each one of you, quickened by divine grace, must feel there is something peculiar about your case — some sin, perhaps, which you would not like to whisper into another’s ear; perhaps, a sin of thought only, but still it is a burden. I hope it will become more and more a burden to you, for the more burdensome it becomes, the more likely are you to conquer it; but you will have to bear it yourself, and in the strength of the Holy Spirit you will have to conquer it, too, and get rid of it. You will have to pluck out the right eye, and rend off the right arm. It were better for you, remember, to enter into life halt and maimed than to keep these and be cast into perdition, eternal. It is for you, in God’s name, personally to do battle with your personal depravity.

Each man must, each man alone can, bear his own burden here. Again, each man must also bear his own burden of personal sin. Unless (there comes in the grand and gracious proviso), unless the sin be blotted out or be utterly removed. Every man who has sin to carry must bear his own burden. There is no shifting the sin from you to a sponsor. No fellow-creature can stand for you, and take your offenses. The Lord Jesus Christ did take his people’s sins, as he was their covenant-head, surety, and representative, and they who are in Christ are free from sin; their sin being utterly removed, and having ceased to be, having been cast by the tremendous power of Christ into the depths of the sea, so that if they be sought for, they shall never be found against the Lord’s people any more for ever. But do remember, dear hearer, that if you are not a pardoned soul, you have got a burden to carry, and you will have to bear it. You will have to bear it now, for “he that believeth not is condemned already.” You will have to bear it when you come to die, and you will have enough to do to die having this burden of sin pressing upon your heart. Worst of all, you will have to bear it when your spirit is disembodied, and your naked soul is called before your Maker. Ah! it will be a dreadful thing to go there with the blackness and defilement of sin about you! And you will have to bear it, too, in the day of the resurrection, and in the solemn article of judgment; and then, last of all, you will have to bear your own burden in the eternal future, and there it will sink you, sink you, sink you, beyond all hope of rescue or escape. Now, while there is life there is hope. “All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven unto men. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive., us our sins,” but unless the sin be removed, it must remain our own burden for ever and for ever. You will not get rid of it by joining a church. You cannot be rid of it, by passing through rites and ceremonies. It will be no help to you to have been a citizen of a Christian nation, so-called, and to have worshipped in a Christian assembly. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” We came through the gates of life into this world, each man alone; we shall go back through the iron gates of death, each man apart, and the judgment, though crowds will be gathered, will be the judgment of so many individuals, each weighed in the scale alone, either to hear the verdict that they are “accepted in the Beloved,” or else to hear it said, “Tekel “ — “ Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting.” How I wish that all my hearers would lay this to heart! Do not try to hide away in the crowd, for God will search and bring you out singly, and you shall be tested and tried apart from others. If you take in ever so many sovereigns to the bank, it is not very likely you will prom one bad one, for they would very soon discover it.. That might be done, however, on earth, but it could not be done in heaven. “Every man shall bear his own burden,” and if the burden of sin be upon him, it shall crush him beyond all hope.

Once again, While thus speaking to both saints and sinners, “Every man shall bear his own burden” of the law. By sin we do not escape from the law. The law of God is binding upon every man of woman born, unless, by being dead to the law through Christ, he escapes from under its yoke and bondage. Now, the believer is not under law. Do not misunderstand me. I mean that he is not under law in the sense in which the sinner is under it. He is not under its condemning power. He is not under law, but he is under grace. The principle of law does not bind him; it is the principle of love which rules and governs his spirit. Now, every man who is under the law is bound to keep it, and to keep it personally himself. See, my dear friends — you who have never fled to Christ — see where you are. The law is such a law that Adam failed to keep it, though innocent; how, then, shall you keep it while imperfect v It is a spiritual law, a law touching not only our actions, but your words and your thoughts; how can you keep it? And yet, if you keep it not, it brandishes its great whip with the thongs, and brings it down upon the conscience with terrible effect. If you keep not the law, remember the sentence, “Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” Happy is the man who has escaped from the territories of law, and come into the dominions of grace! But so long as we are under the law, its burden is ours, and here comes in this grimly solemn truth, that it is a burden which each man must carry on his own shoulders, but

carry it he cannot, and therefore crush us it will, and the curse of God must come upon us through the law.

And now we shall leave those three points which are common to all men, and simply speak to believers of the burdens which they have to carry, and which they ought joyfully to shoulder, each man for himself.

And first, my brethren, when we have been quickened, and awakened, we shall find daily necessity for the confession of sin, and here, "every man shall bear his own burden." A general confession may be very proper in the congregation, but it is only acceptable to God as it becomes an individual and particular confession in the case of each one using the words. Repentance is peculiarly a private and personal grace. Lamentation for sin is a thing for one's own chamber — the husband apart, and the wife apart; the daughter apart and the mother apart. Into confession in its fullness, no two can enter. As far as the sin has been common they may confess together, but in so far as the guilt in each case is personal and particular, so must confession be. My dear friends, let us not hesitate, whatever it may be that is upon our minds to-night, to come and acknowledge it before our Father, who is in heaven. We do not confess now like condemned criminals, who confess before execution because they must; but we confess, like the returned prodigal, with our heads in our dear Father's bosom, conscious that we are forgiven, quite sure that his love is set upon us, and that we shall not be driven from him on account of sin, but hating sin the more because of this love, and weeping bitterly because of that wondrous grace which has had such compassion upon us, let us be very marked in our acknowledgment of sin in private. I believe the Lord often withholds from his people a sweet sense of perfect acceptance until their confession shall be more precise, until they learn to "call a spade a spade," as we say, and so make a clean breast of the matter before the Most High.

Further, my brethren, there is another burden we have to carry, and which we must cheerfully shoulder, and that is the yoke of Christ. Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," and then he adds, "for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." We are bound to obey Christ. He is the Captain; we are his soldiers. There should be maintained in the church a sacred military discipline: we should obey spontaneously the commands of our great Leader. He is our shepherd, we must keep close to him: tracking his foot-prints and delighting in his company. He is the Physician; we must follow his prescription, not hesitating, even though the draught he gives is very bitter. Perfect obedience is what Jesus Christ has a right to claim from us. Oh! that he would give us grace that he might receive according to his rights! Is there any duty, my brethren, which you have not yet fulfilled, and which presses upon your conscience? Or is there some other duty on which your conscience is but partially enlightened? Ask for a quickened conscience, and, when you obtain it, never tamper with it. Oh! to have a conscience quick as the apple of the eye, tender and delicate, that will not even bear the slightest dust of sin! Oh! to walk before God as Caleb did, of whom the Lord said, "My servant Caleb hath followed me fully." There were some of whom it was said, "They walked before the Lord, but not with all their heart, as did David." May we have the whole-heartedness of the most consecrated towards the Savior, and whatever form the yoke of Christ may take, may we count it our highest joy to bear it. Since he carried our sorrow, let us be willing to carry out his commands to their utmost letter, desiring that not so much as a jot or a tittle shall be left unheeded of the Master's will.

Further, brethren, I think we ought, each one of us, to feel that we have a burden of prayer to carry to the mercy-seat. "Every man shall bear his own burden" in this respect. I wish we did this in our assemblies. I am afraid that you often let me pray, but some of you do not pray yourselves. I am afraid, too, that private prayer is neglected by a very large number of Christians — not that the form of it is absolutely renounced, but the vigor of it is not maintained. I wish I could say this without a blush concerning myself, but I do feel that very many of us do grievously fail here. We give the Lord some scanty five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, whereas our Puritanic forefathers prayed sometimes for hours. But it would matter little about the time, if we did but give the spirit. It is poor work, sometimes, our praying! Oh! that we wrestled with the angel and prevailed! My brethren, we have, everyone of us, something to take before God in prayer, and we rob the church of our contributions to her treasury of intercession if we do not put our share into it.

Some of you ought to pray for the Sunday School more than you do. Some of you should bear in prayer the burden of the young of the congregation. The preacher has his burden of prayer — a heavy one. My brethren, the deacons and elders should be — I trust they are — peculiarly men of prayer. They have a burden to carry — a burden of prayer for the church. And you aged fathers in our Israel, you my dear sisters who are matrons in our midst, it often seems to me to be peculiarly your office to be intercessors for the church. It may be possible that many of you could not preach, and could not be very serviceable in many active labors, but you can be the very strength and sinews of war for the church militant, by your prayers. No, no; it is not the whole church praying that you are to think of just now, but you yourself — praying — each man taking his own share of the great common burden which we have to take before the mercy-seat and leave there.

