"And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Paul is here naming the one foe that can prevent us as Christians from winning the victory. He is telling us the one enemy that can prevent us from reaping a harvest of usefulness. "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Notice the conditions. It is not, we shall reap if the weather is favorable, not we shall reap if there are no hypocrites in the Church, not we shall reap if every man pays as much as he ought to pay. It is not we shall reap if the preacher is eloquent, or if the choir leader is an artist. Our final success is dependent upon none of these things. We shall reap, declares the Apostle with conviction, if we faint not.

What is it to faint? It is hardly necessary to define this word. We have seen fainting, every one of us. Not a few of us have passed through the experience ourselves. While I was preaching some time ago a man was standing in the back part of the church. Seemingly, he was enjoying the service. He was making a contribution by his presence and his attention. But suddenly his knees went weak. I heard the impact of his body against the floor as he fell. No longer could he make any contribution. There was no use to pass the plate to him. He would not make any offering. There was no use to give him a hymn book. He would not sing. There was no use to call to prayer. He would not pray. There was no use to preach to him. It was useless to call him to the most inspiring crusade. He would pay no more attention to you than the dead.

Now why was this? It was not because he was my personal enemy. It was not because he was an irreligious man. The one reason why this man ceased to make any contribution to the service was because he had fainted. But the fact that he ceased to be of any service is not the whole story. No sooner had he fainted than four other men had to give their attention to him. They bore him out to where the air was fresh. They administered restoratives. Thus this one fainting man cost the congregation five of its attentive listeners. Thus he was not only not an asset, but he was a liability. He did not serve anyone. He had to be served. And this because he had fainted.

Now, just as folks faint physically, so they faint spiritually. It is an everyday occurrence. It has occurred to some of you. You have not become hostile to the Church. But for some reason you have fainted. For some cause your knees have gone weak. Your courage has gone, your faith has become weak. You no longer make any contribution. Not only so, but you are a positive hindrance. You are having to be carried. You are a load upon the backs of those who are struggling to carry on...
the work of the Church. From a spiritual asset you have become a spiritual liability, not because you have altogether back-slidden, but simply because you have fainted. And neither man nor God can use a man when he is in a dead faint.

II.

Fainting is a persistent danger.

There is no more persistent temptation that dogs our steps than the temptation to faint. It is confined to no single period in life. One would think that in youth's green spring, we might be exempt. But both the Bible and our own experience tell us to the contrary. Isaiah has this wise word, "Even the youth shall faint and be weary". And among us today there are those who are this side of twenty, who have fainted, and who in large measure have given over the fight.

If it is a danger of youth, it is one even more intense as we get into middle life. It dog us even down to old age. As we get to that place when the almsn tree flourishes and the grasshopper becomes a burden, it is often easy to become discouraged. It is easy to become weary in well doing. It is so easy to give over the fight and to fall down in a dead faint. Therefore you who have come close to the sunset and the evening star recognize that this temptation that dogged your steps in the springtime of life is with you still, and that you need to encourage yourselves this morning with this great word, "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Not only does this temptation belong to all periods of life, but it belongs to all classes. The weak are its victims, and the strong do not always escape. Elijah was a strong man. He was one of the strongest. When James tells us that he was a man of like passions as ourselves, we are tempted to quarrel with him. When we read of his great exploits, we say in our hearts, "There is little in those to remind me of myself."

But when one day we come upon him under the Juniper Tree in a dead faint, we realize that James spoke the truth. Indeed he is a man of like passions as ourselves, and though he is exceedingly strong, he is not strong enough to be exempt from the deadly danger of fainting.

The Bible recognizes this danger and warns against it again and again. The writer to the Hebrews tells us to "Consider Jesus Christ, who endured such contradictions of sinners, lest we become weary and faint in our minds." Again he says, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." And even the Master Himself speaks "a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint". He realized that one of the persistent and dogging dangers of the Christian life is that we shall faint.

III.

What are some of the causes that lead to our fainting?

I. A bad atmosphere. It is easy to faint when the atmosphere is
is vitiated and poisoned. I doubt if many of us realize the importance of the right kind of atmosphere. There are atmospheres in which it is easy to do right and hard to do wrong. There are atmospheres in which it is easy to go wrong and hard to go right. Then there is an atmosphere where it is easy to curse and hard to bless.

Sometimes the atmosphere is one of cold indifference. It is very easy in an atmosphere like this to lose heart. It is easy to go limp and to faint and to utterly fall. I do not wonder that those who never have a kindly hand-clasp, I do not wonder that those who never have a word of appreciation, sometimes faint and grow weary and give up the fight. It is dreadfully easy to give over the conflict when nobody applauds, when nobody appreciates, when nobody seems to care whether you stand or fall, whether you sink or swim, whether you live or die.

It is possible to have a home so sweet with the divine presence, that it is next to impossible to enter that home without being conscious of the fact that it is a Christian home. It is also possible to have a church so warm and vital with the breath of God that you cannot come into that church without being made conscious of His presence. What a tragedy it is, therefore, when this is lacking. It is not to be wondered at that souls are not won in such an atmosphere. It is a great privilege to be associated with Christian people, if they are vitally Christians. But if they are only religious without the mind of Christ, then the association is not helpful, but it is often very hurtful.

2. Another cause of fainting is weariness.

Being a Christian is not the easiest way to live. Jesus never claimed that such was the case. When the enthusiastic young men came proposing to follow Him anywhere, He told him frankly there were difficulties in the way, that there were dangers to be faced, that there were sacrifices to be made. He compelled him to see if he accepted His doctrine, he was not to receive it simply as an ornament. He let him know that there was "A Cross red with blood at the center of it". If you are drifting with the tide, then you are not having any great conflict. But if you have pledged yourself with purpose of heart to stand for Christ, then there is a battle ahead of you. And in this battle you will tend to grow weary at times.

3. There are others who have fainted under a great sorrow. Some time ago I saw the meeting between a father and daughter who had been long separated. The daughter had married against the father's will, and had brought to him a great deal of heartache as well as to herself. Now he was on his death bed, and the girl was home once more. As she entered the door and looked into the face of the father whom she had grieved, she fell in a dead faint. The cause was her sorrow, her heartache.

That is the cause of not a little spiritual fainting. Sorrow sweetens a great many people. In fact, most of the helpful people that we know, the people who have a tender touch, the people who know how to sympathize, are the people who have learned that lesson in Gethsemane. They are the people who have suffered. They are the people who wear scars upon their hearts. They are the people whose eyes have been blinded by tears. But while this is true, sorrow blights others. Sorrow so utterly breaks their hearts that it leads them into a dead faint. That is the reason, that the writer to the Hebrews gives us the warning
That is the reason that the writer to the Hebrews gives us the warning that he does.

4. Possibly the most frequent cause of fainting is a sense of failure. We toil and toil and do not seem to get anywhere. Here is a Sunday School teacher that pours her very life into an effort to make her class the best class possible. She gives herself without stint to the study of the lesson. She gives herself without stint to her teaching. She is always available to her pupils, willing to spend; and be spent day by day, week by week, month by month. Yet, after all her labors and toil, she comes face to face with the fact that to all appearances very little is accomplished. As she tries to count up results, she sees so little that she becomes discouraged and faints.

What a persistent temptation this is to the preacher. This I know from personal experience. I love to see results. The Lord knows me well enough to know that He could hardly trust me to get on without them. That is the main thing that is the matter with Elijah when we find him under the Juniper Tree. He felt that his ministry had gone for nothing. He had put his heart and his soul and his all into his work, yet it seemed that nothing had been accomplished. There are preachers all over the land today who are in a dead faint because they feel that their ministry has counted for almost nothing.

Is there an antidote to prevent fainting? Or if we have already fainted, is there a means by which we may be recovered? I do not hesitate to answer this question in the affirmative, God has made rich provisions for us in this particular, as in all others.

1. The first provision I mention is the word of God. There are very few things in literature finer than the testimony of Mr. Standfast, as he reaches the end of the way. "I see myself at the end of my journey. My toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see the head that was crowned with thorns and the face that was spit upon for me. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of, and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there have I coveted to put my foot also. His voice to me has been most sweet and His countenance I have more desire than they that have most desire of the light of the sun. His word I did use to gather for my food, and for antidote against my fainting."

There you have it. He tells us that his antidote was the Word. And that has been the antidote of countless millions. There are certain passages that I have turned to again and again in moments of depression and in moments of weariness. Sometimes it is the first chapter of Joshua. I love to hear my Lord say, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee. Be thou strong and of good courage." Again it is to the sixth chapter of Ephesians, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil". But most often I think it is to the ninety-first psalm, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Oh, if you have fainted, or if you are ready to faint, there are few things that will help you so much as the turning with an open heart and with prayerful soul to the Word of God.
2. The second provision that God has made for us is the privilege of prayer. Jesus recommended this. He spoke a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint. He recognized the fact that persistent prayer and fainting could not go hand in hand. The man who is in constant fellowship with Christ through prayer is not the man who is going to faint. When He was in the garden with His disciples, He urged that they pray that they enter not into temptation, and because they failed to pray, a little later, they utterly fainted.

The reason that prayer is such an efficient remedy against fainting is that it opens the windows of the soul out towards the heavenly Jerusalem. It brings into our hearts the reviving and the refreshing breezes from the city of God. Real prayer will always do this. It will make God a reality. And that is of the highest possible value. Better than any request that might be granted, better than any petition that we might win from Him, is just this, a sense of the divine presence. No soul can faint who has a real sense of the present and living Christ. It is said that the personal presence of Caesar turned the meanest soldier into a hero. I do not know whether this was true or not. But I do know that the presence of Jesus Christ realized will turn the meanest saint into a hero and will save the weakest of us from fainting.

3. The final antidote that I mention is the certainty of our reward. "And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." There is absolutely nothing more sure than that there is a reaping day for the man who will persist in right doing. Nothing that is done in the fellowship of Christ, nothing that is done for His sake, no cup of cold water that is given in His name, no word that is spoken in His behalf, no kindness that is rendered because we are sons and daughters of His, can possibly ever lose its reward. Failure with Him is an absolute impossibility.

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". We have been accustomed to emphasizing the truthfulness of this statement on the darker side. And we are altogether right in so doing. The man that sows tares will reap tares. The man that sows to the flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption. There is absolutely no way of avoiding the issue. "Be sure your sins will find you out", is just as true in a newspaper as it is in the word of God.

But there is a brighter side. This old world will certainly grow thorns and briars, if you plant them. But it is equally true, that if you plant roses, and violets, and lilies, and forget-me-nots, it will grow them too. The harvest from a seed of evil is no more certain than a harvest from a seed of good. If you plant corn, the draught may blight it, if you sow wheat, the rust may ruin it. If you sow cotton, the boll weevil may devour it. But there is absolutely no power in earth or hell that can keep you from reaping a harvest if you continue to do right, in the fellowship of Christ. Therefore, "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

"Be steadfast—because ye know etc"
"Fainting Fits."

Galatians, 6: 9.

"Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." I want you to notice especially this last word: "If we faint not." What the Apostle is afraid of for his Galatian converts, what he seems to fear for himself is this, that he will faint. All the best things are possible if they will only endure. The finest conquests are within their power if they do not grow weak, lose their courage, turn coward, faint.

The Bible has a good deal to say about fainting. We are warned against it again and again. And well we may be for it is one of the most persistent and insidious dangers of the Christian life. "Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall", Isaiah tells us. The writer to the Hebrews encourages us to "keep our eyes fixed on Him who endured the contradictions of sinners, lest we be weary and faint in our minds." And Christ, you remember, spoke a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.

I suppose it is altogether useless for us to define the meaning of this word "faint." We are familiar enough with it in our own experience and in the experience of others. We have seen people faint physically. We have seen them suddenly grow weak, collapse, fall as if dead. One who is in a faint is helpless. He is not able to render any service. He is not able to care for himself. For the time, at least, he is as useless as a corpse.

And we have seen people faint spiritually. Their knees grow weak, they lose their vision, they lose their hope, they lose their expectancy, they lose their courage, they cease to battle. They no longer help. They become spiritual invalids. They no longer encourage; they rather discourage. If I were to tell the tragedy of the lives of some of you that are listening to me at this moment it would be this, that you have fainted. Now, fainting is a temptation to which we are subjected in every department of life. Regardless of the task at which we toil, there must always be a battle against fainting. While I was in the Canal Zone this summer I was shown some of the machinery that was left there by the French. France, as you know, undertook to connect the two seas years ago, but they did not succeed. They spent vast sums of money and not a few human lives, but before the enterprise was completed they fainted.

And that is the story of incompleted tasks without number. It accounts, I think, for more failures than possibly any other one thing. It is not absolutely true that all things come to him who waits, but it is certainly true that life's best prizes come to those who can patiently and persistently work. One of the greatest literary failures of the centuries was Coleridge. He did not fail for lack of genius. He failed because he was persistently fainting. He could dream great dreams, but he could never make them realties.

Happy is the man that knows how to keep on. There was a lad in England years ago who saw a bird's nest in a tree. He wanted that bird's nest and so he set himself to climb for it. The first time he climbed he fell. The second time he climbed he fell again. He climbed a third time, and a third time he fell, breaking his leg. He was carried to the house. His limb was dressed and at last after days of nursing, he was far on the way to recovery.
At this time his mother dared to leave him for a little while. As she left she urged him to be very careful not to move in such a way as to hurt his leg. She was gone for a little while and when she came back, to her amazement and horror, she found the lad with flushed face holding the bird's nest in his lap. And when she rebuked him for his recklessness, he said, "Mother, I can not start a thing and let it alone." And we do not wonder that we find William Carey unable to let the great missionary enterprise alone in later years. We do not wonder that we find him, unswayed by difficulties, changing, by his almost superhuman energy, the whole future history of India.

We faint. That is the way we miss life's prizes. We get discouraged so easily. We so soon give over the struggle. It was a wise mother who would never allow her son to begin any enterprise, even the most trivial, as a child without seeing that he went through with it. My father was a bit on that order. I found it out once to my sorrow.

One day we were hunting cattle together. I rode behind him on horseback. Out on a lonely ridge he left me with instructions to hold the horse and wait for him while he went down in one of those dark hollows that was too steep for the horse to go. Now, you may think I was like the boy that stood on the burning deck, but I wasn't. Father got out of hearing and out of sight. It looked to me as if he were never coming back. At last I hitched the horse and started for home. I had not gone far till he caught me. And the memory of the lesson in patience that he gave me lingers with me still.