So, too, must each of us take our own burden of witnessing for Christ. All saints cannot witness to all truth, since nobody knows all truth but God. Some of our hyper-Calvinistic friends also know it all, according to their own understanding; but we think that nobody else does, at any rate. Finite minds can only grasp part of truth. The Infinite alone can lay hold of the whole of truth. If we were altogether infallible in our knowledge of doctrine, we should be God, for only God can know all things, and know all things thoroughly — know all things without admixture of error. But wherein we do know, each man is called to bear testimony to the truth he does know. There are many things that I do not know; why should I, then, pretend to be a witness to them? But there are some two or

three things I do know. I am quite sure about them: and if I do not speak positively upon them, I shall fail to bear my burden before the Lord. And there is some one truth, perhaps, my brother, about which you have a little light, a little more light than your neighbors. Do not hide the light. God does not ever light a lamp to put it under a bushel. If you have received, either by experience or research, any special light which is peculiar to you. spread it, that it may be, as it should be, the common property of the church of God, to the glory of God. I wish that Christians in these days thought more of bearing their witness. The Scottish people in years gone by attached great importance to the bearing of witness — testifying — standing out at all costs to give evidence to the truth. But now-a-days truth is cast into the street, as though it were worthless, and Christian men will honor a truth and hold it, and yet will put their finger to their lips and say, “For peace sake, such a truth is to be unspoken.” Nay: peace is precious, but it has its price, and is not to be purchased at any price. Truth first. “First pure, then peaceable.” First, the truth of God, and then the peace of God. May we have both, but let us take care that we bear our own burden in witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, dear brethren, we have, each one of us, our own burden in the matter of caring for souls. You are placed, some of you, as working-men amidst working-men; your burden is manifestly your own class. Others of you move in other spheres; do not forget that each sphere has its particular claim. You have ability; you have, then, a burden peculiar to a man of ability. You have wealth; there is a burden there. On the other hand, you live in obscurity. Your utmost sphere is your little children, and your one or two rooms; still, remember that circles are prized not in proportion to their size, but in proportion to their roundness; and so we shall be honored and rewarded by grace, not according to the largeness of our sphere, but according to the way in which we have filled it for Christ. We must each bear the burden of our own sphere. Mother, no one else can be a mother to your children, and do for them what you should do. Minister, if you be truly sent of God, no one can be a sponsor for you in your ministry; you must take that burden which God has put upon you upon yourself. And you trader, merchant, working-man — there is something which you, each of you, must do, and, however earnest all the rest of Christians may be, they cannot, by the surplus of their zeal, if there be any, by any possibility make up for a deficiency in your case. The timber may be very strong in one part of the vessel, but the strength of the timber there is no recompense for a rotten portion in another part of the keel: it must be strong all over. We are all set, as it were, to forge a chain, and if the link that you shall forge be thoroughly strong and well welded, yet if I make a mess of my portion of the work, the chain will be injured all through. Let us remember this, and discharge our own work in the strength of God, by the power of his Spirit, and we shall joy in ourselves by the Holy Ghost.

I might thus enlarge upon these burdens, but they all come to the same effect. There is one more word, however, which will be addressed, perhaps, to half a dozen here — probably not so many. Sometimes, upon some men, God casts a burden which he never puts on others. The prophet speaks of “the burden of the Lord.” Probably we have all carried it at some time, but at any one particular time there will not be many who are bearing it. That burden may be something very extraordinary to others, though you have become so familiar with it that it seems ordinary to you. Perhaps to-night something is saying in your soul, “Go and speak to such an one.” Do not violate that monition. Believe me, there is more in spiritual impulses than some people think. You have all read the old story of the Quaker, who .felt moved to. ride into a certain town, some ten or twelve miles off, at the dead of night, and to .go to a certain house. He did so; found out the house; knocked at the door. No one came to the door; he knocked again, and when at last a man came downstairs, and opened the door, and asked him what he wanted, the Quaker said, “Perhaps thou canst tell me, for I do not know; the Lord has sent me to thee, but what for I know not.” Then the man produced a rope, and said that just when the knock came to the door he was in the top room, planning to hang himself. God had evidently sent the Quaker just at that time to prevent him. If you and I were more obedient to these “burdens of the Lord” when they come, we might often do more good than we do. We must not be .fanatical; there is a line to be drawn; but at the same time I am afraid we often check sacred impulses, which, if followed, might be fraught with the most blessed consequences. Do you feel called at this time, my dear friend, to a work which you never undertook before? Consult not with flesh and blood; do not be particular about asking help and assistance. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Go in the strength of God. If, like Gideon, you want a sign, take it, and, when you have it, and your heart has become like Gideon’s fleece, wet through, even though it be with sorrow, so that you could wring it out, then go in this your might, for if God has sent you, he will go with you. “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” This may be a word to somebody — I know not to whom — but it was a burden on me to say it, and there I leave it.

Lo! now we turn to the second truth of this theme, and with much greater brevity: —

II. Some Things Which Lift The Weight Of These Pressing Burdens.

“Every man shall bear his own burden.” It is not pleasant to be talked to all this long time about your being a burden-bearer, but, perhaps, these things will make it more pleasant. The first thing of which to remind ourselves is this, that it is quite consistent with the truth declared in our text, to remind you that Jesus Christ is the great burden-bearer for all his saints; that though, on the one hand, you will have to bear your own burdens, yet on the other hand Christ will bear all your burdens for you. Your burden of sin was laid upon him as the scape-goat for your soul. That you know, and now your sin is put away, and now to-night, whatever your burden be, come with it to your best friend, the “.friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Tell him the cause of your complaint. The

disciples of John, when their master's head was taken off, took up the body, and "went and told Jesus." Come and tell Jesus what it is that vexes you to-night. It is said of one sick child, "They brought him to Jesus." Is your trouble a sick child, or is it your sick self, or what is it? Bring it to Jesus. All griefs either fly at his approach or else they change to joys, or if they remain griefs, they minister to us an abundance of spiritual wealth.

"Come, make your wants, year burdens known, He will present them at the throne; And angel-bands are waiting there, His messages of love to bear."

You must remember that your burden is easy to bear when Christ is with you. When Jesus Christ has strengthened you with all strength in your inner man, and put into you his own omnipotence, to be your succor, then shall the burden cease to be a burden to you any longer.

This also may tend to lighten the pressure, that as every man has to bear his own burden, so every man has his own hope. I should be afraid to change with anybody else. I have sometimes thought, when I have been much desponding, that I wished I had half as good a hope as some of my brethren; but when I come to think it over — I do not know — I do not know — I would be as happy as the least in the Lord's family if I knew that I was really one of his, but I really should not like to change with any of the little ones, or the great ones either, on the chance of their being his. No! I know my own hope, and I will keep it.

And, blessed be God, as we have our own burden, so we have our own joy. The most miserable and unhappy Christian in the world, when you come to get into his secrets, will tell you — he will let it out somehow — that he has a secret spring of joy which others have not. In fact, it is to be remarked that those who have deep griefs have generally proportionately deep joys. The man of superficial sorrow generally has superficial mirth, but the man whose heart has been bored through and through has a stream of joy springing up as from an artesian well, that cannot be equaled for freshness by the mere land-springs of superficial piety. Brethren, we would not part with our joys nor with our hope. Though we have our sorrows to ourselves, yet we have our joys to ourselves, too, and, thank God, they cannot be taken away from us.

So, too, the Christian has Christ all to himself. I have sometimes tried to think of that. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ, able to save ten thousand times ten thousand sinners, and yet he is all mine! All Christ is mine! Here he is feeding the millions of his saints, and yet there is not a single crumb upon his table but what is mine, nor a grain of corn in the granary of my brother Joseph but what belongs to me. All Christ belongs to each one of God's people. You have got a burden to yourself, but you have also got God to yourself — think of that! Have you ever remembered that if you were the only creature in the world — the only creature in the universe: if there were no angels and no other men — have you ever thought of what an inspection God would have of you, and how he would see you through and through? Well, at this present moment, and at all times, you are as much an object of his inspection as if that were the case; for multitudes of objects do not divide the exercise of omniscience upon each one. The infinite mind of God is such that the infinite care of God belongs to every individual throughout the entire universe. Yes, you have a God to yourself! Oh! what infinite supplies you have, Christian! Talk of your expenses! Look at your income! Speak of your poverty! Look at your wealth! You talk of your weakness: now estimate your strength. You can cast the plumb-line to the bottom of your sorrows, and measure the Atlantic waves of your grief, but you cannot measure heaven above, nor the earth beneath, nor the depths of hell; and if you could measure these, God is greater than them all. Oh! wherefore, then, do you despond because of the big burden, when you have peculiar help, peculiar joy, peculiar hope, and peculiar strength? Rest in God, and be joyful.

Once again, it is true that we, all of us, have a burden to carry, but then we have not to carry that burden long. You do not much pity a man who has to carry a load only during the twinkling of an eye. Well, the whole of life is not any more than that. Just think, my dear friends, of eternity, and what is life? Imagine ourselves sitting down in heaven in the midst of eternal blessedness, and what a moment life will seem! We shall know then what Paul meant when he said, "These light afflictions which are but for a moment." But for a moment! Oh! pluck up courage, man! You are nearer home than you thought you were, and every moment you are getting nearer still. We find our horses quicken their speed when we turn their heads homeward, and they drag their loads then with alacrity. Now, your head is homeward, Christian. You:-

**"Nightly pitch your moving tent,
A day's march nearer home."**

Therefore, be of good comfort, and let not the burden gall your shoulders.

Once more. If you have a burden to yourself, recollect that you will have your own place in heaven, which nobody else will have. You have your own sorrows, but you will have your own joys there. I think there is a note in the heavenly song for each one of us to take. I do not suppose that Mary Magdalene sings precisely the same note as the dying thief. There will be her lofty voice taking some of the treble notes, and we shall have him, it may be, taking the deeper bass. I believe that if one of us should be absent, the choir of heaven would not be complete. In the noblest orchestra all the instruments and voices are wanted for the completeness of the chorus, and so will it be in the orchestra of heaven. Paul says that the saints that are gone before into heaven are not perfect without us, that "they without us would not be made perfect;" that is to say, the company would not be complete, but gaps appear. So long

as there is one soldier in a squad who has not arrived, the battalion is not completely formed. So we must each get there, to perfect, to complete, the number of the saints in heaven. Well, then, beloved, as we are each one to have a place and portion in heaven, each a mansion to himself or herself, we may well be content to bear our burdens here alone. And now to close. What is,

III. The Practical Inference And Result?

I do not know what it may be, but oh! may God the Holy Spirit burn my text into your hearts. I do not want you to recollect so much anything I have said; it does not matter about that; you can forgot it all; but I do want you to recollect this one truth — you Christians especially, that “every man shall bear his own bur-don.” There is something .for each one of you to do for Christ. Oh! that notion that the minister can do it, that the united action of the church can do it — it has ruined the Christian Church to a large extent. A personal, individual sense of responsibility is what we want, each Christian man judging himself daily and hourly as to his capabilities, and obligations, and indebtedness to his Lord. Brother-minister, you have got your burden to bear. Is there any new work you can undertake for Christ, or any old work that wants strengthening, into which you can throw yourself with greater zeal? Then I pray you do it. My sister in the Lord, you have not donor perhaps, what you might do. Now, say in your heart, before you leave the pew, “By God’s ,grace, I will do whatever I can.” I can look round, round upon you here, and see some who are really doing more than I could for a moment ask you to do, for you are “in labors more abundant.”

I thank God that there are such in this church, but then I think of others. Oh! if all were like some, what a church we should be! If all the vines in our vineyard bore such clusters as some of the vines do! Oh! how the wine-presses would burst with new wine! In the matter of liberality, the preacher must never judge: that is a matter for each man. “How much shouldest thou give unto thy Lord?” In the matter of service, it is not for us to allot you your work, but what can you do? Now, what, will you do to-night!. “Oh! give me till the morning,” says one. No! no! we have not an hour that we can afford to waste. Let us serve God to-day: we will leave to-morrow to care for itself. Now is the accepted time for service, as well as salvation. Serve him now: do something to forward his Kingdom and honor his name, now. The only way to serve Christ in the future is to serve him in the present, for the future never comes, or, if it does, it ceases to be future and is the living present. Now, I ask you, you who are now washed in his cleansing blood, you who now bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus, you who have lain in his bosom, you who have been kissed with the kisses of his mouth, you who have been brought from under the apple tree, and know how sweet his fruit is, and how delightful his shadow is, you who are now one with him, of his flesh and of his bones, you who expect soon to see him, you who are longing to be with him, and hope to be caught up to dwell with him, to see him as he is, and to be like him — I charge you by the roes and the hinds of the fields, by the lily-beds wherein you had fellowship with your Lord, and by the garden of nuts wherein he has revealed himself to you — I charge you, by his everlasting love, by the love you bear to him, and by that sweet song you sang just now: —

**“For he is mine, and I am his;
The God whom I adore;
My Father, Savior, Comforter,
Now and for evermore.”**

Serve him now, serve him evermore, and may the Lord bless you and make you blessed, and a great blessing to others, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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Galatians 6:14: Grand Glorying

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“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” — Galatians 6:14.

With that “God forbid,” Paul makes a clean sweep of every other ground of boasting, and casts himself upon the one only chosen object of his soul’s glorying. And yet, if you will think of it, Paul had, after the fashion of other men, many things in which he might

have gloried. If it had so pleased him, he might have boasted of his pedigree, for he was “a Hebrew of the Hebrews.” He could trace his genealogy, as the pure Hebrews could, up to that great fountain of nobility — Abraham himself. If he had pleased, he might have boasted in the precision of the former ritual which he had practiced, for he could say that as touching tile law he had been a Pharisee — a man observant of the minutest points of the very letter of the law, careful for its doctrinal tittles, not suffering even the gnat to escape him, but straining after it with care. And yet the apostle did not care to boast, either of his pedigree or of his ritualism. He casts them both aside, and though ho had once gloried in them, he now counted them hut dross, that he might win Christ and be found in him. Surely, if the apostle had wished it, he might have gloried in his martyr-life. He did once give a list of what he had suffered, and he added, “I have become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me.” Had he not been beaten with rods, shipwrecked, subject to perils from robbers, perils from false brethren, imprisonment, and stones? And yet you never hear him glory in that wonderful martyr-life of his. Amongst the apostles, he was no less than the chief in that which he suffered, and yet he saith, “God forbid that I should glory in it.” He might have gloried in the revelation which he received. Who among us has ever seen or heard what Paul was made to see and hear when he was caught up into the third heavens to hear things which it is not lawful for a man to utter? He might, if he had chosen to boast, have boasted in this revelation, but he did not do so. “God forbid,” said he, “that I should glory,” and that “God forbid” includes even that revelation. Amongst scholars Paul might have taken an eminent position. He was well qualified to speak in the Areopagus, for even there, in that profound assembly, was probably not one with greater knowledge and of more subtle mind than he, who was once called “Saul of Tarsus.” Read the Epistles, brethren. Why, the apostle has the instinct of, Bacon, and the insight of Sir Isaac Newton. The man seems to have looked through a question, where others would have looked round about it and have seen nothing. Yet, though he must have felt a human delight in the talents which God had given him, and must have known that he possessed them, yet still he saith concerning them “God forbid that I should glory.” He seems to take all that he had, all that he did, and all that he was, and put it all away, and come forward with no other theme upon his lip, and no great love in his heart, except this — Jesus crucified for the sons of men; Jesus to be great among the nations; Jesus, the slaughtered Lamb, to be made unto men their life from the dead, their salvation from going down into the pit. “God, forbid,” saith he — that memorable speech, that eloquent declaration, that glorious self-denying, yet exalting resolve — “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!” We shall be brief upon each point at this time, but the first enquiry must naturally be: —

I. What Is This Cross In Which Paul Resolved To Glory?

You need not to be told, my brethren, that Paul set no store by the material cross, or by the sign of the cross. You know that the making of the sign of the cross, and the paying of religious reverence to that, is as great a superstition as the belief in witches, and perhaps, as men come to be enlightened, they will wonder how it is that some men could have thought that there could be more sanctity about a gross than about a circle or tile parallelogram, for really there is no holiness in the sign of the cross, and I sometimes wish that some Christian persons would not countenance that emblem, since it seems to imply a superstitious reverence to that kind of thing. Paul meant no such thing. He would have abandoned in contempt any superstitious use of the cross or the crucifix, and he would do so now if he were, and I hope the result would be that, as at Ephesus they burned their conjuring hosts, so now men would put their chasubles, and their albs, and all their fripperies and upholstery together, and burn them in one glorious pile as the result of the preaching of the true cross of Christ.

What did the apostle men, then? He meant, in a single word, the great doctrine of the atonement offered for sin by the Son of God upon Mount Calvary. “The cross” is the short term for “substitutionary suffering,” for “vicarious sacrifice,” for the offering up of the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. The apostle was never cloudy about this matter. Wherever he went he preached that God was in Christ reconciling the world with himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. His declarations were always clear. “Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.” He was always saying that Jesus Christ took our sins, and bore them in his own body on the tree; that he was punished instead of us; that the claims of divine justice were met by the death of the Redeemer; that he was made a curse for us that we might be enriched and blessed of God in him; that he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Paul’s great master-point was that Jesus actually suffered to vindicate the divine justice by enduring, instead of us, the punishment due to our sins.

And he meant also by it that gospel which springs out of the cross, and which is contained in these few words, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” “He that believeth on him is not condemned.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Paul told the people that the Son of God was made man, and suffered in human form to take away human guilt, and that whoever, the wide world over, would come and rest in what Christ had done should be saved. This was the gospel which ho proclaimed in every place. For barbarian and Scythian, this was the gospel; far the Greek and the Jew, the same; for the illiterate, for the learned; for the king, and for the peasant; ’tis evermore his one theme — a bleeding Savior, and a sinner looking to him; a living Christ dying, that a dying world might live. This is that gospel which we preach from Sabbath to Sabbath, which will save your souls, and which you delight to sing of in words like these: —

**“There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;**

**And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”**

This was “the cross” which Paul resolved to glory in.

II. What Was There In This Particular Doctrine Or Fact For The Apostle To Glory In At All?

The answer is, first, that there is glory in the fact itself. It is a fact entirely by itself, unique, unparalleled. The mythology of the heathens had invented many, many strange things, but among them all there is nothing so beautiful, even if it were not true, nothing so perfect in its imagery, as this, that God, the offended One, should give up his Only Begotten that, in order that justice might not be injured, at the same time his mercy might have full sweep, that the Only Begotten should die, that the offending ones might live. There is nothing like this in the whole range of human poetry. Men had fine poetic imaginings before, and there were prophetic declarations of the coming of Christ, and they prophesied some wonderful things, but of all the poets of all the nations it may be said that they never conceived anything like this. The offended One dies, that the offenders might live. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God first loved us.” “Beloved, behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.” That one fact that God descended from the royalties of heaven, that he might take upon himself the servitude of earth in the form of man, and offer himself a sacrifice for sin, reveals the infinite wisdom, together with the infinite love of God, besides casting a brilliant light upon all his other attributes. It stands a marvel of marvels, a wonder of wonders, in which the believer may glory, glory as much as he will. You know we do not doubt about this fact. We hold it; nay, we are sure of it, and it is a very great reality to us. I was passing, some years ago, a Socinian chapel in this great London of ours, and I saw an announcement of the subjects upon which sermons were to be delivered. If I remember rightly, there was to be a sermon on the morning of one Sunday upon some political subject, and in the evening there was to be a sermon upon the crucifixion, but the word was spelt “crucifiction.” And I thought, “Ah! just so; and though you do not mean it, it is just that with you; it is nothing more to you than a mere fiction, but to us it is real.” We believe that the blood of Jesus really takes away sin. We believe that he really laid down his life to redeem us from our iniquity, and to us the most real, sublime, grand, soul-moving thing beneath heaven, and even in heaven is this, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and died that he might save them. The apostle, then, gloried in the fact as a fact.