If you want to know how Edison made his discoveries a large part of the story is just this, he refused to faint. If you want to know how Columbus found a new world this is the secret, he would not allow himself to faint. All the prizes that are worth the winning are won by those who persist. The great victories of the world have been won by those who could keep on. (The Englishman and the Frenchman.)

You remember the man who staked a gold claim in California and worked it for long days only to throw down his pick at last and go away discouraged. The man who bought that claim had worked no more than an hour till he discovered signs of gold. He became a millionaire. But the other went away poverty stricken because he faint. Yes, there is a great tendency to faint. The hottest fire tends to go out. The fastest train will slow down unless you persistently add new fuel. There is no such thing as perpetual motion been discovered yet. However high we swing, the "old cat will die" unless we keep putting energy into it.

But while we tend to faint in all tasks, we are peculiarly tempted in matters of religion. It is difficult to get people started toward Canaan. It is still more difficult to keep them going. Moses did not have an easy time with those enslaved Hebrews. They do not seem to have been dead anxious to leave Egypt to begin with. But what a time he had keeping them going even after he got them started. They were always losing heart and losing patience and turning their eyes fondly back toward the land of bondage. They at last right upon the borderland of their hopes, they fainted. And not even the dashes of cold water and restoratives offered by the fine enthusiasm of Caleb and Joshua could bring them back to consciousness. They remained in a dead faint till they died. There come, my friends, to all of us times of spiritual earnestness, times of vision and awakening. All of us at times form high resolves. We determine the better men and women we are going to be and the nobler things
we are going to do. And we are perfectly honest, we are thoroughly in earnest, we are genuinely sincere, but the trouble is that we faint, we play out. We fall by the wayside. We quit and give it up. We find this tendency to fainting fits even among the very strongest.

Elijah was a strong man. He was so strong that we are ready to quarrel with James when he tells us that he was "a man of like passions as ourselves." The truth of the matter is, we did not believe the statement at all till we saw Elijah keel over one day in an utter faint. Nobody hanging over a radiator in a stuffy room could have done it better. Elijah under the juniper tree is in a fainting fit.

John the Baptist was a great man. Christ was the furthest possible from being a flatterer, but He complimented John the Baptist. He complimented him tremendously. He said, "A greater man had never been born of woman." But John was locked up in prison one time, and the days passed wearily. Idleness weighed upon him and almost broke his heart. And last in a fainting fit he sent this question to Christ: "Art thou he that came or do we look for another?" And John's feet had well nigh slipped. (Luther and Knox.)

What are some of the causes that lead to fainting? The first cause that I want to mention is the continuous toil of the uphill pull. Of course the man who is not trying to do anything is not tempted to faint. The soul that is merely drifting has no battle. His way is easy. But that man who has deliberately set himself to the task of being a Christian, that man is facing opposition every day. He is facing opposition every hour and every moment. For being a Christian is not drifting with the tide. Being a Christian is an upstream business. It is a task that demands strenuous, earnest and persistent effort.

Jesus Christ, you remember, never disguised this fact. He never urged any man to follow Him because the life of a disciple was an easy life. He would allow no man to follow Him with that idea in his mind. When a young enthusiast came to Him one day with this declaration upon his lips, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," Jesus chilled his enthusiasm. He said, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." He said this not because He did not want the young man to follow Him; He said it because He did not want him to follow Him with a misunderstanding of the strenuous conditions.

To be a Christian means struggle. It means wrestling not against flesh and blood simply, but against principalities and powers. It means that we are to strive, that we are to agonize, that we are to fight. It means that we are to resist unto blood striving against sin. It means not only self denial, but what is far more fundamental, the denial of self.

And how ready we are to give way in this persistent conflict with our own selves. We see the Christian life of great beauty. We yearn for such spiritual attainment for ourselves. We set about the attaining of it. We make progress for a while. But at last we become discouraged. We are overcome, we faint. And we heave a sigh and say that "these great blessings of the spiritual life are not for me after all." Yes, they are for you. They are for every one of us, but we faint even many times on the very threshold of our Canaan.

Then, there is the outward opposition. We come from Christian
homes and enter into a new environment. For a while we maintain our former standards. We are true to our ideals. But little by little we give over the struggle. Little by little we fall in with the ways of the crowd. We dress our lives by the other man's mirror. We cease to fight as we used to fight. We collapse and say, "Well, it's no use." And we falter and utterly fall.

The second reason for our fainting is chastisement. The writer to the Hebrews realized that danger and said, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." But often-times under the stress of a great sorrow, a sorrow that was intended to sweeten us and soften us and make us better, we faint.

I was reading a story of this kind in a piece of modern fiction the other day. A girl reared in the slums of New York had a great sorrow. In the stress of this sorrow she lost what little faith she had. She blamed God, and in her slum language said, "God, I'm off you forever." that is, "because God has mistreated me, I am going to have nothing more to do with Him." There are many sad losses that we suffer, but the saddest loss, I think, is a lost sorrow.

It may be that you are here this morning and there has come a great disappointment into your life. It may be that you have been betrayed by your friend. It may be that life's sweetest and holiest relationships have been dragged into the muck and the mud. It may be that there has been the setting of a great hope in your life like the setting of the sun. If such is the case do not let it rob you of God. To lose your fortune or to lose your health or to lose your dearest and best is bad enough, but to lose your faith and a loving and fatherly God is the supreme calamity. Do not faint because of the chastening of the Lord.

Then we are tempted to faint by our seeming failures. Sometimes it looks like we are accomplishing so little. We work and work and work and do not seem to get anywhere at all. That was one thing that was the matter with Elijah. He got down under the juniper tree and started in to keep books. He tried to figure out how much his life had been worth and that got him into trouble.

It usually does. It is always best for us to let the Lord do the bookkeeping. Elijah added a column of figures and got nothing. The Lord added the same column and got 7,000, which shows that you and I do not know how to keep books. We can not always tell what is success and what is failure. It is not our part of the job anyway. Our part is to do our best and let the results take care of themselves.

And do not forget that I am preaching to myself as well as to you. I love to see results. I very much fear that I would not be equal to the task of toiling day after day without visible results. For mark you, it takes far less courage and far less grit and grace to work when you see wonderful things happening than it does to work when you see nothing at all. What a marvelous grip of God Noah must have had to have enabled him to keep right on at his task for more than a century when he did not seem to be accomplishing a thing.

Are you discouraged this morning? Do you feel as if you had lost the fight in your own inner life? Do you feel that you are counting for almost naked nothing in the world? Do you feel at times that though you have tried and though you have prayed and though you have struggled, you
have got almost nowhere? It is a dangerous move. I remember a spent deer that came across the fields one day where I was ploughing. The hounds were close upon his heels. But in front of him was the river. I think he could have made it and found life, but he saw men in between him and the river. And he gave over the race and fell upon his side, and the pursuing hounds seized him by the throat. And I have seen people that reminded me in some measure of that panting deer. Hard pressed by the enemy, they lost courage and fainted within handclasp of life.

Then maybe you are ready to faint for lack of sympathy. David got that way one time. He was a brave man usually. On most days he was a man of great courage. But we find him one day saying, "I wish I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and be at rest." What is the matter? His boy has rebelled against him, and his friend who had been a close friend in the days of his prosperity, had turned from him and broken his heart. And David did not feel that he had a friend in the world, and so he wanted to quit. He wanted to run away. He fainted.

And I wonder if you are here this morning in a strange city, in a strange crowd, and you feel that nobody cares, and you feel that it doesn't matter to anyone whether you go or come, whether you stand or fall, whether you win or lose. And because you feel that way you are ready to faint. Many a soul has fainted for lack of sympathy. Many a man and many a woman has lost the battle when they would have won if somebody had only given them a cheering clasp of the hand or a word of encouragement. There are times when we need a little bit of encouraging and a little bit of mothering, everyone of us. We need it to keep us from utterly failing and fainting and falling.

But what am I to say to you this morning who have fainted or who are ready to faint? I believe I know a remedy that will keep you from fainting or that will restore you and lift you upon your feet and start you with fresh new zest in the fight of life, if you have already fainted. One of the most beautiful passages, I think, in all literature is the picture that Bunyan gives us of the end of the journey. "I see myself now", says the Pilgrim, "at the end of my journey. My hardships and struggles are over. I would love to hear my Lord spoken of. And wherever I have seen the print of His feet in the sand, there I have coveted to set mine also. His words did I use to gather as an antidote against my faintings." —Sand-Facet

There you have a remedy. It is the Word of God. It may sound trite, but it is not trite. I have no hope for your resisting the downward tug of the world unless you are a Bible-fed and a Bible-nourished Christian. "I commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up." If you are to be strong you must be made strong by the word. If you are to fight you must know how to wield the Sword of the Spirit. I looked with interest on the sword that George Washington once wore. But I look with keener interest on the sword with which my Master fought His battle in the wilderness. Here it is, the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

If you will resist fainting, in the second place, you must make much of the privilege of prayer. "And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint." Persistent prayer and fainting do not go hand in hand. The praying of which the Master is speaking here is unceasing prayer. He does not mean that we shall always be in our knees, but that we shall always be on speaking terms with our Lord. It is that praying that keeps the windows of the
soul open toward the Heavenly Jerusalem. It is the kind of praying of which the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "Even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint."

Yes, heart, Christ knew that our spiritual energies could only be kept from utter exhaustion by the inexhaustible God. You remember the fire that Christian saw in the House of the Interpreter. There was a fire that was kept burning brightly in spite of the fact that a man was busy dashing water upon it all the time. Christian wondered at the secret till he saw that the fire was being fed all the while from a hidden supply of oil.

And so our lives must be fed. "He that believeth on me from within his inner life shall flow rivers of living water." But this is possible only for those who keep in continuous contact with the living Christ. I have been out hunting when the spring rains were on and have found the loveliest springs imaginable. Later on when the days were hot and listless I have toiled my way in thirst to those one-time gushing springs and have found them dry. They were dry because they were fed from temporary sources. They had no living and abiding fountains behind them. And you and I will become mere parched fountains unless our lives are fed by Him who is the Water of Life.

We are to keep ourselves from fainting, in the second place, by consideration of the certainty of victory. "In due season", says the Apostle, "we shall reap if we faint not." He does not state this as a possibility or a probability. He states it as an absolute certainty. He says, "Keep on toiling. Be unwearyed in your efforts to do good, for God is not going to let your work fall to the ground. He is not going to allow you to be finally defeated."

We have emphasized this truth on its sterner side again and again. How many sermons have we heard preached on the verse just preceding this, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And we have heard it emphasized, and rightly, that every wild oat that a man sows must be harvested one day. This is true not because it is in the Bible, but because it is true, it is in the Bible.

But while we remember that he who sows tares reaps tares, let us not forget also that the man who sows wheat will reap wheat. It is all right to press home the stern doctrine that a man's sin will find him out, but let us not fail to encourage ourselves at the same time that God allows no good deed to be wasted. "No man", said Jesus, "who gives a cup of cold water in my name shall lose his reward." "You shall reap if you faint not."

Therefore do not be weary in well doing. I hope you will soon get tired of living for your own selfish ends. I hope you will soon exhaust yourself in poisoning the fountains of human happiness. But do not get tired of planting flowers. Do not get tired of helping men to hope. Do not get tired of giving and enriching and blessing. Do not get tired of spending yourself even in the most hidden place for the service of God and men. "For you shall in no wise lose your reward." Results will follow here and hereafter.
Mark me, the results may not come as abundantly as you hope or in the manner you hope, but come they will. Judson, after seven years of toil in far off Burma, did not have a single conversion. A letter came to him written almost in scorn and it said, "How about the prospect of converting the Burmese now?" Back over the sea out of those years of patient toil came the answer: "Prospects are as bright as the promises of God." Judson refused to faint and he reaped an abundant harvest of human souls.

So mother, go on planting the seeds of faith in the life of your boy. Go on sowing down the heart of your girl with your own confidence in God. It may seem to be counting for little. And the time may come when even sin will lay its defiling hands upon your child, but the seeds that you have sown will not be in vain. And in the Far Country memory will bring back the lessons of long ago, and unanswered prayers will be answered, and you will reap in your child as you have sown.

So do not, I beg you, give over the fight. However discouraging your outlook, remember the victory is sure. One day one of the prizes of Heaven will be the magnificence of your harvest. Jesus will say one day, "I was hungry and you fed me. I was sick and you visited me." And you will look perplexed and say, "Lord, I do not remember. I do remember going to a poor man who had no friends. I do remember ministering to one who was sick and without heart and without hope." And the Master will say, "That was I, for inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these ye did it unto me." Therefore "let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

CGC:BR

1. Abraham - I know long that he once Commands, his children and his household after him;
He that will forth and prefer
Shons will grow if you plant them. It is just as true of roses, so I like plant roses.
This is sure. I have many offers for sure in vestment fells., En 41/4.
"And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Notice the condition that the apostle here lays down. It is not if God does not fail us. It is not if the weather is suitable. It does not read: "We shall reap if it is not too hot or too cold." There is only one condition. "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Our reaping is conditioned by our own conduct. God will not fail. Therefore, if we refuse to faint; if we refuse to let our knees go weak; if we refuse to become limp and utterly fall, then our reaping is assured.

Paul here brings us face to face with one of the most persistent dangers of the Christian life. He is not the only one who warns against fainting. Isaiah has a word about it. "Even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall." The writer to the Hebrews urges that we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus lest we become weary and faint in our minds. Jesus Himself spoke a parable to this end — that men ought always to pray and not to faint.

It is useless to define fainting. We have had too much experience for it to be necessary. We have seen others faint. Peradventure we have fainted ourselves. And I have seen as many as four faint in one corner of my church in one service.

What is it to faint? Here is an individual standing listening attentively and possibly prayerfully and helpfully to the sermon. Suddenly his knees go weak, he slumps down in utter and helpless unconsciousness. No use to pass him the collection plate, he will not see it. No use to announce the hymn, he will not sing. No use to call the prayer, he will not pray. No use to tell him of the danger that threatens his best friend, he will not be concerned. No use to inform him that his son came home staggering last night, or that his daughter was out joy riding until the small hours of the morning. He will not heed you in the least. He has fainted. Not only does he cease to be an asset, he becomes a liability. He cannot help any more. He must be helped. He does not lift, he pulls down. He does not serve as wings, he is a weight. He does not boost, he hinders. At least four men are needed to carry him out and fan him and dash water in his face and take care of him. If a few score folks should have suddenly fainted, it would, therefore, take a whole congregation to minister to them alone.