And next, the apostle gloried in the fact viewing the simplicity of it — the simplicity of the doctrine which grew out of the fact. It is frequently said, “Oh! these evangelical preachers, these men that preach up Christ, these popular preachers — they are very shallow-brained men; they talk mere platitudes; they do not read the German philosophers; they do not go to the bottom of the thing and stir the mud; they are content with just telling the people really such plain and common things that you cannot expect enlightened people in this nineteenth century to care to go and hear them.” It is a very odd thing that they are the only people who do go to hear them. That only shows, I suppose, that there are plenty of people who are shallow too. But we boast, if in anything, in the sheer simplicity of this truth that we preach. If the cross of Christ were a marvellous conundrum, the answer to which none could guess, but a philosopher trained for fifty years, if we understood it so, we should feel as if it were scarcely worth while for us to tell it, since there would be so few that could be benefited by it. But we thank God that we have a simple gospel to preach to you, because there are so many in this world who want saving quite as much as the wisest, but who could not be saved if the gospel were not simple. I thank God that, when Christ is preached in the Union House, he is believed there, and when Christ is preached to the most benighted nation, he is received there, and he is just as sweet and precious to those who cannot read as to those who are the best educated. No, we do not, and never will, blush, because the gospel is simply “Believe and live.” We think that every statement of great truth before it can do good to the heart must be simple. It seems to us that its simplicity is a part of its grandeur; that it is more God-like, to give us a gospel which can be spoken in few words by simple men, than to give us something involved and intertwined, the meaning of which we should never be able to guess. We thank God, dear hearer, that it does not want many minutes to tell you what you must do to be saved. Believe in Jesus; that is, trust him; trust him with all your heart; cast yourself flat upon him; you cannot fall any lower when you are down there; cast yourself on his arms; rely upon his merits, and you are saved. God forbid that we should glory save in this very simplicity, which some persons so fiercely decry.

Paul gloried, and we glory, in the next place, in the freeness and suitability of the gospel. The apostle never found himself in a place where the gospel was not suitable. Sometimes some of you young men who are here to-night may have to go out to supply pulpits, and you may be apt to ask yourselves and ask one another, “Well, what subject shall I take?” I answer you — wherever you go, preach Jesus Christ, and that will suit every congregation, and if it does not, the congregation that is unsuited by it will not be suited at all, and they ought to have twice as much of it till they are suited with it. Preach up Jesus Christ, no matter how noble the audience, or how poor; still preach the atonement. Preach up the dying Savior, instead of men, and it never can be out of season. Those men who, for the sake of variety and freshness, run away from their Bibles are like men who for the sake of wealth, should run away from a substantial business which brings them in their thousands in order to speculate where bankruptcy must be their only gain. Close to the cross! There is no such variety as in that one theme. It is like a diamond with a thousand facets, each one reflecting its own sweet light. You shall preach Jesus Christ to the angels in heaven throughout eternity, and make known to them

the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus, but the theme will be quite inexhaustible. What a blessing, though, that this cross of Christ should be so suitable to every person we meet with! If you take the cross of Jesus Christ into the condemned cell, there is nothing else that is so likely to awaken that slumbering soul. If you take it to our criminals — alas! that there are so many! — it is the only balm of Gilead to them. Go with it to the lodging-houses, and the back slums, and the street corners of St. Giles's, or where you will, and this story of the man Christ Jesus, who loved and died, touches all hearts. You have heard of the Greenlanders. The missionaries thought they ought first to instruct them in the doctrine of the Trinity; so they preached away to them of the Godhead, but the Greenlander did not care about it; but one of them, while interpreting, I think, the third chapter of John, came across that blessed passage, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life," and the Greenlanders stopped him and said, "Why didst you tell us that before?" Oh! I thought I had better begin by telling you of some of the other truths." "But we knew all those, or could have guessed them; why didn't you tell us this before? From that moment the good Moravians lifted up Christ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and the eyes and hearts of the Greenlanders began to look to him, and Jesus Christ was the glory of that land. We may say of this doctrine of the cross, as David did of Goliath's sword, "There is none like it." It is suitable in all places, wherever we may be found.

Truly, brethren, Paul might well glory in the cross, if you will kindly remember the great results which are sure to come from its constant and faithful preaching. There is not land where the cross has been lifted up, but is the better for it. Even those countries in which we have been compelled to regard missions as a failure have still received much blessing as the result. If the people have not been converted, yet still the bringing of the light into contact with their thick darkness has done something, though not all that we could wish. See yonder South Sea Islands, where the savage is clothed and in his right mind. Go tonight, if you can, on the wings of imagination, to the Bechuana villages, where Mr. Moffat labored amongst the Bushmen, about the existence of whose souls even there was once some doubt, and see what has been done there! Ay, and even in this land, with all our sins, how different are we from our savage forefathers, and how can Edinburgh, and London, and Glasgow tell you how the putting down of a district church or chapel has turned the heathen population of these days into a Christian community. This is the great lever to uplift the masses. Where Jesus is preached, signs and effects follow in which we may well rejoice. How many a home that was once filthy and miserable has been cheered and comforted now that father is a Christian. How many a man who used to reel in and out of the gin-shop or the public-house now delights to sing another song, and to drink of other wines on the lees, well refined! What changes grace is making among us! How some of us could tell of them as long as we live, we ourselves being changed! We will then say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You know, as I was last night turning over this text in my mind, I shut my eyes and saw — for you see a great deal more with your eyes shut than with them open sometimes — as I looked I thought I saw a cross before me, and it began to grow. I saw it as I had never seen it before. It grew upon me — grew every moment. I saw it go downward, into the earth, and as its foot descended graves began to open — for resurrection comes from the cross — and hell itself began to tremble, for nothing shakes the infernal kingdom like the cross. Then I looked up, and the cross had been growing till it reached up to heaven, bearing with it tons of thousands of souls redeemed, and I thought of that verse:-

**"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."**

I turned my eye lower, and I saw its transverse beams. and these began to stretch to the east and to the west, and they took away the sins of all God's people, and carried them into the place of forgetfulness, where they never shall be found; while a shadow, broad as the universe, seemed to fall upon creatures of all kinds, and wherever it fell the shadow dropped with the benedictions of heaven. Oh! that crucifixion of the Lord Jesus — how deep, how high, how broad! The imagination cannot conceive it, but the soul delights in it.

And then, as I seemed to look with eyes closed, I thought I saw in my vision a flock of doves, fluttered and afraid, and well they might be, for there were archers after them, and the sharp arrow all but pierced their breasts. Nay, some fell wounded sore, and they flitted to the groves, and they flew to the far-off sea, and to the wilderness, but the sharp shafts pursued them everywhere, and the doves found no rest for the soles of their feet. At last one day they lighted on the cross, and they marked that every shaft fell short, and some that were shot at them with double force were splintered and broken, and fell upon the ground. Not a single dove was hurt, but all found shelter there. Lord, make me one of those doves, and may my soul escape the arrows of my spiritual foes; let me find shelter on my Savior's precious cross, for there is shelter there, and there alone.

And then the picture changed, and I saw before me the whole earth, as it now looks without rain, and it was all parched and browned, and seemed ready to be burned, and the plants hung down their heads, and the flowers seemed to be pining for the tears of the angels to drop down upon them from heaven, but nothing came. Yet I noticed that all along wherever the shadow of the cross fell it was all verdant as in spring, and every flower seemed as if it did drink in the dew, and opened its cup towards the light that

streamed from the cross. 'Twas all fertile there where the cross-shadow fell, but all barren elsewhere. And is it not so? Wherever there is the influence of the atoning blood, wherever the cross is fully preached and received, every soul is blessed, and happy, and fruitful, but where it is not so there is an arid waste, on which the dew of heaven falleth not. And while I thought I saw before me a caravan, and there were camels, and hundreds of men, the drivers of the camels, and they were all hot, and panting, and fainting. They went to the well and rolled away the stone, but they found no water there. So they went onward, ready to drop at every step. Before them they thought they saw a cooling stream, but it was a mirage, and they wore mocked. But I thought I saw them suddenly halt at the foot of the cross, and just at the bottom of it there sprang up a clear and crystal spring, and each one drank, and went on his way refreshed. And what are the sons of men, but a great caravan on the way to realms unknown, and where is there water for so much as one of them, except at the cross-foot? If they drink there, they live; if they drink not there, there is for them naught beside.

Many other things passed before me, but I cannot detail them now, for we have had too much time upon this second point, and must pass to the third. The third point, very briefly discussed, is this: —

III. If We Do Glory In The Cross Of Christ, How Shall We Prove It?

We must prove it by trusting in the cross. The atonement must have our only confidence, or else it were vain to say that we glory in it.

We must prove it, next, very holding fast the doctrine when others impugn it. We must be confident about this vicarious sacrifice of Christ, let others say what they may.

We must prove it by our zeal in propagating it according to the best of our ability. We must endeavor as much as lieth in us to tell the good news to others, that whosoever believeth hath everlasting life.

But there are some here who are called to the ministry, and, therefore, to them let me say that we must prove that we glory in it almost by being prepared to suffer for it. Any man who is called to the ministry may, if he will take an example from yonder dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. There you see the cross above the globe. You must put from henceforth the cross above the world in all your calculations. To preach Jesus and to win souls, and not to gain money or human applause, must be the way in which you prove that you glory in the cross.

But the principal way is by constantly preaching about it. What shall I say to young men who are about to enter the ministry that shall be more useful to them than this? Keep to the cross; keep to the cross! Always preach up Jesus Christ! Always reach up Jesus Christ! I think no sermon should be without the doctrine of salvation by faith in it. I would not close a single discourse without at least something about believing in Jesus and living. Oh! that our tongues would speak of nothing but Jesus! Oh! that we were something like Rutherford, who is said to have had a squeaking voice on every other subject, but when he begun to speak of Christ the little man would grow tall and his voice become full, so that the duke who was one of his hearers called out, "Now man, you're on the right string!" Oh! surely, this is a theme that might inspire the very dumb, and make the dead to rise, to tell of Jesus Christ's most wondrous love.

I have thus as well as the short time I had allowed, shown how we may glory in the cross. But if we do so, according to the text, we are not to expect to go to heaven in silver slippers, for the apostle adds, "By which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the worldly." There are two crosses in that saying — there is the world crucified there, and there is Paul crucified here. What means he by this? Why, he means that ever since he fell in love with Jesus Christ, he lost all love for the world. It seemed to him to be a poor, crucified, dying thing, and he turned away from it just as you would from a criminal whom you might see hanging in chains, and would desire to go anywhere rather than see the poor being. So Paul seemed to see the world gibbeted, hung up there. "There," said he, "that is what I think of thee, and all thy pomp, and all thy power, and all thy wealth, and all thy fame! Thou art on the gibbet, a malefactor, nailed up, crucified! I would not give a fig for thee; I would not turn on my heel to speak to thee; all that thou couldst give me would no more suit my taste than as if husks were given to me. Give them to thine own swine, and let them fatten thereon!" You know the world is not crucified to "the successors of the apostle," and all others who preach merely as a profession. They get their living out of it; they are endowed by the world; the State or the church pays them; the world is not crucified to them." That is the change that has come over the times, but to the first apostle the world was crucified. And now observe the other cross. There is Paul on that. The world thinks as little of Paul as Paul does of the world. The world says, "Oh! that hair-brained Paul! He was sensible once, but he has gone mad upon that crotchet about the Crucified One; the man is a fool." So the world crucifies him. It was something like the case of Luther, when he said, "There is no love lost between me and the Pope of Rome; he hates me, and I also hate him with all my heart, and soul, and strength." So is it with the world and the genuine Christian. If he glories in Christ he must expect to be misunderstood, misrepresented, and attacked. And, on the other hand, he will say that he would sooner have the world's scorn than its honor, he would sooner have its hate than its love, for the love of the world is enmity against God. Blessed are ye when they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christ's sake and the gospel's. Set your account, ye Christians, upon rough weather, and get seaworthy vessels that will stand a gale or two. Ask the Lord to give you grace enough to suffer and

endure for that precious Savior who will give you reward enough when you see him face to face, for one hour with him will make up for it all. Therefore, be faithful, and may the Lord help you thus to glory in the cross of Christ. Amen.

Gal. 1:16: A Conference To Be Avoided

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

THE conversion of Paul is a memorable proof of the truth of Christianity. A consideration of it has been the means of the conversion of many thoughtful persons.

His case is a noble instance of the gospel's power over men of mark, men of learning, men of zealous mind, and men of energetic character.

Paul, being converted, took an independent course.

Being taught of God—

He did not consult those who were already believers, lest he should seem to have received his religion secondhand.

He did not consult his relatives, who would have advised caution.

He did not consult his own interests, which all lay in the opposite direction. These he counted loss for Christ.

He did not consult his own safety, but risked life itself for Jesus. In this independent course, he was justified and should be imitated.

I. FAITH NEEDS NO WARRANT BUT THE WILL OF GOD.

1. Good men in all ages have acted upon this conviction.

Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samson, David, Elijah, Daniel, the three who were cast into the furnace, etc.

2. To ask more is virtually to renounce the Lord as our Commander and Guide and to lift man into his place.

3. To hesitate from self-interest is openly to defy the Lord.

4. To submit the claims of duty to the judgment of the flesh is diametrically opposed to the character and claims of the Lord Jesus, who gave himself to us and expects us to give ourselves to him without question or reserve.

5. To delay duty until we have held such consultation almost always ends in not doing the right thing at all. Too often it is sought after that an excuse may be found for avoiding an unpleasant duty.

II. THE PRINCIPLE HAS A WIDE RANGE OF APPLICATION.

1. To known duties—

In forsaking sin, we are not to consult society.

In upright dealing, we are not to consult the custom of trade.

In consecration to Christ, we are not to follow the lower standard so common among our fellow Christians.

In service, we are not to consult personal liking, ease, honor, prospect of advancement, or remuneration.

2. To needful sacrifices. We are not to shrink from—

Losses of situation through honesty or holiness.

Losses in trade through religion.

Losses of friendships and kindly feeling through faithfulness.

Losses of position and worldly honor through inability to lie, bribe, cringe, flatter, compromise, conceal, or change.

We had better not confer with flesh and blood, for—

Good men may be self-indulgent, and so consult their own flesh.

Bad men may practically be consulted by our fearing that they will ridicule us and by our acting on that fear.

Our own flesh and blood may be consulted by unduly considering wife, husband, brother, child, friend, etc.

3. To special service. We are not to be held back from this by—

Considerations of personal weakness.

Considerations of want of visible means.

Considerations of how others will interpret our actions.

Consult not even your brethren here, for—

Good men may not have your faith.

They cannot judge your call.

They cannot remove your responsibility.

4. To an open avowal of Christ. We must not be deterred from it by—

The wishes of others, who think themselves involved in our act.

The dread of contempt from those who deride godliness.

The fear of not holding on and of thus disgracing religion.

Reluctance to give up the world and a secret clinging to its ways. This is a very perilous vice. "Remember Lot's wife."

III. THE PRINCIPLE COMMENDS ITSELF TO OUR BEST JUDGMENT.

It is justified by—

1. The judgment which we exercise upon others.

We blame them if they have no mind of their own.

We applaud them if they are bravely faithful.

2. The judgment of an enlightened conscience.

3. The judgment of a dying bed.

4. The judgment of an eternal world.

Let us be in such communion with God that we need not confer with flesh and blood.

Let us not wait for second thoughts, but at once carry out convictions of duty and obey calls for help or impulses of love.

Confirmations

An Indian missionary says that the Hindus do not act on their own convictions, but according to their own phrase, "I do as ten men do." Let the maxim of the Christian be, "I do as my God would have me do."

"Sir," said the Duke of Wellington to an officer of engineers who urged the impossibility of executing the directions he had received, "I did not ask your opinion. I gave you my orders, and I expect them to be obeyed." Such should be the obedience of every follower of Jesus. The words, which he has spoken are our law. We are not permitted to oppose thereto our judgments or fancies. Even if death were in the way, it is—

"Not ours to reason why —
Ours but to dare and die",

and, at our Master's bidding, advance through flood or flame. — "Feathers for arrows"

But this is a hard lesson to learn. I read some time ago of a German captain who found this out. He was drilling a company of

volunteers. The parade ground was a field by the seaside. The men were going through their exercises very nicely, but the captain thought he would give them a lesson about obeying orders. They were marching up and down in the line of the water at some distance from it. He concluded to give them an order to march directly towards the water and see how far they would go. The men are marching along. "Halt, company," says the captain. In a moment, they halt. "Right face" is the next word, and instantly they wheel round. "Forwart martch" is then the order. At once, they begin to march directly towards the water; on they go, nearer and nearer to it. Soon they reach the edge of the water. Then there is a sudden halt. "Vat for you stop? I no say, Halt;" cried the captain. "Why, captain, here is the water;" said one of the men. "Veil, vot of it?" cried he, greatly excited, "vater is nothing, fire is nothing, everything is nothing. Ven I say, Forwart martch, then you must forwart martch." The captain was right; the first duty of a soldier is to learn to obey. — Dr. Richard Newton

What God calls a man to do, he will carry him through. I would undertake to govern half-a-dozen worlds if God called me to do it; but if he did not call me to do it, I would not undertake to govern half-a-dozen sheep. — Dr. Payson

Galatians 3:23 Under Arrest

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. — Galatians 3:23

HERE we have a condensed history of the world before the gospel was fully revealed by the coming of our Lord Jesus.

The history of each saved soul is a miniature likeness of the story of the ages. God acts upon the same principles both with the race and with individuals.

I. THE UNHAPPY PERIOD. "Before faith came."

1. We had no idea of faith by nature. It would never occur to the human mind that we could be saved by believing in Jesus.
2. When we heard of faith as the way of salvation, we did not understand it. We could not persuade ourselves that the words used by the preacher had their common and usual meaning.
3. We saw faith in others and wondered at its results; but we could not exercise it for ourselves.
4. We could not reach to faith, even when we began to see its necessity, admitted its efficacy, and desired to exercise it.

The reason of this inability was moral, not mental—

We were proud and did not care to renounce self-righteousness.

We could not grasp the notion of salvation by faith because it was contrary to the usual run of our opinions.

We were bewildered because faith is a spiritual act, and we are not spiritual.

5. We were without the Spirit of God and therefore incapable.

We do not wish to go back to the state in which we were "before faith came," for it was one of darkness, misery, impotence, hopelessness, sinful rebellion, self-conceit, and condemnation.

II. THE CUSTODY WE WERE IN.

"Kept under the law, shut up."

1. We were always within the sphere of law. In fact, there is no getting out of it. As all the world was only one prison for a man who offended Caesar, so is the whole universe no better than a prison for a sinner.
2. We were always kicking against the bounds of the law, sinning, and pining because we could, not sin more.
3. We dared not overleap it altogether and defy its power. Thus, in the case of many of us, it checked us and held us captive with its irksome forbid-dings and commandings.
4. We could not find rest. The law awakened conscience, and fear and shame attend such an awakening.
5. We could not discover a hope, for, indeed, there is none to discover while we abide under the law.
6. We could not even fall into the stupor of despair; for the law excited life, though it forbade hope.

Among the considerations which held us in bondage were these—

The spirituality of the law, touching thoughts, motives, desires.

The need of perfect obedience, making one sin fatal to all hope of salvation by works.

The requirement that each act of obedience should be perfect.

The necessity that perfect obedience should be continual throughout the whole of life.

III. THE REVELATION WHICH SET US FREE.

"The faith which should afterwards be revealed." The only thing which could bring us out of prison was faith. Faith came, and then we understood—

1. What was to be believed.

Salvation by another.

Salvation of a most blessed sort, gloriously sure, and complete.