And you know what it is to faint spiritually. You make fine resolutions. You get a clear vision of a lofty goal. You set yourself to the high task of new spiritual attainment and new usefulness. Then the revival closes. The hot weather comes on. You go limp. You are no longer at prayer meeting. It is too hot. You are no longer at the Sunday School
or at the preaching service for the same reason. You faint. You give over
the fight, and from your earnest purpose to carry others, you have to be
warried by others. You cease to count. You are faint.

We are faced by the danger of fainting whatever direction we take.
You decided once that you would be a musician. You practiced for a few weeks
and then fainted. You decided that you would learn to love poetry. You
read it for a few days and then fainted. You decided that you would be a
more earnest student of the Bible. You read it every day for a week and
then fainted. You made up your mind that you would count in the Church in
a new and helpful way. You gave yourself unreservedly to the task for a
few weeks and then fainted.

Three years ago the Government sent me down to Panama to speak to
the operatives. As I passed here and there in the Canal Zone I would some-
times see huge heaps of machinery. Asking what it was, I was told that it
was machinery left there by the French. France, you remember, undertook
to join the two seas. She spent millions of money and not a few men, but
she never retained her purpose. She fainted. And we can faint in every
department of life. But no where is this tendency more persistent than in
matters of religion. It was dreadfully hard for Moses to get the Israelites
started toward Canaan. It was dreadfully hard for Moses to get the Israelites
started toward Canaan. They did not seem eager to leave Egypt at all. But
when he did get them started, his battle was not over by any means. They
were always whining, always growling, always looking back. They were on the
point of fainting every day. But at last got on the border land of Canaan
they went utterly limp. And not even the restoratives that were ministered,
by the courageous enthusiasm of Caleb and Joshua could bring them to their
senses. Therefore, they never got into the Land of Promise at all. They
fainted.

II.

What are some of the causes that lead to fainting?

One cause is a bad atmosphere. When atmosphere becomes impure
and stuffy folks are more likely to faint. Many people faint because they
put themselves in a wrong atmosphere. They run with a crowd that is un-
spiritual and worldly. That select as their friends those whose influence
is unwholesome. By and by they are overcome by this atmosphere of the world
and faint by the way. Head, Companion $ Joint

2. The sight of blood will make some folks faint. One drop of sa-
crificial blood has sented to make many so called saints to go limp. In
other words, we faint because we are unwilling to sacrifice. We faint be-
cause we do not consent to do the hard thing, the difficult thing. It is
easier, for instance, to stay home Sunday night than it is to go to church
and thus help make the service a success. It is more pleasant to take an
auto drive and let your pastor sweat before empty pews. It would really be
easier for me. But you expect me to come along even if it is hot. Therefore
I have a right to expect the same of you. And, mark me, no amount of money
in this world could hire me to persistently preach to empty pews. I would
Now, to be the right kind of a Christian requires a fight. Jesus never said it was easy. Over and over again he said the opposite. He said: "Strive to enter in". He said: "If any man will come after me, let him say no to himself and take up his cross." When a young enthusiast came volunteering his services, Jesus saw that he did not understand. He therefore made him understand. He said: The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." And the young man went away after this. He fainted at the sight of blood.

3. We often faint spiritually because of the sense of failure. We set ourselves to a new spiritual attainment personally, but we fall and rise and fall again. At last we say to ourselves, "This great experience is not for me. Other men may attain, but I cannot", and we lie prone upon our faces trying to make ourselves content to be pigmies when we know we might be giants, trying to enjoy being weaklings when we are tormented by the fact that we might be possessed of spiritual strength.

Or we set ourselves to the doing of some specific Christian work. We teach a Sunday School class, but the class does not grow as we feel that it should. We set ourselves to win somebody for Christ, but he does not respond to our first appeal. We therefore give over. Our knees grow weak. Our hands limp. We faint. Not that it was necessary that we do so. But a failure to win an immediate victory overwhelms us, and we give over the struggle. Of course sometimes we faint on account of the lack of appreciation. We work and work and nobody applauds. We try and try and nobody congratulates us. We toil and toil and nobody sends us any flowers, until at last we come to the place where we feel that it does not matter to anyone whether we sink or swim, whether we succeed or fail, whether we conquer or go down in defeat. At last we give over the fight and fall in a dead faint.

Now, it is hard to keep up the fight when nobody appreciates. I do not think anybody gets too much of appreciation. Some folks get too little. Some folks have so few really encouraging things said to them. Mark you, I am not talking about myself. I have far more than I deserve. If folks will not say kind things about me, I will say them myself and ask them if it is not so. Then some will have to reply in the affirmative. It is difficult to go on when nobody seems to appreciate it. But remember this appreciation is absolutely necessary. Applause is not a necessity. It is necessary to be true. You can afford not to be complimentarily. You cannot afford to be disloyal.

III.

How are we to keep from fainting? Or supposing that we have already fainted, what restoratives can we use to bring ourselves back to usefulness and vigor once more?

Surely we do not desire to spend our lives in a dead faint. Surely we do not wish to be among those who never lift but who always lean. Surely we would hate more than all else that our friends should have to
Painting Fits - 4.

say about us that we came and grew and went and never knew the majesty and the method of carrying a heavy load. Surely we want to be useful, everyone of us. Therefore, we want to avoid fainting.

How is it to be done?

1. If you are going to keep from fainting, you will need to read much of the Word of God. One of the finest bits of English Literature is Bunyan's description of the homegoing of Mr. Steadfast:

"I see myself now at the end of my journey. My toilsome warfare is over. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of. Wherever I have seen the print of His foot in the sand, there have I coveted to set mine also. His Word was to me an antedote against my fainting;" did I used to gather as an

This Pilgrim you see has reached his journey's end. He is going home a victor. Many a time he has been tempted to faint, but when thus tempted he resorted to his antedote, the Word of God.

2. The writer to the Hebrews urges us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus lest we become weary and faint in our minds. And Jesus was speaking to the same purpose when he spoke a parable to this end: "That man ought always to pray and not to faint." He knew that persistent prayer and fainting never go hand in hand. Prayer opens the windows of the soul and lets out the stuffy atmosphere of the world and fills it with the sweet breath of heaven. Prayer links us up with the Divine energies. Prayer connects our dought parched hearts with the River of Living Water. Isaiah had learned the secret when he said that "Even the youth should faint and be weary and the young men should utterly fall, but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

3. The last antedote I will mention is this. The sure hope of reaping. "In due season we shall reap if we faint not." If the farmer sows his wheat or plants his corn, he may reap, but there are many chances against him. The cut worm or the drought may get his corn, or death may get him. He may never get his hands on one single grain of his own planting. But the man who sows to the Spirit is sure to reap.

We emphasize this fact again and again in its darker aspect. How many sermons have you heard from this text: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." And we have emphasized, and rightly so, that the man who sows tares will reap them; that the man who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption. That the man who scatters his wild oats will harvest them with his own bleeding hands and thru the bleeding hands of those who love him.

But there is another side to this stern fact. We need to remind ourselves again and again that if we sow of the flesh that we will surely of the flesh reap corruption. That if we plant seeds of evil, that those seeds will spring up and grow into vigorous life. But just as true is it that if we sow seeds of good these will also spring and grow. When my father used to vote the Prohibition ticket, some would say, "Yes, you lost your vote." And so far as winning the election was concerned, it was lost. But no blow
struck in the defense of the right is ever lost. No loyal words spoken for God and righteousness ever misses its reward. No life lived in loyalty to the highest ever failed of its harvest.

Therefore, go on sowing the seeds of righteousness. Sow them in your home. Sow them in the hearts of children. Sow them in your Sunday School class. Do this and your harvest is sure. Even "The man who gives a cup of cold water in His name shall in no wise lose his reward." And God sets Himself to see to it that the one who sows to the Spirit reaps a harvest of life everlasting.

"Let us therefore not be weary in well doing." If we are not doing well, of course we are tired. We ought to get tired. I hope you will get so utterly weary that in sheer disgust you will turn away from your sowing. But, if you are engaged in well doing, do not give it up. Do not quit. There is a blessed harvest ahead of you. You will reap one day. I know that nettles will grow if you plant them, Likewise thorns. But remember that violets and roses can also be grown in this wonderful soil of ours. So let us give ourselves to the highest task of sowing for God, strengthen ourselves against fainting by feeding on His Word, by continuing in prayer, by the firm conviction that in due season we shall reap if we faint not.
FAINTING FITS

"I had fainted, unless I had believed." (Psalm 27:13)

Here is a man who realizes that he has had a very close call. He has just succeeded in traversing a rugged road that threatened to work his ruin. More than once had his knees gone weak. More than once had the whole world seemed to grow black about him. Again and again had he been on the point of toppling over in a dead faint. But when he was reeling in his tracks and ready to fall there was one firm staff that did not break in the grip of his clutching fingers. There was one solid wall against which he leaned that he found amply able to bear all the weight that he could put upon it. That wall was his faith. So he won through but as he looks back over it all he declares with humility, "I had fainted, unless I had believed."

Now fainting is one of the most common and deadly foes that you and I have to face. We know from our own experiences what it is and something of the havoc that it works. Some time ago I was preaching in a church that was greatly overcrowded. Suddenly a gentleman who was standing in the rear of the building toppled over with a dull thud. He was not dead. He had just fainted. But he was as completely cut out of the service as if he had died. The moment before he was to all appearances an eager and interested worshipper. But as soon as he had fainted all this was over. There was no use to give him a hymn book. He would not sing. There was no use to
was he out himself, but four other men who had also been making their contribution to the service had to leave in order to minister to him. Thus by his fainting he not only ceased to be an asset, he became a liability. He succeeded in taking five men out of

But for everyone who faints physically there are scores who faint spiritually. How many such do we have all about us? Once they could be counted upon to be in their places at every service of their church. Once they helped to strengthen the whole community was helped in some measure through their efforts. But all this is passed. The fires of their enthusiasm have gone out. Their interest has become utter listlessness. They are no longer a help but a positive hindrance. They no longer give life. They rather lie like huge stones across the door of the sepulchre where God is seeking to raise some needy Lazarus from the dead. And this is the case not because they have broken with their faith altogether. It is the case not because they are vicious or flagrantly corrupt. It is rather the case—because they have fainted.

II

What are some of the causes of our fainting?

1. Some faint because of a bad atmosphere. They get into the wrong crowd. I doubt if we have ever rightly estimated the power for good or for evil of a right or of a wrong atmosphere. How almost inevitably we take on the spiritual temperature of those about us. If you put yourself persistently in a wrong crowd you are likely to faint.

2. Then some faint at the sight of blood. Even so, some faint spiritually at the sight of sacrificial blood. One day a young enthusiast came to Jesus saying: "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." But when Jesus
indicated that the venture would be costly, that it might even involve bloodletting, the young man fell in a dead faint.

3. Then sometimes we faint from weakness or we faint from discouragement. The climb seems so long and hard that we lose heart and quit. There are many today who have given over the fight because they have decided that for themselves at least the great dream that Christ dreamed for them has not and will not come true.

III

Now all these temptations came to this sturdy psalmist of the long ago. But somehow he managed to stand firm. How did he win? I would have failed, he tells us frankly unless I had believed. He refused to give over his faith. In the face of difficulties he held by his convictions. Thus he came through all his tempestuous trials with honor. What then did he believe? Upon what strong convictions did he take his stand to find them as the very rock of ages under his feet.

1. He believed in the church. It is evident that this psalmist had found strength through the worship of the sanctuary. He had remained faithful and zealous in his attendance upon the services of the church. He may have attended for various reasons but this was supreme that he might behold the beauty of the Lord. In these services past all that was outward and visible until he came face to face with God. In the strength born of that he was able to run and not be weary and to walk and not faint.

2. A second antidote against fainting that he no doubt found was the word of God. This Bible of ours has been a source of strength to countless thousands. In one of the most beautiful passages in literature John Bunyan gives the testimony of Mr. Steadfast in these words: "I find myself at the end of my journey. Many toilsome days are ended. I go to
see the head that was crowned with thorns for me and the brow that was
spit upon for me. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of and wherever
I have seen the print of his foot in the sand there have I coveted to set
mine also. His word did I use together as an antidote against my fainting."
There you have it. He steadied himself as we may do by the word of God.

3. He was made strong through his faith in— and his practice of prayer.
He had learned to wait on God. "Wait on the Lord," he urges with quiet
confidence. "Wait on the Lord and be of good courage and he shall strengthen
thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord." It is a fact that those who pray
possess a strength to which those who are prayerless must remain strangers.
Jesus you remember spoke a parable to this end that men ought always to
pray and not to faint. He was sure that praying and fainting could not
home in the same heart at the same time. So this psalmist had

So—also may we find if we give ourselves to prayer.

4. Finally he was kept from fainting by his faith in the final triumph
of righteousness. There is nothing more bracing than the certainty
that though all appearances may be to the contrary we are sure to win.

---Did not our Lord strengthen himself with such a faith. Who for the joy
that was set before him, the joy of victory, the joy of drawing all men
unto himself, enduring the cross, despising the shame." It is with this
same faith that Paul is seeking to strengthen us when he says, "Therefore,
let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we
faint not." No seed of goodness ever comes to nought. Thorns will grow
if we sow them, I know. But so will wheat. Thorns will grow if we plant
them but so will roses and violets and forget-me-nots. "I had fainted,
unless I had believed." If no life invested on the side of right can
ever fail, but because I believe in the final victory of righteousness I
will fight to the end. If we are to stand firm we must have faith.

"Therefore let us not be weary in well doing, for
OUR BURDENS

Galatians 6:3

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

I

When we talk about burdens we are speaking a language that is easily understood. "Every man," says Paul, "should bear his own burden." And that is profoundly true. You who are listening to me represent a cross section of humanity who are at every possible stage on your spiritual pilgrimage. Some of you are just setting out for the Celestial City with the cry, "Life, life, eternal life" upon your lips. Some of you have gone as far as the Slough of Despond into which you have come and are now writhing in agony and wondering sadly if you did not make a mistake in setting out on so high and arduous a quest. Some are climbing the hill Difficulty and doubting in your hearts your ability to attain the summit. Others are making your way through the Valley of Humiliation. Some perchance have reached the Palace Beautiful whose open door is welcome and whose atmosphere is peace. Some are nearing the end of the journey where the "thought of what you are going to and the welcome that awaits you and doth lie like a glowing coal at your soul."

But wherever you are on the journey, this is true: You each have your own burden.

1. Every man bears his own burden of sorrow. Soon or late to all of us heartache comes. To some of us it has already come. To others it will surely come tomorrow. No life is altogether exempt. The wound from which you bleed may be evident to all who
know you. Or you may wear your sackcloth within, hide it away with the purple garment of / cheerful countenance. Yours may be a secret wound but it is your very own, not fully understood by anyone else in all the world. The full reason why I laugh or weep and never be completely known to anybody. We have our individual burdens of sorrow.

2. We have our individual burdens of sin. "My sin," cried the psalmist, in a voice tense with agony and choked with tears, "My sin is ever before me." That is one something that is peculiarly your own. This is true whether you sin alone or sin with the multitude. It was Macbeth who murdered Duncan. Lady Macbeth did not touch him. She could not because in his sleep he reminded her so much of her father. Yet she urged her husband to the deed. They shared the guilt of his murder. But that does not mean that each was fifty per cent a murderer. Macbeth was one hundred per cent guilty and so was his wife and so would they have been if they had shared the tragic crime with countless millions. My guilt is my very own.

3. We have our individual burdens of obligation. I am a debtor and so are you. There is something that I owe and something that you owe. There are obligations resting upon me that I can no more escape than I can escape my own shadow. This does not mean, of course, that I have to discharge those obligations. It is in my power to refuse. But my refusal does not cancel the obligation. If I owe you a sum of money I may refuse to pay it, but my refusal does not cancel the debt.

We recognize the tragic fact that there are those who have a veritable shack of standing from under their obligations. This is true in many homes. There are homes that might be happy but the wife looks upon her husband as a checking account and a meal ticket. The husband considers his obligations fully met in supplying the
material needs of his family. He declares glibly that he is the paying member and his wife the praying member and thus shifts all the moral and spiritual responsibilities of his home upon the shoulders of his wife. There are children that grow up seemingly with passionate determination to acknowledge no obligation to those to whom they are indebted for life itself.

There are always those who shirk their obligations to the church. Sometimes they do so by standing aloof and washing their hands of the whole matter, offering as a substitute for their obligation to contribute to the spiritual uplift of their community cheap excuses and paltry and blind criticism. Sadder still, there are such in the church though they realize that our church can never be what God meant it to be without their help. They offer as a substitute for the coin of loyalty the paltry counterfeit of fault-finding. But the fact that you or any man refuses to do his part toward making this a Christlike church and a Christlike world does not relieve you of your obligation. Every man shall bear his own burden of responsibility.

II

But while it is true that every man shall bear his own burden Paul is not contradicting that truth when he urges us to bear one another's burdens. "Bear ye one another's burdens." What command could be more sane, more reasonable, more Christian? To what command throughout the Bible should we offer a gladder obedience?

1. We do not bear one another's burdens because such a high service is possible for us. It is fearful to think what capacity we have for hurting each other. What wounds I can inflict upon you and what wounds you can inflict upon me. But the other side of that ugly possibility is this: That we have perfectly amazing capacities for helping each other. I can lighten your load and you can lighten
mine, we can bear one another's burdens. What an unpayable debt I owe to those who have rendered this high service for me. I fear that my courage would have failed long ago, that I would have taken to my heals and given over the fight but for the fact that here and there along the way certain selfless souls have got under my load. I am thinking of one now. Many a time I have had him to slip into the pulpit just before I preached and put his arm around me and whisper in my ear, "God bless you. I am holding you up. I am remembering you on the throne of grace."

You have had such service rendered to you. Maybe it was when you had lost a loved one. Maybe it was when you kneeled at the first little white coffin that ever went out of your home. Maybe it was when you were staggering under a burden of shame. Then some friend came to you, put his arm through yours, told you he still trusted you and gave you back your self-respect. Did you read of that man in a certain American city who was hurrying down to the water's edge to end it all but was saved to life and to usefulness by the smile and hand clasp of a friend? Yes, God has given us this amazing capacity to bear one another's burdens, and because we can, surely we ought.

2. Then we ought to bear one another's burdens because it is the only way of really bearing our own. Our lives interlock. No man liveth to himself. No question today is more biased that the question asked by Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" To ask that question is to ask one that is dense with stupidity, black with hate and streaked with murder. My burden is your business, your burden is my business. The man that fell among thieves was the business of the priest and the Levite as well as of the good Samaritan. I cannot bear my own burden except as I bear yours.
This is true not only in a legal sense but in one that is far higher. For strange as it may seem, it is in the bearing of your burden that I lighten mine. As I seek to dry your tears the painful rain ceases to fall upon my own face. As I seek to check the bleeding of your wound I find healing for my own. The poet Schiller spoke a real truth when he said, once the birds had no wings but God threw wings on the ground and ordered them to carry them and as in obedience they took up those annoying weights and held them to their hearts they found them changed into wings.

This has happened in countless millions of lives. Stanley Jones tells of a charming woman that he knew in India named Ramabai. This woman was left a widow with a little girl in her young womanhood. Now few things are so tragic as being a widow in India, for the fact that you are a widow is proof positive in their minds that you were guilty of the sin of adultery in a previous existence. Therefore the curse of the gods is upon you. You are a creature of the shadows. You are expected to be a very slave of slaves, to eat only one meal a day, to be despised of all your fellows. Such was the lot of Ramabai. But instead of fixing her mind on her own tragic burden she thought of those whose plight was as desperate as her own. She opened her home for other widows and orphans. Soon there were fifty in her home, then a hundred, then two hundred, then a thousand. When Stanley Jones visited her she had two thousand and in addition to these there were a hundred and fifty epileptics, creatures for whom nobody else would care. Unto the burden of one widowhood she added that of two thousand. Instead of the load crushing her it made her forget her own till her life was radiant with a light that was never seen on land or sea.
3. Then we ought to bear one another's burdens because we can be Christians in no other way. This is the law of Christ. That is, it is of the very heart and essence of Christianity. It is the very summary of all Jesus taught.

(1) This is what he taught by spoken word. This is what he meant by that new commandment that he gave to us. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." For this is the law of love, that it does not seek to shirk but seeks to share. If you really love anybody you count yourself wronged and robbed if you are not privileged to share not only their joys but also their sorrows. I heard a grizzled old soldier tell of a raw recruit who was the joke of his regiment, who he himself befriended. One cold night that officer went to sleep shivering under his thin blanket. The next morning he was warm for there were two blankets upon him. But that raw recruit paid the penalty of giving up his blanket with his life. But he died with a smile on his face because loving, he was glad to share.

(2) This is also what Jesus taught with his life. This is the very heart and center of the message of the cross. "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sorrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes are we healed." When my load was too heavy for me to bear He got under it with me. When your load was too heavy to bear He got under it with you. He trod the wine press alone. And we can sing today, "Jesus Jesus paid it all."

But we must not misunderstand the purpose of this cross for you and me. To think of the death of Jesus as exempting us from ever sharing in the cross is tragically false. By the cross He sets us free from the bondage of sin itself in order that we may bear the
burdens of others. The apostle rightly understood the meaning of Calvary when he said, "He laid down his life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." This is the only way we can save the world. This is the only way we can really save ourselves.

"Oh cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

Have you found this endless life? It is yours just in proportion to the fullness with which you die to self. Some years ago at the commencement at my old school, Duke University, the seniors were receiving their diplomas. At the call of each name there was applause. When one name was called the applause was thunderous. Instead of one man walking across the platform to receive the diploma there were two. The strangers in the audience sought an explanation. This was the answer: That man receiving his diploma now is stone blind. He lost his eyesight soon after coming to college and was going home in despair. But he had a friend and that friend shared his eyes with him, read to him, saw him through to graduation. There was a light in the face of the blind man, but there was a far greater light in the face of him who had got under his burden and darkness with him and been light to him as he walked in the shadows. This is the path of light for you and me. Therefore, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."
"OUR BURDENS"
Galatians 6: 2&5
Psalms 55:22

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "For every man shall bear his own burden." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

My subject is "Our Burdens." It is a subject of personal interest to every one of you. We all have our burdens. As we meet here we are at varied stations on the road of life. Some are yet in the City of Destruction. Some are just beginning the Journey of the Spirit. Some are on the Sea of Life with the cry of,"Life Life,"on your lips. Some are in the Slough of Despond... Some are climbing the Hill of Difficulty... Some are going into the Valley of Humiliation. Some perchance are resting at the Palace Beautiful in the room called Peace, whose windows look out toward the morning tide and sunrise. But wherever we are we all have our burdens.

Now the Bible has three definite and clear statements about this great matter of burden bearing. The three texts that I bring to you are rich in information and inspiration. They tell us, I think, all we need to know about this matter which sooner or later becomes the intense concern of every human soul.

PART I.

The first fact we notice is that burdens must be borne individually. In Galatians 6:5 Paul says, "Every man must bear his own burden." There are burdens that are particularly our own. We cannot transfer them. We cannot fling them on other shoulders. We cannot
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escape them. They are our very own and by us they must be borne.

1. Every man must bear his own burden of guilt. There are not many things in this world that we may call our own. That farm you possess is not yours. That house in which you live is not yours. Your very self is not yours. "You are not your own, you are bought with a price."

But there is one something that is exclusively your own. That is your sin. "My sin," said the Psalmist, "is ever before me." The guilt of it was upon his own heart and head personally and there was no escape.

This is true of the sins that we commit when we are alone. It is true of the sins we commit when no human influence is brought to bear upon us. When Cain killed his brother he alone was guilty. There was no accomplice, there was no accessory. The guilt was unshared and unsharable. But this is also true of the sins that we commit in fellowship with others. Lady Macbeth plotted with her husband the murder of Duncan. It was the hand of the husband that did the deed, but the wife was equally guilty with the husband. But they could not divide the guilt so as to make each one fifty per cent of a murderer. Both were one hundred per cent guilty. The unsoiled hand of Lady Macbeth was as red with blood as the man who did the actual stabbing.

There was a multitude that had to do with the crucifixion of Jesus. Judas betrayed Him. Caiaphas bought his treachery. The court of the Sanhedrin sided with the High Priest. The mob yelled for His crucifixion, but each one bore his individual guilt. Judas was scourged by his remorse into eternity just as if no hostile hand had ever been laid upon Jesus other than his own. Sin is an individual matter. You may lend your aid to that of millions for the doing of a wrong deed, but
"Our Burdens"

the guilt of it is your very own.

2. Every man must bear his own burden of obligation. I do not mean by this that every man must meet his obligation. When the Lord called his prophet Jonah to go to Nineveh, he did not force him to go. The prophet rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord. But in dodging the discharge of his obligation he did not dodge the obligation itself. There are obligations that rest upon you and that rest upon me. They are my very own. They are your very own whether we ever discharge them or not.

This is true however great and strong we are. There are some who lift themselves so far above the common herd that they feel they have in a measure escaped their obligation. The worse violators of the law today are the people who owe most to what the protection of the law has done for them. Nor is there any escape because you are insignificant. The man of one talent had obligations that were just as real and just as binding as the man of five.

3. Your handicaps are your very own. You have been maimed in the fight of life. May be you were born with a handicap. If so no one can altogether take that burden from your shoulders. May be you are a constant sufferer. There are those who love you well enough to be glad, at least for a time, to bear that knowing agony in your place but they cannot. That thing, that wasting disease, that maimed and crippled body, it is yours.

4. Your sorrow and your heartache, the wounds of the soul, these also are your very own. "Every heart knoweth its own bitterness." Some of you are worried and anxious. Some of you are dreadfully dis-
"Our Burdens"

couraged. Some of you are lonely. Some of you have just broken sweet human relationships that must remain broken till you reach life's furthest side. That burden of sorrow is yours. Nobody can altogether carry it for you. "Everybody must bear his own burdens."

PART II.

The second fact that the Word of God teaches us about our burdens is that while they are our very own, they may be shared. There is no contradiction here. Just as no one can eat for me or do my sleeping, so no one can do my repenting or my praying or my loving, no one can do my suffering and no one can do my serving. Yet there are those who can share my burdens and there are those whose burdens I can share. We are to bear one another's burdens. We must do this for the following reasons.

1. It is one of the best possible ways to lighten your own burden. What makes your burden so heavy, so galling. One great reason is this, you keep your mind so constantly fixed upon it. You are always looking at it. You are always thinking about it. You are living an ingrowing life. Self is setting upon your shoulders like an old man of the sea. You are making your burden more weighty and more wearisome every day that you live.

How are you going to help this? Find somebody whose burden is quite as heavy as your own and get under the load with him. As you seek to bind up his wounds your own will become less painful. As you seek to dry his tears you will find that your own cheeks have become dry. As you seek to carry his load you will find that it has added
"Our Burdens"

wings instead of weight. How many a broken heart has been healed of its hurt thru loving ministry to other broken hearts.

A magazine writer told some years ago of a negro regiment that was kept hard pressed during the Spanish American war. When they were released from duty they were almost dead with weariness. They trudged along silent and in utter confusion. There was only one man in all the company who was singing. He was letting out his voice as if behind it there was an uncontrollable joy. The officer was eager to see who it was that of all the company was still able to sing. When he found him he was carrying his own gun and that of his comrade. In addition he had a little stray dog tucked under his arm. He was the worst burdened man in the crowd and the only man that was singing.

It was Mrs. Josephine Butler who came home one night to find her only child, a bright eyed little girl leaning over the banisters waiting for her. In her eagerness to reach her mother she fell. The fall proved fatal. The mother was half mad with grief. But she found her chiefest comfort in giving her life to countless other children who would have had but little chance, but for her kindly ministry.

Have you a heartache that is almost too painful to bear? Have you a burden of care and of anxiety that is crushing you? Instead of complaining about it, sobbing over it, withdrawing yourself from the world, go out to help somebody else. Even on the Cross Jesus had time to make provision for his mother. He had time to pray for his enemies. He had time to hear the prayer of the repentant thief. And I have an idea that in this bearing of the burden of others his own was infinitely lightened.
2. It is in bearing the burden of others we are fulfilling the law of Christ. There was a law given on Mount Sinai, but Jesus gave another law. That included all the Ten Commandments and far more. This is His law. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." The law of love demands that we bear one another's burdens. If we love we simply cannot help suffering with the one whom we love. We cannot help sympathizing with them.