Salvation by a most glorious person.

2. What it was to believe.

We saw that it was "trust," implicit and sincere.

We saw that it was ceasing from self and obeying Christ.

3. Why we believed:

We were shut up to this one way of salvation.

We were shut out of every other.

We were compelled to accept free grace or perish.

Our duty is to show men how the way of human merit is closed.

We must shut them up to simple faith only and show them that the way of faith is available.

To Arrest Attention

The Law and the Gospel are two keys. The law is the key that shutteth up all men under condemnation, and the gospel is the key which opens the door and lets them out.- William Tyndale

"Shut up unto the faith." To let you more effectually into the meaning of this expression, it may be right to state that in the preceding clause, "kept under the law," the term, kept is, in the original Greek, derived from a word which signifies a sentinel. The mode of conception is altogether military. The law is made to act the part of a sentry, guarding every avenue but one, and that one leads those who are compelled to take it to the faith of the gospel. They are shut up to this faith as their only alternative — like an enemy driven by the superior tactics of an opposing general to take up the only position in which they can maintain themselves or fly to the only town in which they can find a refuge or a security. This seems to have been a favorite style of argument with Paul, and the way in which he often carried on an intellectual warfare with the enemies of his Master's cause. It forms the basis of that masterly and decisive train of reasoning, which we have in his epistle to the Romans. By the operation of skillful tactics, he (if we may be allowed the expression) maneuvered them and shut them up to the faith of the gospel. It gave prodigious effect to his argument when he reasoned with them, as he often does, upon their own principles, and turned them into instruments of conviction against themselves. With the Jews, he reasoned as a Jew. He made use of the Jewish law as a sentinel to shut them out of every other refuge and to shut them up to the refuge laid before them in the gospel. He led them to Christ by a schoolmaster whom they could not refuse; and the lesson of this schoolmaster, though a very decisive, was a very short one: "Cursed be he that continueth not in all the words of the law to do them." But in point of fact, they had not done them. To them, then, belonged the curse of the violated law. The awful severity of its sanctions was upon them. They found the faith and the free offer of the gospel to be the only avenue open to receive them. They were shut up unto this avenue; and the law, by concluding them all to be under sin, left them no other outlet but the free act of grace and of mercy laid before us in the New Testament. — Dr. Chalmers

The law was meant to prepare men for Christ by showing them that there is no other way of salvation except through him. It had two especial ends: the first was to bring the people who lived under it into a consciousness of the deadly dominion of sin, to shut them up, as it were, into a prison-house out of which only one door of escape should be visible, namely, the door of faith in Jesus. The

second intention was to fence about and guard the chosen race to whom the law was given — to keep them as a peculiar people separate from all the world so that at the proper time the gospel of Christ might spring forth and go out from them as the joy and comfort of the whole human race. — T. G. Rooke

Galatians 5:7: Various Hindrances

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? — Galatians 5:7

NEVER censure indiscriminately. Admit and praise that which is good that you may the more effectually rebuke the evil. Paul did not hesitate to praise the Galatians and say, "Ye did run well."

It is a source of much pleasure to see saints running well. To do this, they must run in the right road, straight forward, perseveringly, at the top of their pace, with their eye on Christ, etc.

It is a great grief when such are hindered or put off the road.

The way is the truth, and the running is obedience. Men are hindered when they cease to obey the truth.

It may be helpful to try and find out who has hindered us in our race.

I. WE SHALL USE THE TEXT IN REFERENCE TO HINDERED BELIEVERS.

1. You are evidently hindered—

You are not so loving and zealous as you were.

You are quitting the old faith for new notions.

You are losing your first joy and peace.

You are not now leaving the world and self behind.

You are not now abiding all the day with your Lord.

2. Who has hindered you?

Did I do it? Pray, then, for your minister.

Did your fellow-members do it? You ought to have been proof against them. They could not have intended it. Pray for them.

Did the world do it? Why so much in it?

Did the devil do it? Resist him.

Did you not do it yourself? This is highly probable.

Did you not overload yourself with worldly care? Did you not indulge carnal ease?

Did you not by pride become self-satisfied?

Did you not neglect prayer, Bible reading, the public means of grace, the Lord's Table, etc.?

Mend your ways, and do not hinder your own soul.

Did not false teachers do it, as in the case of the Galatians?

If so, quit them at once, and listen only to the gospel of Christ.

3. You must look to it, and mend your pace.

Your loss has been already great. You might by this time have been far on upon the road.

Your natural tendency will be to slacken still more.

Your danger is great of being overtaken by error and sin.

Your death would come of ceasing to obey the truth.

Your wisdom is to cry for help that you may run aright.

II. WE SHALL USE THE TEXT IN REFERENCE TO DELAYING SINNERS.

1. You have sometimes been set a-running.

God has blessed his word to your arousing.

God has not yet given you up; this is evident.

God's way of salvation still lies open before you.

2. What has hindered you?

Self-righteousness and trust in yourself?

Carelessness, procrastination, and neglect?

Love of self-indulgence or the secret practice of pleasurable sins?

Frivolous, skeptical, or wicked companions?

Unbelief and mistrust of God's mercy?

3. The worst evils will come of being hindered.

Those who will not obey truth will become the dupes of lies.

Truth not obeyed is disobeyed, and so sin is multiplied.

Truth disregarded becomes an accuser, and its witness secures our condemnation.

God have mercy on hinderers. We must rebuke them.

God have mercy on the hindered. We would arouse them.

Spurs

Cecil says that some adopt the Indian maxim that it is better to walk than to run, and better to stand than to walk, and better to sit than to stand, and better to lie than to sit. Such is not the teaching of the gospel. It is a good thing to be walking in the ways of God, but it is better to be running — making real and visible progress, day by day advancing in experience and attainments. David likens the sun to a strong man rejoicing to run a race; not dreading it and shrinking back from it, but delighting in the opportunity of putting forth all his powers. Who so runs, runs well. — The Christian

The Christian race is by no means easy. We are sore let and hindered in running "the race that is set before us," because of: (1) Our sinful nature still remaining in the holiest saints. (2) Some easily besetting sin (Heb. 12:1). (3) The entanglements of the world, like heavy and close-fitting garments, impeding the racer's speed. (4) Our weakness and infirmity, soon tired and exhausted when the race is long or the road is rough. — "In Prospect of Sunday," by G. S. Bowes

Some are too busy. They run about too much to run well. Some run too fast at the outset; they run themselves out of breath. — T. T. Lynch

Henry Ward Beecher, in a sermon on this text, describes one of the hindrances to Christian progress thus: "We have fallen off immensely on the side of religious culture — earnest, prolonged, habitual, domestic, religious culture, conducted by the reading of God's Word and by prayer and its family influences. And this tendency is still further augmented by the increase of religious books, of tracts, of biographies and histories, of commentaries, which tend to envelop and hide the Word of God from our minds. In other words, these things which are called 'helps' have been increased to such a degree and have come to occupy so much of our attention, that when we have read our helps, we have no time left to read the things to be helped; and the Bible is covered down and lost under its 'helps.'"

It is possible that fellow-professors may hinder. We are often obliged to accommodate our pace to that of our fellow-travelers. If they are laggards, we are very likely to be so, too. We are apt to sleep as do others. We are stimulated or depressed, urged on or held back by those with whom we are associated in Christian fellowship. There is still greater reason to fear that in many cases worldly friends and companions are the hinderers. Indeed, they can be nothing else. None can help us in the race but those who are themselves running it; all others must hinder. Let a Christian form an intimate friendship with an ungodly person, and from that moment all progress is stayed. He must go back; for when his companion is going in the opposite direction, how can he walk with him except by turning his back upon the path which he has formerly trodden? — P.

A sailor remarks— "Sailing from Cuba, we thought we had gained sixty miles one day in our course; but at the next observation, we found we had lost more than thirty. It was an undercurrent. The ship had been going forward by the wind, but going back by the current." So a man's course in religion may often seem to be right and progressive, but the undercurrent of his besetting sins is delving him the very contrary way to what he thinks. — Cheerer

Galatians 5:11: The Offence of the Cross

Then is the offence of the cross ceased. — Galatians 5:11

PAUL intends here to declare that the offense of the cross never has ceased and never can cease. To suppose it to have ceased is folly.

The religion of Jesus is most peaceful, mild, and benevolent.

Yet, its history shows it to have been assailed with bitterest hate all along. It is clearly offensive to the unregenerate mind.

There is no reason to believe that it is one jot more palatable to the world than it used to be. The world and the gospel are both unchanged.

I. WHEREIN LIES THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS?

1. Its doctrine of atonement offends man's pride.
2. Its simple teaching offends man's wisdom and artificial taste.
3. Its being a remedy for man's ruin offends his fancied power to save himself.
4. Its addressing all as sinners offends the dignity of Pharisees.
5. Its coming as a revelation offends "modern thought."
6. Its lofty holiness offends man's love of sin.

II. HOW IS THIS OFFENSE SHOWN?

1. Frequently by the actual persecution of believers.
2. More often by slandering believers and sneering at them as old-fashioned, foolish, weak-minded, morose, self-conceited, etc.
3. Often by omitting to preach the cross. Many nowadays preach a Christless, bloodless gospel.
4. Or by importing new meanings into orthodox terms.
5. Or by mixing the truth of Christ with errors.
6. Or by openly denying the deity of him who died on the cross and the substitutionary character of his sufferings.

Indeed, there are a thousand ways of showing that the cross offends us in one respect or another.

III. WHAT THEN?

1. Herein is folly, that men are offended—

With that which God ordains.

With that which must win the day.

With the only thing which can save them.

With that which is full of wisdom and beauty.

2. Herein is grace—

That we who once were offended by the cross, now find it to be—

The one hope of our hearts.