Not only does love involve sympathy, it demands service. If your child is sick there is absolutely nothing that you will not do to save that child. Princess Alice was warned that she must not kiss her little child that was dying of diptheria. But the little fellow waked from a feverish dream and cried, "kiss me mother," and without a moment's hesitation she gave the desired kiss though she had to pay for it with her life.

It is this love that sends us not only to share another's burden but to share another's shame and another's guilt. How constantly Paul was doing that. "Who is offended and I do not burn." It is this sharing that does more to win them than any other thing in all the world. "If one be overtaken in a fault restore him." says the apostle, "in the spirit of gentlemess." A gentlemess born of love. We can restore him in no other way.

I have a friend who after his conversion fell into shameful sin. I made up my mind to see him and try to win him back, but to his burden of guild was also added the burden of shame. Therefore, he dodged me. He hid himself from me. But at last I found him. Seemingly he wanted to be let alone. Seemingly he was saying, "I do not need any help, I can carry my own burden," but he did want help. And because that
"Our Burdens"

Help was given when it was most desperately needed. He is a successful minister of the gospel today. "Bear ye one another's burdens." It is thus and only thus that we fulfill the law of Christ which is the law of love.

PART III.

The third word that our Lord has to say to us about our burdens is that we are to cast them upon Himself. In Psalms 55:22 we read, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." This is one of the most winsome invitations to be found in all the Bible. My burden that is individual, my burden that can be shared in some measure by my brother, can be cast fully upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever is vexing you, whatever is blotting the sun out of your sky, whatever is withering the flowers of your soul, whatever is making you deaf to the music of the world, bring that and fling it down at the feet of your Lord. If you do this He will certainly do one of two things for you.

1. If you are bearing a needless burden He will take it away. There are some burdens that Jesus Christ is always eager to remove. If your burden is a burden of sin He wants to remove that. He is our sin bearer. "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." When Bunyan's Pilgrim came within sight of the Cross his burden dropped from his shoulder and he stood in the glad consciousness of freedom. He was able to say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," for the law of the spirit hath made me free."
"Our Burdens"

If yours is a burden of care and anxiety He will remove that. It is not the will of God that anybody should worry. That is made very plain in His word. "In nothing be anxious." "Consider the lilies how they grow -- if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more cloth you, oh ye of little faith. Cast all your care upon Him for He careth for you."

2. But there are some burdens that are laid upon our shoulders according to the will of God. There are some burdens that He means for us to carry. Therefore, when we cast our burdens upon Him, He does not remove them directly by taking them away, but He does something far better. He gives us strength for the bearing of them. Therefore, the greater the need the greater the supply that He gives. The greater the sorrow the greater the comfort. The greater the weakness the greater the strength. For instance, when the Hebrew children stood so courageously by their convictions, God did not save them from being cast into the furnace, but He entered into the furnace with them. That was better still. When Paul writhed in anguish because of the pressing thorn, God did not see fit to remove it, He did say, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "My strength is made perfect in weakness." And so rich and abundant was the grace that Paul came to rejoice in his very suffering because it had brought him into a richer and fuller and deeper experience of God and God's love than he could have ever known before.

What a friend we have in Jesus! What a privilege to go to Him with all our burdens! What a privilege to know that we can tell
"Our Burdens"

Him what we can breath into no human ear. Our secret sorrow, the dreams that never came true, the hopes that we never realized, the joy that was shaddowed and came to nothing but dust and ashes you can't tell the world about it, but we can tell Him. The secret sin, the dreadful moral failure, the ugly wounds that the world does not see, we can bring them all to Him, knowing that He will heal where healing is best for us, know also that if He does not heal he will do something even better still. He will give us grace to bear.

One lovely September morning more than a quarter of century ago I stood by the bedside of my father. I saw him wade out into that stream that the old pilgrim said was to the palace bitter, but whose bitterness was broken because the thought of what he was going to lay like a glowing coal at his heart. How those that loved him prayed for his recovery! I thought especially of mother. Life was behind her. I was yet in the springtime. She was the one who would suffer most. Yet in that hour His grace was sufficient and one of the most radiant faces into which I have ever looked was that of my mother in that hour of the supremest sorrow that ever came into her life. And if she could give her testimonial today from that land where all dreams come true she would say, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee."

"He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

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"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

--- Galatians 6:2

I

When we talk about burdens we get on familiar ground. "Every man," says Paul, a little later in this chapter, "shall bear his own burden." And that is true.

1. We have our individual responsibilities. There are obligations that rest upon us, and no human soul can discharge them for us. You belong to a church that has a large membership, and if the membership of that church were increased to a million, it would not lessen your obligations one iota. There is a part that you can play in the building of the Kingdom, in the saving of your home, and the saving of the world, that can be borne by none else.

This does not mean, of course, that everybody has to meet his obligations. That is not the case. It seems strange at times that God has left us absolutely free, that he will not compel us to measure up to our responsibilities. But He never does. He never will. He never can. He lays them upon us, but we can refuse them. But what we cannot refuse is the fact that they are ours. We are debtors, every one of us. And we can no more run away from that fact than we can escape our own shadows.

2. We often refuse our obligations, and, therefore, we have our burdens of individual guilt. Sin is a tremendously important matter. "My sin," says the penitent psalmist, "is ever before me." That is one thing that is peculiarly our own.
Macbeth and Lady Macbeth committed a joint crime. But they were 100% guilty. You may join with the whole world in the neglect of your duty, but you are 100% guilty. Every man shall bear his own burden of sin.

3. We have our individual burdens of sorrow. We do not get very deep into life before we discover that there are sorrows against which we must press our aching and bleeding hearts. How many care-encumbered men, each bearing his burden of sorrow, do we meet every day? Some of them wear their wounds in the open, and some have sackcloth within, upon their flesh. Thus, of one kind or another, we all have our burdens. They are individual. They cannot be escaped.

But Paul tells us that they can be shared. That is a fact of experience. There is another side of the tragic fact— that we can hurt each other. What power we have to cause each other pain! There are those whose one contribution to the dear hearts that love them are wounds and tears. If we can hurt, we can also help. If we can wound, we can also heal.

Now, because we can bear one another's burdens, we ought to do it. This is the case for three very good reasons:

1. It is the law of Christ. It is the rule by which He lives. He was always making the burdens of others His own, their sorrows were His sorrows, their tears were His tears, their guilt was His guilt. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquity; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

2. We ought to bear one another's burdens because it is the law of love. If there is no love, we delight to stand
from under. If we love one who is staggering under a heavy load, we desire to help them bear that load. Here is the language that is native to the lips of a lover: "Tell him that I never nursed a thought that wasn't his, that daily and nightly, on his wandering way pours a mourner's tears. Tell him that even now I would rather work for him, beg with him, walk by his side, an outcast, than wear the crown that Bourbon lost."

3. This, being the law of Christ and the law of love, is also the law of life. It is a great mistake to think of the cross as something that is to set us free from the penalty of sin, only that we may not suffer. The cross is to set us free from sin, and so that we may save others. If "He laid down His life for us, we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." "Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for every one, and there's a cross for me." This is a song that we are not to sing with a sob upon our lips, but with a great joy in our hearts.

Why is this the case?

Because it is only as we die to self that we really live. It is as we lift the burdens of others that our own becomes lighter. As we dry the tears of another, our own cheeks lose their painful look. As we bind up the wounds of another, we find healing for our own. There is real truth in the old story that once the birds had no wings. God threw the wings down on the ground and told the birds to carry them. In obedience, they bore them, at first as burdens, to find that they had in them vast lifting power.

Stanley Jones tells of a woman in India who was left a widow when she was quite young. The lot of an Indian widow is, as you know, one of the worst possible. The fact that she is left
a widow indicates that, according to their faith, she was guilty of adultery in a previous existence. Therefore, she must pay the penalty. She is allowed only one meal a day. She is a veritable slave of slaves. But this widow saw others who were more pitiable than herself. She took some of them into her home to minister to them. First five, then ten, then a hundred, then a thousand. When Jones visited her, she had two thousand. That is, she had increased the burden of her widowhood two thousand-fold. But in so doing, she had found wings that lifted her into the heights. She was God's care-free, happy child. That is the way of life.

"Oh, cross that lifest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."
LIFE AT ITS BEST

Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

When we speak of burdens we are talking a familiar language. Those who are listening to me here present or on the air represent a coarse section of humanity. You represent every stage of life's pilgrimage. Some of you are just beginning the journey with the cry of "Life, life eternal life" upon your lips. Some have come as far as the Slough Despond, where you have grown utterly discouraged. Some have reached the Hill Difficult where you are finding it hard to win your way. Some perchance have come to the palace beautiful, whose open door is welcome and whose atmosphere is peace. Others of you have even reached those heights where the thought of your home-going and the welcome that awaits you there lies like a glowing coal at your heart. But at whatever stage you are upon the journey you know something of the meaning of my text.

I.

Though Paul bids us bear one another's burdens, he reminds us that our burdens are tremendously individual. "Every man," he says, "shall bear his own burden." These texts do not contradict each other, they complement each other. There is a sense in which our burdens cannot be transferred to the shoulders of another. They are profoundly and eternally our own.
Of course, the greater our capacity to serve, the greater our obligation. But the man of five talents, while having greater obligations than the man of one, is no more really obligated. That is, the obligation of the least of us is just as genuine as that of the greatest of us, and we cannot dodge them or deny them except at one peril. "Every man shall bear his own burden."

2. Then we have our individual burdens of guilt if we refuse to measure up to these obligations. Sin is a tremendously individual matter. It is at least one thing in life that is your very own. We may possess a farm, but we do not own one. It was here when we arrived, it will be here when we are gone. But when the penitent Psalmist says "My sin is ever before me" he is speaking of what is his very own. Failing to meet our obligations we have our burdens of individual guilt.

This is true, however great the multitude that shares our sin. It was the hand of Macbeth that dealt the death blow to Duncan. Lady Macbeth refused to touch him. She thought of doing the dreadful deed, but Duncan looked too much like her father as he lay in his helpless sleep. But while she did not strike the blow, she urged her husband to the deed. They both killed him. That means that Macbeth was fifty percent guilty and his wife fifty percent? Not at all. They were both one hundred percent murderers. The same would have been the case if there had been a million of them instead of only two.

This guilt is individual whether it takes the form of positive wrong doing, or the more respectable form of dodging the duties that we ought to perform. The Priest and the Levite did not stop by the wounded man to take what shreds of clothing the brigands had left him. They did not steal his last coin. They only passed by on the other side. But they sit forever in the prisoner's dock, each bearing his own individual guilt. Our obligations are terribly individual. So is our sin if we fail to discharge them.

3. Then we have our individual burdens of sorrow. There are griefs this
morning that are peculiarly our own. Your dreams have not come true. Your hopes have faded like autumn leaves. You have been sorely wounded in the battle of life. Maybe your wound is of a nature that is known to the world. Maybe you wear sack-cloth within upon your flesh. But most of us have our burdens and grief. There are sorrows in life against which we must press our aching and broken hearts, as most of us learn before we get very deep into life.

II

But while our burdens are tremendously individual, they may be shared. That means that we may help each other. That is a truth that compensates for the dismal fact that we so often hurt each other. What a capacity we have to wound. How many tears are there in the world today that are of your making? There are some perchance listening to me whose one contribution to the home is disappointment and heartache. We have a tremendous capacity to hurt each other.

But there is a glamorous and beautiful side to this truth. If we can deeply wound, we can also help and heal. We have it in our power to lighten the burdens of those about us. We can do it by our giving. That is the purpose of the Community Chest. It is to get under somebody's load who is a bit weaker than ourselves. We can help by our sympathy, by our prayers. We can help immeasurably just by being good men and women. What an unpayable debt I owe to those who along the way have shared my burdens with me!

III

But why should we give ourselves the trouble of doing this? Why not say "Every fellow for himself and the devil take the hindmost." Why not snarl with Cain "Am I my brother's keeper?" Such a question is not only black with hate
and red with murder, but it is dense with utter stupidity. To take such a
course is to deny yourself a place at the feast of the fullness of life. It is
flatly to refuse to live life at its best. It is always to play the fool.

Why are we then to take upon ourselves the burdens of others? The one
reason that Paul gives is that to take such a course is the law of Christ.
Law here does not mean law in the sense that we should drive on the right hand
side of the street instead of the left is a law. It is a law in that it be-
longs to the fitness of things. It is a law in the sense that gravitation
is a law. It is that without which we simply cannot live. Jesus made this
the law of his life because he knew it was the only law that made life liveable.

1. It is the law of Christ because it is the law by which he lived.
Jesus from the beginning was constantly putting himself under the other man's
load. This was what he was doing on the cross. And this cross about which
we think today is something more than a single episode in the life of our
Lord. What he suffered on the cross for us is what he is constantly suffering
because of our sins and our failures.

2. It is the law of Christ because it is the law of love. If you do
not care; if you have no love, to take the other man's burden is only an
irritation. It is an experience that we shun. We even resent being called
upon to share with others when we care nothing about them. That is the
reason some folks are irritated when they are asked for a donation for the
church. That is the reason some snarl at the Community Chest. But love
delights to give.

3. This is the law of Christ because it is the law of life. To take
any other course is to die. "He that saveth his life shall lose it." There
is nothing more true than that. Think how many million of folks this morning
are wretched and useless and soured, not because of their circumstances, but
because there one thought is saving themselves. Such a course will kill you
physically.
Get up every morning and begin the day by feeling your pulse and looking at your tongue and see how long you stay out of the hospital. I have a good right arm. Suppose I put it into a sling so I will not injure it. In six months I might as well have a piece of wood tied to my shoulder. To seek to save your life is to lose it just as surely as to jump from a skyscraper.

How then are we going to live?

Suppose these restless, half starved souls of whom I spoke a moment ago were to go out today to put themselves under the other fellows load. What would happen? They would find that as they dried their brothers tears, their own would cease to flow; as they bound up their brother's wound; their own would cease to bleed. All selfish folks are dissatisfied and hungry of heart. All those who deliberately forget themselves by putting themselves under the other man's load find life at its best.

That means that this cross is not the thing of horror as we often mistakenly think. When Jesus was going out to the Cross certain women wept over him. But he did not accept their pity. "Weep not for me," he said, "weep for yourselves and for your children. I am doing the thing that of all others I most long to do. I am doing the life giving thing. Therefore, weep not for me, weep rather for those who are so selfishly grasping at things that they are passing through the agony of a living death." The Cross is the way to life.

"O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be."

Stanley Jones tells of a certain widow he knew in India. The life off a widow in India is the most pathetic possible. The fact that she is a widow is proof positive to her fellows that she was guilty of adultery in a previous existence. Therefore, she is a creature of shame. She is the very slave of slaves. But this young widow realized that there were others whose lot was
just as hard as her own. So she sought to help. She took five into her home.
Then ten, then one hundred, then one thousand. When Stanley Jones visited her
she had two thousand. That is, she had multiplied her own burden two thousand
fold. Was she two thousand times as miserable as she had been before? By no
means. She was a carefree, radiant person who was living life at its best.
What was her secret? Here it is. By putting herself under the other's burden
she was fulfilling the law of Christ.
"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."
—Galatians 6:2

When we begin to talk about burdens, we are talking a language that is familiar to all of us. As we gather together this morning, we come each with his own burden. That is true whatever may be the particular stage to which we have attained in our spiritual pilgrimage. Some of us may be just beginning the journey with the cry of eternal life on our lips. Some of us may have come to the Slough of Despond where we are battling with discouragement and wondering if we did not make a mistake when we set out upon such a high spiritual quest. Some of us may be climbing the Hill of Difficulty and struggling through the Valley of Humiliation. Some may have come to the Palace Beautiful whose open door is welcome and whose atmosphere is peace. But whatever the stage to which you have attained, you each have your own burden.

I

"Every man," says Paul, "shall bear his own burden." That is not a contradiction of our text. It is a completion of it. There are burdens that are uniquely our own. They simply cannot be transferred to the shoulders of another.

1. We have our individual burdens of responsibility. Paul, looking out upon the needy world of his day, said, "I am a debtor." He did not say it grudgingly. He said it gladly. But what this great genius said of himself is true of every one of us. It is true of the most gifted. It is equally true of the most handicapped. By this I do not mean that one owes as much as the other. But I do mean that the man of one talent has obligations that are strictly his own, just as the man of five talents. Every one of us, whether old or young,
rich or poor, whether our gifts are great or mediocre—we all have our individual responsibilities.

There is, for instance, a contribution that you can make to your home that nobody else can make. You have obligations there that are your very own. There is something that you can do for this church that none other can do. My ministry has been spent largely as pastor of churches whose membership ran into the thousands. Large strong churches have certain advantages. They can move with a momentum and an enthusiasm that the small church often lacks. But such churches have their dangers. There are always those among the members that tend to lose themselves in the crowd. "There are so many others," they say, "who are more capable than myself that I am not needed." Therefore, because they cannot contribute largely they contribute nothing at all. This is a wicked and tragic blunder.

Years ago in the old street-car days, a chap got on a car that was so crowded that the conductor was unable to single him out and ask him for his fare. Therefore, he got off the car inwardly chuckling that he had had the ride for nothing. But he was as completely dishonest as if he had stolen the money from the pocket of the conductor. There is no crowd big enough to hide us from our individual obligations. You can do something for this church that nobody else can do. You can do something for your city that nobody else can do. You can make a needed contribution to your fellows in these desperate days that would make everybody in some measure the richer.

You owe it to your God and to your fellows to be your best. You have no right to be weak when you might be strong. You have no right to be half-hearted when you might be whole-hearted. You have no right to be useless when you might be useful. You have no right to stand aloof from the Church when you might be a part of it. It is every man's obligation to belong to some church. There is nothing more foolish than to say, "That is none of my business. I do not even belong to the church." A man might as well excuse himself from having any part
in the War effort because he did not wear a uniform. The only difference between the man of the church and the man outside is that the man in the church has acknowledged his obligation while the man outside has refused to acknowledge it. There is a solemn obligation resting upon me now and upon you to be at our best.

Not only do we owe it to God and man to be our best, but also to do our best. After the first World War, there was a terrible moral slump. What goes on during the actual fighting is never so tragic as what takes place when the War is over. There are difficult days ahead. This I say not to be pessimistic. I am saying this that we may equip ourselves to play a worthy part when that needy hour comes. When Jesus took his three friends, Peter and James and John, to pray with Him in Gethsemane, they went to sleep while He prayed. He brought them there because He needed their sympathy. He brought them there most of all because they needed the strength that they might have gained by watching with Him in prayer. But while He prayed, they went to sleep. Therefore, while He met His ordeal victoriously, they turned cowards and fled like frightened sheep. We are going to enter the door tomorrow for which we prepare ourselves today. We owe it to God and to our fellows to do our best.

This is not true simply of the minister. It is not true simply of the members of the Official Board. It is not true merely of those in official position. It is true of every one of us. One day when two men were unhitching a little donkey just outside the city of Jerusalem, they were questioned—"Why are you unhitching the donkey?" The answer was direct and to the point. "The Master has need of it." On another day when Jesus had fed the multitude, He said, "Gather up the scraps. Let nothing be lost." The Christ Who has not a single crust of bread to throw away, the Christ Who must even lean upon the services of a donkey certainly has no human soul to waste. Every man, therefore, shall bear his own burden of responsibility.

Since every man has his own burden of responsibility, every man must bear his own burden of guilt if he fails to meet those responsibilities. There are
obligations that are your very own, but you do not have to discharge them. Nobody will make you measure up to the demands of this hour. You can refuse the particular task to which God has called you. You can refuse to pay the debt that is your very own. But while you can stand from under the debt you can not stand from under the guilt that is the result of your refusal to pay.

Here is one something that is in a peculiar sense our very own—that is our sin. We speak of "my house" and of "my farm", but though we may possess a farm we never own one. That farm was possessed by others before we came on the scene. It will be possessed by others still when we behind the veil have passed. But there is something that is our very own. "My sin," said the penitent psalmist, "is ever before me." We may sin alone. We may sin in groups. We may sin with the multitude. But each has his own individual guilt. Cain killed his brother alone. He was a hundred percent the murderer. Lady Macbeth joined with her husband in murdering Duncan, but they were not each fifty percent guilty. Each was guilty one hundred percent.

Now the type of guilt that Jesus feared most for us is that that we incur from the refusal to bear our part of the load. I have reminded you before that every parable of judgment that Jesus uttered He uttered not against those that had been guilty of some aggressive crime. He uttered them rather against those who had stood in the presence of obligations that they refused to meet, needs to which they made no response. The sin of the Priest and the Levite was not that they one day found a poor chap lying wounded by the roadside and took advantage of his helplessness to strip from him the few shreds of clothing that the brigands had left him. It was rather that they did nothing at all.

What was the trap of the barren fig-tree? It was not that it bore poisonous fruit. It was rather in the fact that it was barren. The tragedy of the haunted house was not in that, having been cleansed, it allowed itself at once to be polluted. It simply remained empty. The man of one talent was not flung out into the dark because he had wasted his lord's money in riotous living.
He merely refused to use it. When Jesus said, "These shall go away unto everlasting punishment," He was speaking not to thugs and rebels and crooks. He was speaking to those who had moved among broken and battered humanity—some of them sick, some of them undergoing the disgrace of prison—and refused to help them. "Inasmuch as ye did it not." Every man has his own burden of obligation and his own burden of guilt if he refuses to meet that obligation.

II

But while our burdens are not transferrable, while they are in a profound sense our very own, they may also be shared. Hence Paul said, "Bear ye one another's burdens." It is our privilege to do that. This fact is a compensation for another fact that is very grim. I can add to your burden. I can wound you. I have it in my power to make life harder for those nearest to me. I have it in my power in some degree to lower the moral temperature of the whole world. I can help or I can hinder. It is terrible the tragedy we can bring into each other's lives.

But over against this grim fact is this high privilege—I can help to make life easier for every man that knows me. I can to some degree help sweeten this church. I can help to heal the wounds of this broken world. I can get under your load with you.

Now, because I can do this, I ought to do it. Paul proceeds to give a very definite reason for taking this course. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." To bear the burdens of others is to carry out the command of our Lord. We cannot refuse such burden-bearing and be obedient to Him. This is what He meant when He said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." This He had in mind when He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We ought to bear the burdens of each other because there is no being real Christians without it.

But this was not only the command of Christ. It was the law by which He lived.
It was what He was constantly doing. Throughout His ministry He was taking upon Himself the burden of others. He was sharing every man's need. He was giving Himself to little children, to social nobodies, to outcasts, to battered and forgotten people for whom nobody else cared. "Bear one another's burdens because there is no being like your Master without that."

But this is more than a law in the sense of being a command. It is a law as gravitation is a law. It is the way life is made to work. To refuse to bear the burdens of others is in a profound sense to refuse to live. It is only as we thus share our brother's burden that in a real sense we find life livable. This is not mere theory. This is fact. It has been demonstrated in the experiences of some of us. You can convince yourself of its truth by looking at the lives of others.

For instance, go out this morning and find the man who in the fullest sense is living for himself. Find the man whose one question is "What am I to get out of it?" Find the man who is forever asking, "What is that to me?" Find the man who says of the church, of the community chest, of every needy cause, "That is none of my business," and you will find a wretched man whose life is not worth the living. But find on the other hand the man who in the fullest sense is making the burdens of others his burden, and you will find the only really live man.

This has been demonstrated times without number. Josephine Butler came home from an entertainment to face stark tragedy. She had one lovely and beautiful little daughter. That daughter was upstairs. In her eagerness to greet her mother, she fell and was fatally injured. The mother looked as if she would go mad from sheer grief. But up and on she began to be interested in the children of others. Deprived of mothering her own child, she mothered hundreds. But she found as she dried the tears of others, her own cheeks lost their painful rain.

As she bound up the wounds of others, her own ceased to bleed. As she took upon herself the burdens of others, her own burden became lighter.
That, I repeat, has happened times without number. Stanley Jones tells of a widow that he knew in India. As you know, the lot of the Indian widow is unspeakably horrible. The very fact that she is a widow is proof positive in their minds that in a previous existence she was guilty of adultery. She must, therefore, be made to suffer for her sin. She is the very slave of slaves. She is allowed to eat only one meal a day. Her nights are full of bitterness and her days are without hope.

But this particular widow instead of cursing her evil fate, became interested in other widows whose plight was as tragic as her own. She decided to try to help them. She took four of these pitiable creatures into her home. Then, she increased the number to ten, then to twenty. When Stanley Jones spoke of her, she had two thousand widows in her home. The burden of her own widowhood she had multiplied by two thousand. But was she two thousand times more wretched than she had been? By no means. She was rather God's carefree happy child. In taking upon herself the cares and needs of others, she had forgotten her own.

A few years ago at a Commencement at my own university, the seniors were marching across the stage to receive their diplomas. As each name was called, there was the customary applause. But by and by a name was called and the applause was thunderous. Instead of one man going, there were two. When the visitors asked for an explanation, it was this—"The man now receiving his diploma is stone blind." He had gone blind in his freshman year. When he was preparing to go home, in despair, a friend came forward and proposed to share his eyes with him. This he had done for four years and now the blind man was graduating. His face was full of light, but more radiant still was the face of the man who had shared his eyes with him.

"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Life will work this way. It will not work any other. That is what Schiller meant when he spoke the parable about the birds. In the beginning, he said, the birds had no wings. They were not made to fly, but to walk upon the dust of earth. Then one
day God threw wings upon the ground and ordered the birds to take them up and carry them against their breasts. It was very awkward. At first the birds thought the wings were going to be grievous burdens that would make life harsh and hard. But as they wore the wings at His command, lo! they grew upon them. And what they had first lifted began to lift them. What they thought was a hinderance became a help. What was at first only a weight became wings.

This is one of the deep meanings of the Cross.

"Must Jesus bear the Cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me."

That is a song that we sing, but often we sing it with a sob in our throats and with gloom in our hearts. "The cross is a necessity," we say, "the more's the pity!" Now the cross is a symbol of death to self, and these selves of ours do not die without a struggle. But the Cross is more than a burden. It is the highest privilege. It is through the cross that we are set free. It is through such death to self that we really live. The Cross, therefore, is not simply a burden. It is the highest privilege.

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I la, in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."
THE GAMBLING CRAZE

Galatians 6:7-8

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Gambling is a word that is somewhat hard to define. As I understand it, it is the adventuring of values for pure chance, or upon a mingling of chance and skill. For instance, the man who bets on the flip of a coin, or the throwing of dice is betting on pure chance. An idiot and a genius stands upon the same level. The man who bets on a card game is betting on a mingling of chance and skill.

Now there are those who tell us that all life is a gamble. There is just enough truth in this to make the statement a bit dangerous. There is an element of risk or adventure in everything that is worth doing. The child that learns to walk has to dare something. When I learned to skate I did so at the price of risk but it was not a gamble. My venture was based on reason. All business that is legitimate seeks so far as possible to eliminate anything akin to mere chance.

Take, for instance, insurance business. There are those who tell us that it is a gamble to insure your life. You bet the company so much that you will not die within a certain time. But the very purpose of insurance is to eliminate chance and that it does as almost no other business. Take the company in insuring you, is it not basing its risk chance, but by a wide investigation it knows with accuracy your expectancy. What it loses on you it will win on another. There is no probability of loss. The insured can be absolutely sure that his estate have a certain value at the time of his death. Instead of being
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a gambler it has in it absolutely no element of risk.

II

Now this passion for venturing or chance is one of the most universal. It has belonged to all ages. It is as old as human history. It is probably as old as the race. Thousands of years ago it was so prevalent in Egypt that they had to legislate against it. A man convicted of gambling was sent to the rock quarry. It belonged to the most ancient yesterday. It belongs to today.

It has been the vice of all nations and all peoples. The backward nations gambled. So does the most advanced. It was distressingly prevalent among the cultured Greeks. Ariltotle classed the gambler along with the thief and plunderer. It grew to such enormous proportions among the Romans that one historian went so far as to say that every man in Rome at a certain period of her history was a gambler.

This vice has belonged to all kinds of people. It is a vice of the rich and of the poor, of the cultured and of the ignorant. It belongs to the superstitious and to those who have set aside superstition. It is vastly prevalent among ourselves. If we may believe Mr. Fullerton, it is on the increase. According to the North American Review of Reviews, our gambling bill each year in the United States is four and a half billions of dollars, as much as it costs to run the Federal government.