The great delight of our souls.

The joyful boast of our tongues.

3. Herein is heart-searching.

Perhaps we are secretly offended at the cross.

Perhaps we give no offense to haters of the cross. Many professed Christians never cause offense to the most godless.

Is this because they bear no testimony to the cross?

Is this because they are not crucified to the world?

Is this because there is no real trust in the cross and no true knowledge of Christ?

Let us not follow those preachers who are not friends to the cross.

Let us have no fellowship with those who have no fellowship with Christ. Preachers who have caught the spirit of the age are of the world, and the world loves its own; but we must disown them.

Let us not be distressed by the offense of the cross, even when it comes upon us with bitterest scorn.

Let us look for it and accept it as a token that we are in the right.

Annotations

There is a want in the human mind, which nothing but the Atonement can satisfy, though it may be a stumbling-block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek. In the words of Henry Rogers, "It is adapted to human nature as a bitter medicine may be to a patient. Those who have taken it, tried its efficacy, and recovered spiritual health, gladly proclaim its value. But to those who have not and will not try it, it is an unpalatable potion still."

I open an ancient book written in opposition to Christianity by Arnobius, and I read: "Our gods are not displeased with you Christians for worshipping the Almighty God; but you maintain the deity of one who was put to death on the cross, you believe him to be yet alive, and you adore him with daily supplications." Men showed me at Rome in the Kircherian Museum a square foot of the plaster of a wall of a palace not many years ago uncovered on the Palatine hill. On the poor clay was traced a cross bearing a human figure with a brute's head. The figure was nailed to the cross, and before it a soldier was represented kneeling and extending his hands in the Greek posture of devotion. Underneath all was scratched in rude lettering in Greek, "Alexamenos adores his God." That representation of the central thought of Christianity was made in a jeering moment by some rude soldier in the days of Caracalla; but it blazes there now in Rome, the most majestic monument of its age in the world. — Joseph Cook

If any part of the truth which I am bound to communicate be concealed, this is sinful artifice. The Jesuits in China, in order to remove the offense of the cross, declared that it was a falsehood invented by the Jews that Christ was crucified; but they were expelled from the empire. This was designed, perhaps, to be held up as a warning to all missionaries that no good end is to be answered by artifice. — Richard Cecil

The cross is the strength of a minister. I, for one, would not be without it for the world. I should feel like a soldier without weapons, like an artist without his pencil, like a pilot without his compass, like a laborer without his tools. Let others, if they will, preach the law and morality. Let others hold forth the terrors of hell and the joys of heaven. Let others drench their congregations with teachings about the sacraments and the church. Give me the cross of Christ. This is the only lever which has ever turned the world upside down hitherto and made men forsake their sins. And if this will not do it, nothing will. A man may begin preaching with a perfect knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; but he will do little or no good among his hearers unless he knows something of the cross. Never was there a minister who did much for the conversion of souls who did not dwell much on Christ crucified. Luther, Rutherford, Whitefield, M'Cheyne were all most eminent preachers of the cross. This is the preaching that the Holy Ghost delights to bless. He loves to honor those who honor the cross. — J. C. Ryle

My thoughts once prompt round hurtful things to twine,
What are they now, when two dread deaths are near?

The one impends, the other shakes his spear.

Painting and sculpture's aid in vain I crave:

My one sole refuge is that love Divine,

Which from the cross stretched forth its arms to save.

— Last lines written by Michaelangelo, when over eighty

Galatians 6:2,5: Burden-bearing

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For every man shall bear his own burden." — Galatians 6:2, 5

GALATIANS were apparently fond of the law and its burdens. At least, they appeared to be ready to load themselves with ceremonies, and so fulfill the law of Moses.

Paul would have them think of other burdens, by the bearing of which they would fulfill the law of Christ.

We are not under law, but under love.

But love is also law in the best sense. The law of Christ is love.

Love is the fulfilling of the law. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Lest this principle should be presumed upon, he mentions the principle of individual responsibility. "Every man shall bear his own burden?"

I. COMMUNITY. "Bear ye one another's burdens?"

1. Negatively:

It tacitly forbids certain modes of action.

We are not to burden others. Some take a liberty to do so from this very text, as if it said, "Let others bear your burdens," which is just the reverse of what it urges.

We are not to spy out others' burdens and report thereon.

We are not to despise them for having such loads to bear.

We are not to act as if all things existed for ourselves, and we were to bend all to our own purposes.

We are not to go through the world oblivious of the sorrows of others. We may not shut our eyes to the woes of mankind.

2. Positively:

We are to share the burdens of others:

By compassion, bear with their former sins (verse 1).

By patience, bear with their infirmities and even their conceit (verse 2).

By sympathy, bear their sorrows (verses 2-3).

By assistance, bear their wants (verses 6, 10).

By communion, in love and comfort, bear their struggles.

By prayer and practical help, bear the burden of their labors and, thus, lighten it (verse 6).

3. Specially, we ought to consider—

The erring brother. Referred to in verse 1 as "overtaken in a fault?" We must tenderly restore him.

The provoking brother, who thinks himself to be something (see verse 3). Bear with him; his mistake will bring him many a burden before he has done with it.

The brother who is peculiarly trying is to be borne with to seventy times seven, even to the measure of the law of Christ.

The greatly tried is to have our greatest sympathy.

The minister of Christ should be released from temporal burdens, that he may give himself wholly to the burden of the Lord.

II. IMMUNITY. "For every man shall bear his own burden." We shall not bear all the burdens of others.

We are not so bound to each other that we are partakers in willful transgression, negligence, or rebellion.

1. Each must bear his own sin if he persists in it.
2. Each must bear his own shame, which results from his sin.
3. Each must bear his own responsibility in his own sphere.
4. Each must bear his own judgment at the last.

III. PERSONALITY. "Every man ... his own burden."

True godliness is a personal affair, and we cannot cast off our individuality. Therefore, let us ask for grace to look well to ourselves in the following matters:

1. Personal religion. The new birth, repentance, faith, love, holiness, fellowship with God, etc., are all personal.
2. Personal self-examination. We cannot leave the question of our soul's condition to the judgment of others.
3. Personal service. We have to do what no one else can do.
4. Personal responsibility. Obligations cannot be transferred.
5. Personal effort. Nothing can be a substitute for this.
6. Personal sorrow. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness."
7. Personal comfort. We need the Comforter for ourselves, and we must personally look up to the Lord for his operations.

All this belongs to the Christian, and we may judge ourselves by it.

So bear your own burden as not to forget others.

So live as not to come under the guilt of other men's sins.

So help others as not to destroy their self-reliance.

Pithy Brevities

An old anecdote of the great Napoleon records that, while walking along a country road attended by some of his officers, he encountered a peasant heavily laden with faggots for fuel. The peasant was about to be jostled aside as a matter of course by his social superiors, when the Emperor, laying his hand on the arm of the foremost member of his escort, arrested the whole party, and gave the laboring man the use of the road, with the remark, "Messieurs, respect the burden."

Let him who expects one class in society to prosper to the highest degree while others are in distress try whether one side of his face can smile while the other is pinched. — Thomas Fuller

There is a proverb, but none of Solomon's, "Every man for himself, and God for us all." But where every man is for himself, the devil will have all. — William Secker

"Every man shall bear his own burden"; this is the law of necessity. "Bear ye one another's burdens"; this is the law of Christ. Let a man lighten his own load by sharing his neighbor's burden. — T. T. Lynch

There is a gateway at the entrance of a narrow passage in London over which is written, "No burdens allowed to pass through." "And yet we do pass constantly with ours," said one friend to another as they turned up this passage out of a more frequented and broader thoroughfare. They carried no visible burdens, but they were like many who, although they have no outward pack upon their shoulders, often stoop inwardly beneath the pressure of a heavy load upon the heart. The worst burdens are those which never meet the eye.

Bishop Burner, in his charges to the clergy of his diocese, used to be extremely vehement in his declamations against pluralities. In his first visitation to Salisbury, he urged the authority of St. Bernard, who being consulted by one of his followers, whether he might accept of two benefices, replied, "And how will you be able to serve them both?" "I intend;" answered the priest, "to officiate in one of them by a deputy." "Will your deputy suffer eternal punishment for you, too?" asked the saint. "Believe me, you may serve your cure by proxy, but you must suffer the penalty in person." This anecdote made such an impression on Mr. Kelsey, a pious and wealthy

clergyman then present, that he immediately resigned the rectory of Bernerton, in Berkshire, worth two hundred a year, which he then held with another of great value. — Whitecross

With many, personal service in the cause of humanity is commuted for a money payment. But we are to be colliers in the campaign against evil and not merely to pay the war tax. — "Ecce Homo"

Galatians 6:7: Sowing and Reaping

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. — Galatians 6:7

BOTH Luther and Calvin confine these words to the support of the ministers of the word, and certainly therein they have weighty meaning.

Churches that starve ministers will be starved themselves.

But we prefer to take the words as expressing a general principle.

I. GOD IS NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH.

1. Either by the notion that there will be no rewards and punishments.
2. Or by the idea that a bare profession will suffice to save us.
3. Or by the fancy that we shall escape in the crowd.
4. Or by the superstitious supposition that certain rites will set all straight at last, whatever our lives may be.
5. Or by a reliance upon an orthodox creed, a supposed conversion, a presumptuous faith, and a little almsgiving.

II. THE LAWS OF HIS GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE SET ASIDE.

1. It is so in nature. Law is inexorable. Gravitation crushes the man who opposes it.
2. It is so in providence. Evil results surely follow social wrong.
3. Conscience tells us it must be so. Sin must be punished.
4. The word of God is very clear upon this point.
5. To alter laws would disarrange the universe and remove the foundation of the hopes of the righteous.