III

What is the fascination of gambling? Why is it so wide-spread and universal?
1. It offers quick returns. We are not fond of waiting. We are vastly impatient. We are in a tremendous hurry. We are not only eager to be rich but we want to be rich quickly, and the gambling game promises quick returns.

2. It offers something for nothing. How fascinating that is! We are glad to pay twice as much as an article is worth if we can persuade ourselves that we are getting something for nothing. We will buy what we neither need nor desire if we can be convinced that we are getting something for nothing. Take that cheap magazine and see how many articles are free. Why does it pay to advertise these glaring lies from generation to generation? Because of our passion to get something for nothing. A woman told me she went some months ago to see some bargain dresses. She did not buy one, she almost lost the one that she had in the mob. Of course, experience, reason and common sense tell us that we really never get anything for nothing. The man who robs a bank and gets away with it has not really succeeded in getting something for nothing. He has murdered his manhood his honesty, his soul for money. The man who inherits an estate that enables him to live without work pays the price in terms of the lost strength and growth and ruggedness that might have been his if he had made his own way in the world. There is nothing free but God and He is only free at the price of our utter self-surrender. Yet we insist from age to age in fooling ourselves to believe that we can get something for nothing.

3. Then gambling is fascinating because it brings a thrill. It is one way of breaking the monotony of life. And how we hate monotony! How the treadmill tires us! We do not want to travel life on the deadlevel. We demand that the road dip down into the canyon and climb the heights.
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And gambling does bring a thrill. It is full of excitement. It lifts us at times upon the mountain peak of expectancy and flings us into the chasm of despair.

IV.

If gambling does this for us, why not gamble? What is wrong with it?

1. Gambling is bad business. The man who gambles stands almost every chance to lose in the end. I am not here, of course, referring to organized gambling. Most of their schemes are not gambles at all, they are just plain fraud. They are not betting on an uncertainty but on a certainty. It was discovered recently that the gamblers of Philadelphia were paying four million dollars a year for protection. That meant that they were clearing forty million dollars a year. They count on paying ten percent for official protection. I talked to a man some time ago who had once been a policeman in New York. He said he had handled as much as eighty thousand dollars in one day for police protection. These gambling organizations can pay the price because they are winning.

The North American Review of Reviews says that there are five hundred base ball pools in the United States with a turnover of an average of one million dollars each. Those who gamble after this fashion are mainly the poor. Their chance of winning, says this writer, is nine hundred and ninety/thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine. Mr. Mallard, a millionaire horseracer said that after traveling the track for years he had never known a gambler to win in the end. The author of THE DISILLUSIONED SPORTSMAN said that he had traveled for fifty years and had
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come to the same conclusion.

The most skilled professional gambler is a failure. Years ago there was a young fellow in Memphis whose father was a judge. The judge sometimes gambled for amusement. The son took it up for a profession. The father gave him one of the best known papers in the South. He was brilliant, he might have been its editor with success, but gambling fascinated him. One night he beat his way into an Oklahoma city, borrowed a stake and the next morning pocketed forty-two thousand dollars. Yet, after forty years of gambling he quit with only one dollar and a half to the good. He declared that he had known in these years the best professional gamblers in the United States and all of them were broke ninety-percent of the time. Gambling is a bad business. It is wasting money and in wasting money you waste yourself.

2. Gambling is bad business because it bases life on a false foundation. The gambler worships the god of chance, and no such god exists. He falls at the feet of luck and luck is as dead as the gods of ancient Rome. He believes that he can reap without sowing. He does not believe in the reign of law he believes in the reign of chance. But God's word, human experience, common sense all say, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

3. Then gambling makes a man a parasite. The gambler is a blood sucker and nothing more. He gets without giving. Therefore, he is worthy of less respect than the tick or the flee or the beast of prey. It is a part of God's plan that we should make some contribution to life. The first question we ask about any creature or thing is, "What is it for and if it cannot give any reason for itself in terms of service then we reserve the right to junk it. The gambler gets without giving and is
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craze therefore, a menace and nothing else.

4. Then gambling because it is truly selfish prepares the one who engages in it for every form of crime. No form of life can be more utterly selfish. All it gets must come thru another's loss, all its pleasures thru another's pain, all its laughter thru another's tears, all its sunshine thru another's shadow. It is conducive to self-centeredness that is nothing short of devilishness.

Beginning to take without giving thru a turn of the dice or the flip of coin easily passes to taking without giving thru thievery. Elbert Hubbard reported, that he himself was not a member of the Epworth League or the Christian Endeavor, tho he would not trust any man who gambles as far as he could throw Mount Torus. Chauncy DePew said that ninety-five percent of the embezzlements and stealings among young men and women were the result of gambling. The pathway of gambling is one littered with ruins. It has to its credit lost fortunes, wrecked homes, every form of thievery, suicide and murder. If everybody who has found this true were to say "amen" it would rattle the windows of every jail or penitentiary in the world.

But you say, "why preach this to us?" Because gamblers are not made in the gambling dens of our cities, they are raised in our homes. Ninety-nine percent of all gamblers, says Mr. Burch, began to gamble in childhood. Many of them learned to gamble in so called Christian homes. They got the first thrill of it in homes where the card table had crowded out the family altar. Is it any harm to play a social game of cards? No more than in dominos. Yet, the association of these things has been so bad that as a Christian I will not have them in my home.

To any one that is skilled at cards, it is so easy to pass
The Gambling Craze

from the mere card player to the gambler. It adds to the interest to put up small stakes. That is almost necessary in our social game. We must have a prize. It helps to give respectability to the card games of decent society when prizes are offered.

Some time ago a woman come home from one of these fashionable affairs and showed her husband a beautiful piece of silver that she had won at bridge. He congratulated her, then he reached in his pocket and pulled out a roll of bills and told her he had won them at poker. She tried to be horrified but she could not say a word legitimately. Both of them were gamblers.

It is evident that gambling appeals to that which is native to our race. Every vice in its last analysis is just a virtue gone wrong. That is certainly true of gambling. The hunger for the thrill is perfectly natural and legitimate. The desire for adventure is God-emplanted. The tragedy of it is that we seek an outlet for these high impulses in wrong directions. The desire for pleasure, the desire for any wealth that will meet our needs is God-given. But how shall they be met?

Are you seeking something for nothing? Then God, not the gambler gives. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

Do you want the thrill of adventure? Jesus Christ offers that.
The Gambling Graze

He is an adventurer that will not leave you disillusioned. He will not leave you with an ill head and a broken heart. There is nothing so much needed in the church today as a new spirit of adventure. Paul wrote of a certain friend of his that was near unto death, because for the work of Christ he had been gambling with his life. This man was willing to bet all that he had and all that he was that Jesus Christ was true.

Why will you not make that high adventure? It will bring you a thrill as nothing else in all the world can. It will bring you a great zest that will outlast the ages. Do you believe it is more blessed to give than to receive? Do you believe that what a man sows he reaps? Do you believe that right is right as God is God and, "Right the dame must win." Then venture on it, Stake your life on it and you will come into a joy of which the world must ever remain a stranger. But if you believe and fail to venture, then in spite of all that God can do for you, you lose. Will you play the hero or play the coward?

"Upon a rock stands prone my soul,
A diver lean, undressed,
And looks and fears the shock,
And turns and hides its shame
In some poor sorry jest."
"Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Galatians 6:9

What think you is the greatest peril that threatens us as Christians? I am speaking of course as Christian minister to Christian people. What is our chief peril? If we make shipwreck of our faith, what is likely to prove the cause? I do not fear that many of us will become gangsters or outlaws. I am not expecting any to break openly with their faith and turn in bitter hostility upon the Church they once loved. I think Paul pointed out our greatest danger in a solemn word of warning as he closed his letter to the Galatians. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." There you have it. We shall reap not if we have world peace, not if God does not let us down, not if our investments pay good dividends, we shall reap if we refuse to faint.

I.

What do we mean by fainting. The experience is so familiar that we hardly need to define it. Some of us know what it is to faint because we have fainted ourselves. The rest of us know from our experience with others. A few years ago I was preaching in a church that was terribly overcrowded. Some two hundred or more were standing. Suddenly a young man who had been making a contribution to the service by his presence collapsed. He hit the floor as if he had been shot down. But he was not dead; he only fainted. But having done this he ceased to make
any contribution to the service. There was no use to give him a hymn book, he
would not sing. There was no use to pass the plate for the offering, he would
not give. There was no use to preach to him, he would not listen. There was
no use to call him to prayer, he would not pray.

Not only did he cease to make any contribution to the service, not only did
he cease to be an asset, he became a liability. When he fell in a dead faint some
four other men who were also making some contribution to the service by their pre-
sence and their attention were taken out of the service. They had to lift up this
fainted man and take him out to fresh air and administer restoratives. Thus through
the fainting of one man five were taken out of the service. Many a time through
the fainting of a father or a mother, a whole family is taken out of the service,
and taken out of actual Christian living. When we faint we cease to help and be-
gin to hinder. No wonder, therefore, that the Apostle warns us against fainting.

II.

Now it is this tendency to faint that is a constant threat to us. This is
ture not only in the realm of religion, but in every other realm. It possibly
accounts for more failures to get on in life than any other one thing. Some fail,
perchance, for lack of ability, some from unfortunate personalities, but perhaps
more fail for lack of a capacity to exist than for any other one reason. It does
not take much courage to start, but it often takes great courage to follow through.
Many of our lives are full of half finished jobs. Some of us change from one vo-
cation to another. We join one church after another. We refuse to hold long upon
any course.

There is a proverb that says, "For the ship bound to no harbor, no wind is
favorable." It matters nothing how fast a ship or a car may go if it is constantly
changing its direction. It matters not how great your ability if you never focus
that ability on an enterprise long enough to see it through. Samuel Coleridge was a genius. Had he written all the books that he planned he would have produced a library. But all he left was a few glittering fragments. He had ability to the point of genius, but he had no capacity for keeping on.

As a runner, the hare was brilliant. There was not a man living that would have been stupid enough to believe that the tortoise would win instead of the hare. But it was the tortoise that won. Not because of his fleetness of foot, but because he had the dogged tenacity to hold on. And that race and victory has been repeated times without number. How many a slow moving tortoise wins over brilliant hares just because the hare quit and the tortoise kept on.

Perhaps you have heard of the hunter who set out early one morning to kill a deer. He was all enthusiasm. He had already planned just the friends to whom he was going to send a piece of venison. He had picked out the taxidermist who was going to stuff the head. Suddenly he saw the track of a deer and set out in pursuit. But by and by that track was crossed by the foot prints of a fox. "Well," he said, "I will leave the deer for the present and get the fox, that will do for today." So he tracked the fox till he saw that track crossed by that of a rabbit. By this time he was tired and hungry. So he left the path of the fox and took out after the rabbit. Despair soon led to a grim briar patch. Just as he entered this patch he came on the track of a field mouse. And as the sun went down he was looking sadly down into the burrow of a mouse. Years ago an English boy was walking home from school. He looked up into a tree and saw a bird's nest that was just the particular nest that he wanted. He put down his book satchel and began to climb. But as he reached out his hand for the coveted nest his other hand slipped and he fell to the ground. It jarred him a bit, but he at once began to climb again only to fall again. Then he climbed again the third time. Again he fell. But he was less fortunate this time and broke his leg. He was found and taken home. When he was sufficiently recovered to be left by himself his mother went to the vil-
lage, urging him to stay perfectly quiet. When she returned she found a flush-faced boy with a bird nest in his lap. When she rebuked him he said rather shamefully, "I just can't begin a thing and then let it alone." No wonder a few years later when a friend of this boy, now grown to manhood, William Carey, could not let a missionary project stop. He had to organize a missionary society then and there. Not only so, but he went out as our first missionary. That man is in a profound sense the father of modern missions.

It is this stubborn tenacity on the part of William Carey that is the finest thing about his nation. Whatever may be your attitude toward Britain, you must agree that they have passed through a baptism of tragedy during recent months that has few parallels, if any, in history. I doubt if any other nation could have stood up under it. When a Britisher quoted to our Foreign Correspondent that familiar saying, "Britain can lose every battle except the last," Mr. Murrah answered, "But what if you lose the last?" "Well," was the dogged reply, "in that case we will fight another one." You can't beat an individual or a nation like that.

When we look for the greatest man in the Old Testament we find him in the person of Moses. What is the outstanding characteristic of this great man? He was a genius I know. He made laws that have been adopted by every nation of the earth. But when the writer to the Hebrews fixes upon that quality of character that is outstanding it was this, his persistence, his fine capacity to get on the track of a purpose and pursue it till it became an accomplished fact. He endured, that is the word. He endured. Men opposed him, but he endured. Members of his own family disappointed him and let him down, but he endured. Old age came upon him, but he endured. His endurance was the very endurance of God. "He endured as seeing him who was invisible."

"If you have this fine quality," says Paul, "nothing can defeat you." But if
you lack it no amount of ability, no favorable circumstances can bring you victory. God himself can do nothing for the man who faints. We need this warning today. We are thanking God for the faithful men and women who in these difficult times are standing by the church and helping to keep alive those fundamental values by which the individual, and by which the nations live. But if ours is an average city there are as many who once were active in the church who have fainted and quit altogether as there are those who are active today. Since half of us have fallen by the wayside we surely need this warning against fainting.

III.

What are some of the causes of fainting?

1. A bad atmosphere. Folks subject to fainting often get into an atmosphere that is vitiated by the poison of many breathers and keel over. So many faint spiritually for the same reason. I doubt if we have ever rightly estimated the power for good or ill of a right or wrong atmosphere. There are atmospheres that embrace us, that revive us like oxygen. There are others that depress us, that weaken us, that make a victorious stand next to impossible. Herod, bad as he was, did not want to kill John the Baptist. He committed that crime because of those that sat with him. He had put himself in a wrong crowd. He had surrounded himself by a bad atmosphere. Turn aside from those who cherish your faith, who are braced by your conviction, and put yourself among those to whom your faith means nothing, who laugh at your standards and your ideals, and the chances are that you will faint. Beware of your companionship.

2. Some faint at the sight of blood. More still faint at the sight of sacrificial blood. We can go on cheerfully till it begins to cost us something. We can follow our Lord till we see a cross on a hill, then we faint. Softness is a most common cause of fainting. "Lord," said a young enthusiast one day, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." What a fine declaration. Jesus longed for
followers above all else. Yet he did not thrill at this word. Instead he an-
swered, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of
Man hath not where to lay his head." And the young man went away because he was
not willing to pay the price. Some faint at the sight of sacrificial blood-letting.

3. Then, there are those who faint because of chatisement. The writer of the
Hebrews knew such. "My son," he wrote, "despise not the chatising of the Lord nor
faint when thou art rebuked of him." We go on our sunny ways, then suddenly like
a bolt from the blue, tragedy darkens our lives. We find darkness where there was
once light, loneliness where there was once a bracing companionship, walskness
where there was once vigorous health. We stagger under the blow, feel that God has
forgotten us, and fall into a dead faint. I saw one such not long ago. If I were
to go this morning to knock on the door of one of the darkest homes that I have ever
visited I would knock on that door.

4. Then there are those who faint from weariness and weakness. When Richard
Mansfield was trying to gain a foothold in England as an actor, he was dogged by
poverty. He had a way of buying a hot potato and warming himself by it till it got
cold and then eating it. At last he secured a small part in a play. But at his
first appearance on the stage he fell in a dead faint. They thought at first it
was fright, but they found it was hunger. He was so nearly starved that he was not
able to stand. So sometimes we faint from sheer weakness.

Then we get weak through weariness. We get tired of the up-hill way. This is
a danger that threatens those who have reached middle life and beyond. The years
bring us maturer wisdom, but they do take some things away that we should like to
keep. Often we become less sure of ourselves. We find, too, that it is harder to
get positions and harder to keep them as we get farther into life. There is no more
trying position than that of the man who knows himself too young to retire, while the
world thinks he is too old to work. Such a man finds it very easy to faint.

5. Perhaps the supreme cause of fainting is discouragement. We begin the fight
so sure that we are going to win. But we suffer one defeat after another.

Commonplace day follows commonplace day, and we seem to win no closer to the goal. At last we give over and quit. Elijah was a strong man. He was a man of great courage. When he triumphed on Mount Carmel he was sure that he had brought his people back to their lost faith. But when Jezebel threatened his life and no man lifted a voice in protest he saw his mistake. Therefore, he fled into the wilderness and flung himself in a dead faint under the juniper tree. I read sometime ago of a man who got lost in a blizzard in the northwest. He fought for hours. The next morning they found him prone upon his face. His hands were outstretched. One of those hands was not a yard away from his own doorstep. I am sure if he had only known how close victory was he would not have surrendered. But he lost heart and fainted.

IV.

Realizing then the tragedy of fainting, what are we to do about it? I am going to name a few preventives, or, if you have already fainted, a few restoratives.

1. If you are to guard against fainting you need to recognize at once that Christian life is a conflict. I know it is the greatest of all privileges, I know it is the one way to live joyously and abundantly, but to be a real Christian means a fight. Sometimes in our eagerness to make disciples we fail to face this fact. Jesus never did. When a football team expects an easy victory, they are likely to faint. When we enter upon any undertaking expecting no opposition, the shock of opposition may defeat us. Right living means a battle, strive is the word Jesus uses. That means struggle as an athlete in a game. It means to fight as a soldier on the field of battle. It means to agonize as did Jesus in Gethsemane. Expect opposition.

2. If you are about to faint or have already fainted, get a little pure air into your lungs. Of course you will not find any that is absolutely pure. It is
hard to breath on the top of a high mountain, but the most bracing atmosphere I know is to be found among good people. Put yourself among those who see your visions, dream your dreams, and hold to your faith.

3. Expose yourself daily to the Word of God. I speak as one who loves the Bible. I love it above all other books. I sympathize fully with the words of Standfast in the words of Bunyan's immortal allegory. "I find myself," he said, "at the end of my journey. My toilsome days are over. I have lived where my Lord has spoken of. And wherever I have seen the print of his foot in the sand there have I coveted to set mine also. His Word have I used to gather as an antidote against my faintings." There you have it! Begin every day by looking to God's Word and you will find it an antidote against fainting.

4. The fourth antidote I mention is prayer. This for an antidote is recommended by Jesus himself. "He spake a parable unto this, that men ought always to pray and not to faint." He knew from his own experience that constant prayer and fainting did not go together. ""Then so saying he was speaking in harmony of one of the greatest of prophets, "Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Prayer is a means of letting God into your life. Prayer steadies you by enabling you to lean your tired shoulders against the Rock of Ages. "I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

5. Finally, if we are to guard against fainting we must keep ever before us the conviction of victory. "In due season," said Paul, "you shall reap if you faint not." Of course, he does not mean by that that all of us can win all the prize upon which we set our hearts. You and I may never be able to bring about world peace, as much as we should like to do so. We may never be able to bring about the just and Christian social conditions that we should like to see. We may never be able to see our church as triumphant as we should like to see it. But nothing in earth or in hell can keep us from inward victory. And that is the victory that
"Our Greatest Danger"

is of eternal worth.

When we look about us for those whose lives have enriched the world in a superlative degree, when we search for those great souls that have breathed upon all the centuries like a breath of springtime, we find them, as a rule, not among the outwardly victorious. Often they failed outwardly. Their victories were the victories of the spirit. What a defeat was that of Jesus'. The meanest slave might have pitied him as they heard his cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet that defeated Man has remade the world.

Therefore, I take this brave word from the lips of Saint Paul, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." I know there is much that is wrong. I know we live in a world torn and shattered. I know weeds and nettles will grow in the soil of this grim earth if we plant them. But roses and violets will grow too. So, go your way sowing to the Spirit. Go your way unworried in well doing, your reward is sure. It is sure in the here and now, it is sure tomorrow, it is sure in that eternal tomorrow to which all our faces are turned. "Therefore my beloved brethren be ye steadfast, unmoved, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
"God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord.

Gal. 6:14

We can listen to such words to-day without being greatly shocked but to the ears that first heard them they must have sounded revolutionary and almost unbelievable. Here is a man proclaiming a new faith. The Christ to whom he belongs and whom he serves has died the most shameful and horrible of deaths. Yet instead of trying to conceal that fact, instead of putting it into the background, it is one fact about his Master in which he glories most. "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross."

There was only time in the ministry of this great man when he seems to have failed to put the Cross in the center of his message. That was when he preached on Mars Hill in Athens. When Paul came to this center of culture, when he came to this city of philosophers and scholars, he seems to have had a normal desire to show that he too was a man of the schools. He had read the poets of Greece as well as his own people. Therefore he met the Athenians on their own terms. But they were not greatly impressed. They only ask angrily, "What does this babbler say"? Paul's victory here was not conspicuous.

From Athens he went to Corinth. In this great and wicked city, he went back to his old style of preaching. He solemnly resolved in his chastened heart that he would not try to win through man's wisdom any more. He determined not to know anything among these Corinthians except Christ and the crucified Christ at that. "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."
GLORY IN THE CROSS—Page 2

Why this strange decision? Paul facing a fact realistically that the preaching of a Christ who died the death of a felon had its difficulties. To the Jews such preaching was a stumbling block. To the Greeks, it was foolishness. It seemed to them the height of stupidity to try to win them to allegiance by proclaiming as Savior one who had so utterly failed to save himself that he died as only slaves and foreign criminals die. Of course, such preaching seemed to them foolishness. Yet this Paul went madly on glorying in the Cross in spite of the derision and laughter that it excited.

That men would laugh at it, that such preaching would seem foolish, we can readily understand. To apologize for the Cross, to seek to explain it away would seem to them perfectly natural, but to glory in it— that seemed so absurd as to be little short of madness.

Why was this the case? Why does it at first glance seem foolish that Paul should glory in this Cross?

1. Such glorying seems foolish in the first place because the Cross puts the spotlight on the sinfulness of man as no other event in human history. If you are of a mind to be of a critical nature, there is nothing bad that you cannot say about a man. There is no wrong that he has not committed. No trust that he has not betrayed. No cruelty of which he has not been guilty. No bloody crime of which he has not stained his hands. But of all his crimes this is the worst. That when incarnate goodness and love came into our needy world we could find nothing better to do with him than to hang Him on a cross.
Nor does this event light up for us only the sinister faces of the men who actually participated in the crucifixion. It throws its searching light upon your face and mine, for the sins that crucified Jesus were the commonplace every day sins that vexed society in all generations and have stained your hands and mine. Ananias and Ciaphas for instance who bear the heaviest load of guilt, why are they so antagonistic to Christ? They were immensely rich and growing richer from the revenues of the temple and Jesus was threatening their position. He was interfering with their business. They fought him as men fight today when anybody threatens their gains however ill-gotten they may be. There is no length to which the gambling interest and the liquor interest of this country will go to protect their business.

Take Pilot, he was a Roman official. He had a sense of justice. It went very much against the grain for him to crucify a prisoner whom he knew to be innocent. But while Pilot was an official, he was first of all a politician. Therefore, while he had a natural desire to do the just thing, he had still a greater desire to stay in office. Therefore when one shouted, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend". Pilot went hot and cold and lost the fight and stained his name with an eternal shame. Is Pilate out of date? Look at the political leaders of our nation and our world at this hour and find your answer.

Take the part of the crowd, when Pilate offered the people a choice between Jesus and Barabbas, they chose Barabbas. Why? For the very same reason the vast majority would choose him to-day. Jesus was an idealist to their way of thinking. Of course He was really the supreme idealist. But His realism took this form. He believed that violence and hate do not have the final answer. Barabbas, on the other hand, believed in violence and murder. He was revolutionary. Therefore they said as
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Finally, take the part played by the friends of Jesus. Why did they make such a poor showing? It was not because they were bad men. It was not because they were not friendly to the master. They loved him.

But they became panicky. They lost their courage. Naturally brave men, they played the coward when their big crisis was upon them. Greed for money, passion for power, faith in hate rather than in love, cowardice; these nailed Jesus to the cross. They are doing it still. How strange, therefore, for one to glory in the cross when that cross is the supreme revelation of man's deviltry.

2. Then Paul's position seems foolish to the point of madness, because this cross represents what looks like the supreme failure of all human history. Here, it would seem, is the greatest defeat of goodness that was ever suffered. Glance again at the story. One day a young man locked up his carpenter shop to return to it no more. He is out on a mission. That mission had for its purpose the transformation of mankind. He went out to make the kingdom of God a reality in every human heart and in all human relationships. His appeal to the tired hearts of that day was tremendous. Great multitudes hung upon His words and followed Him. One day they sought to take him by force and make him a king.

But little by little this changed. The people came to discover that he was not the kind of Messiah they wanted. The religious leaders turned against him. At last he was arrested, had a mock trial, was sentenced to death and was crucified.

How did it all end? I can an absent well-wisher asking a friend who was present. "How did his disciples conduct themselves when their master was arrested." "It was a heart-breaking scene", came the bitter
reply, "one of them betrayed him, another swore he had never seen him, the rest of them fled like frightened Mares. So far as any of his friends were concerned he had to die alone."

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"Well for the most part he saw it through grandly. He did sob in the garden as he faced the cross. Then he staggered and fell as he went out toward Calvary, but he never lost his head. He prayed for the misguided soldiers who tortured him. But there was one black moment when even his great heart seemed to fail him. I heard him cry: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Then I turned and slipped away, I couldn't stand it any more."

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II.

But strange as it may seem, he has a reason for his glory. Remember that he is no wild-eyed fanatic. He is no mere dullard. He is one of the best intellects of the centuries. He is far too wise to glory in something that has nothing glorious about it. What then were some of the reasons for gloriing in the cross?

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As no other event has done so much to give a sense of worth to us as individuals, no other event has done so much to give to those who take the cross seriously an appreciation of the worth of their fellows. Paul went with burning eagerness to spend and be spent for others because he saw in every man a brother for whom Christ died. Years ago I listened to a Quaker missionary who had spent fourteen years in the heart of Africa. He told us...
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To-day humanity is cheap because so many fail to see man in the light of the cross. But when the cross has become a reality the one priceless thing in the world is human personality. No wonder, therefore, that Paul gloried in the cross. It gave him a sense of the worth of man. It caused him to see in every man a brother for whom Christ died.

Then, as another pointed out, this supreme defeat of goodness that took place on Calvary was also its supreme victory. Taken in connection with Easter, this cross is the most victorious event in all human history. Jesus knew that it would be so. Therefore his life was not taken from him, he gave it. "No man taketh it from me but I lay it down of myself." He was sure that lifted up from the earth, he would draw all men to himself.

III.

What then is this cross to mean to you and me in the living of our lives day by day? If we are wise, we will let its light shine into our darkened hearts and rebuke our selfishness and sin. We will permit it to give us a sense of worth. We will by its light see in every man a brother for whom Christ died.

Not only so, but we must face the fact, that the cross of Jesus Christ is not simply to be enjoyed but to be shared. As he won his supreme victory through self-giving, so we must win ours. "He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life shall keep it unto life eternal."
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Not only so, but we must face the fact, that the Cross of Jesus Christ is not simply to be enjoyed but to be shared. As He won His supreme victory through self-giving, so we must win ours. "He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life shall keep it unto life eternal." How did Jesus come to that truth? He learned it through experience,—His own experience and the experience of others. How richly will you live the coming year. The richness of your life will depend upon the fullness of your giving.

When France went to pieces in 1940, there was an American mother who had married a French aristocrat, who was left alone with a little girl—a child about four years of age. The husband having been imprisoned, his wife tried to make her way out of France with her daughter. When the train was coming across to the borders of Spain, a kindly conductor informed her that if she went into Spain on the train, she would be arrested. Therefore, he put her off at a little station under the shadow of the Pyrenees Mountains. It was night and she sat in this station with her little girl until morning.
The next day, she dared approach an old gentleman who whispered to her that if she made her way to the top of the mountains she would find other refugees who were trying to get across into Spain. Also that a guide would meet them who would show them the way.

After a hard and tedious journey, she reached the meeting place. A little later, the guide came and the refugees began their journey. It was December and the weather was cold. All the other refugees were old people. Now and then, one of them would fall out and say, "I can go no further, my life is lived anyway so go on and leave me". But the young mother would say, "It is your time to carry the Baby. You can't fall out now and leave the baby to freeze". So that old body would rally. He would drop behind at first and then get out ahead. After four terrible days and nights they won their freedom, chiefly because they were handicapped by a little child. It is in the spirit of the cross that we are to live our lives. Life will work that way, but it won't work any other.