III. EVIL SOWING WILL BRING EVIL REAPING.

1. This is seen in the present result of certain sins.

Sins of lust bring disease into the bodily frame.

Sins of idolatry have led men to cruel and degrading practices.

Sins of temper have caused murders, wars, strifes, and misery.

Sins of appetite, especially drunkenness, cause want, misery, delirium, etc.

2. This is seen in the mind becoming more and more corrupt and less able to see the evil of sin or to resist temptation.
3. This is seen when the man becomes evidently obnoxious to God and man so as to need restraint and invite punishment.
4. This is seen when the sinner becomes himself disappointed in the result of his conduct. His malice eats his heart; his greed devours his soul; his infidelity destroys his comfort; his raging passions agitate his spirit.
5. This is seen when the impenitent is confirmed in evil and eternally punished with remorse. Hell will be the harvest of a man's own sin. Conscience is the worm, which gnaws him.

IV. GOOD SOWING WILL BRING GOOD REAPING.

The rule holds good both ways. Let us, therefore, enquire as to this good sowing:

1. In what power is it to be done?

2. In what manner and spirit shall we set about it?

3. What are its seeds?

Towards God, we sow in the Spirit, faith and obedience.

Towards men, love, truth, justice, kindness, forbearance.

Towards self, control of appetite, purity, etc.

4. What is the reaping of the Spirit?

Life everlasting dwelling within us and abiding there forever.

Let us sow good seed always.

Let us sow it plentifully that we may reap in proportion.

Let us begin to sow it at once.

Seeds

They that would mock God mock themselves much more. — John Trapp

It is not an open question at all whether I shall sow or not today. The only question to be decided is, Shall I sow good seed or bad? Every man always is sowing for his own harvest in eternity, either tares or wheat. According as a man soweth, so shall he also reap. He that sows the wind of vanity shall reap the whirlwind of wrath. Suppose a man should collect a quantity of small gravel and dye it carefully so that it should resemble wheat and sow it in his fields in spring, expecting that he would reap a crop of wheat like his neighbor's in harvest. The man is mad; he is a fool to think that by his silly trick he can evade the laws of nature and mock nature's God. Yet equally foolish is the conduct and far heavier the punishment of the man who sows wickedness now and expects to reap safety at last. Sin is not only profitless and disastrous; it is eminently a deceitful work. Men do not of set purpose cast themselves away; sin cheats a sinner out of his soul.

But sowing righteousness is never and nowhere lost labor. Every act done by God's grace and at his bidding is living and fruitful. It may appear to go out of sight, like seed beneath the furrow; but it will rise again. Sow on, Christians! Sight will not follow the seed far; but when sight fails, sow in faith, and you will reap in joy soon. — William Arnot

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," — No blight, nor mildew, nor scorching sun, nor rain deluge, can turn that harvest into failure.

Cast forth thy act, thy word into the ever-living, ever-working universe. It is a seed-grain that cannot die; unnoticed today, it will be found flourishing as a Banyan grove (perhaps, alas! as a Hemlock forest) after a thousand years. — Thomas Carlyle

So it is with all temptations and lusts. They are ever scattering seeds — as weeds do. What a power there is in seeds! How long-lived they are, as we see in the mummies of Egypt, where they may have lain for thousands of years in darkness, but now come forth to grow. What contrivances they have to continue and to propagate themselves. They have wings, and they fly for miles. They may float over wide oceans and rest themselves in foreign countries. They have hooks and attach themselves to objects. Often they are taken up by birds, which transport them to distant places. As it is with the seeds of weeds, so it is with every evil propensity and habit. It propagates itself and spreads over the whole soul and goes down from generation to generation. — Dr. James McCosh

Doth any think he shall lose by his charity? No worldling, when he sows his seed, thinks he shall lose his seed; he hopes for increase at harvest. Darest thou trust the ground and not God? Sure, God is a better paymaster than the earth; grace doth give a larger recompense than nature. Below, thou mayest receive forty grains for one, but in heaven (by the promise of Christ) a hundred-fold: a measure heaped, and shaken, and thrust together, and yet running over. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor"; there is the seeding. "The Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble" (Ps. 12: 1); there is the harvest. Is that all? No. Matthew 25:35: "Ye fed me when I was hungry, and gave me drink when thirsty" — comforted me in misery; there is the sowing. Venite, beati. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"; there is the harvest. — Thomas Adams

Galatians 6:14: Three Crucifixions

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. — Galatians 6:14

PAUL vigorously rebuked those who went aside from the doctrine of the Cross (verses 12-13).

When we rebuke others, we must take care to go right ourselves; hence, he says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross."

Our own resolute adherence to truth, when practically carried out, is a very powerful argument against opponents.

Paul rises to warmth when he thinks of the opponents of the cross. He no sooner touches the subject than he glows and burns.

Yet, he has his reasons and states them clearly and forcibly in the latter words of the text.

Here are three crucifixions—

I. CHRIST CRUCIFIED. "The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He mentions the atoning death of Jesus in the plainest and most obnoxious terms. The cross was shameful as the gallows tree.

Yet with the clearest contrast as to the person enduring it, for to him he gives his full honors in the glorious title, "our Lord Jesus Christ."

He refers to the doctrine of free justification and full atonement by the death of Jesus upon the cross.

In this he gloried so as to glory in nothing else, for he viewed it—

1. As a display of the divine character. "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:19).
2. As the manifestation of the love of the Savior (John 15:13).
3. As the putting away of sin by atonement (Heb. 9:26)
4. As the breathing of hope, peace, and joy to the desponding soul.
5. As the great means of touching hearts and changing lives.
6. As depriving death of terror, seeing Jesus died.
7. As ensuring heaven to all believers.

In any one of these points of view, the cross is a pillar of light, flaming with unutterable glory.

II. THE WORLD CRUCIFIED. "The world is crucified unto me."

As the result of seeing all things in the light of the Cross, he saw the world to be like a felon executed upon a cross.

1. Its character condemned (John 12:31).
2. Its judgment contemned. Who cares for the opinion of a gibbeted felon?
3. Its teachings despised. What authority can it have?
4. Its pleasures, honors, treasures, rejected.
5. Its pursuits, maxims, and spirit cast out.
6. Its threatenings and blandishments made nothing of.
7. Itself soon to pass away, its glory and its fashion fading.

III. THE BELIEVER CRUCIFIED. "And I unto the world."

To the world, Paul was no better than a man crucified.

If faithful, a Christian may expect to be treated as only fit to be put to a shameful death.

He will probably find—

1. Himself at first bullied, threatened, and ridiculed.
2. His name and honor held in small repute because of his association with the godly poor.
3. His actions and motives misrepresented.
4. Himself despised as a sort of madman or of doubtful intellect.
5. His teaching described as exploded, dying out, etc.
6. His ways and habits reckoned to be Puritanic and hypocritical.
7. Himself given up as irreclaimable and therefore dead to society.

Let us glory in the cross, because it gibbets the world's glory, and honor, and power!

Let us glory in the cross when men take from us all other glory.

Memoranda

It is a subject of rejoicing and glorying that we have such a Savior. The world looked upon him with contempt, and the cross was a stumbling-block to the Jew and folly to the Greek. But to the Christian, that cross is the subject of glorying. It is so because: (1) of the love of him who suffered there; (2) of the purity and holiness of his character, for the innocent died there for the guilty; (3) of the honor there put on the law of God by his dying to maintain it unsullied; (4) of the reconciliation there made for sin, accomplishing what could be done by no other oblation and by no power of man; (5) of the pardon there procured for the guilty; (6) of the fact that through it we become dead to the world and are made alive unto God; (7) of the support and consolation which go from that cross to sustain us in trial; and (8) of the fact that it procured for us admission into heaven, a title to the world of glory. All is glory around the cross. It was a glorious Savior who died; it was glorious love that led him to die; it was a glorious object to redeem a world; and it is unspeakable glory to which he will raise lost and ruined sinners by his death. Oh, who would not glory in such a Savior! — Albert Barnes

If you have not yet found out that Christ crucified is the foundation of the whole volume, you have hitherto read your Bible to very little profit. Your religion is a heaven without a sun, an arch without a key stone, a compass without a needle, a clock without spring or weights, a lamp without oil. It will not comfort you; it will not deliver your soul from hell. — J. C. Ryle

Do not be satisfied with so many others only to know the cross in its power to atone. The glory of the cross is that it was not only to Jesus the path to life, but that each moment it can become to us the power that destroys sin and death and keeps us in the power of the eternal life. Learn from your Savior the holy art of using it for this. Faith in the power of the cross and its victory will day by day make dead the deeds of the body, the lusts of the flesh. This faith will teach you to count the cross, with its continual death to self, all your glory. Because you regard the cross not as one who is still on the way to crucifixion with the prospect of a painful death, but as one to whom the crucifixion is past, who already lives in Christ, and now only bears the cross as the blessed instrument through which the body of sin is done away (Rom. 6:6, RV). The banner under which complete victory over sin and the world is to be won is the cross. — Andrew Murray

When Ignatius, pastor of the church at Antioch, was condemned by the emperor Trajan to suffer death at Rome, he was apprehensive that the Christians there, out of their great affection for him, might endeavor to prevent his martyrdom; and therefore wrote a letter from Smyrna to the Roman Christians, which he sent on before him, wherein he earnestly besought them to take no measures for the continuance of his life, and amongst other things, said, "I long for death," adding as a reason why he was desirous of thus testifying his love to Christ, "My love is crucified."

Love makes the cross easy, amiable, admirable, delicious.

Brethren, the cross of Christ is your crown, the reproach of Christ your riches; the shame of Christ your glory. — Joseph Alleine, written from "The Common Prison"