

ed with schemes by which to make his contemptible little life easy and pleasant, he has no thought for the pleasure of others, no unselfish thinking of his neighbor, much less of God. And let me add, that's the motive of not a few even in their striving for Heaven. There are men seeking thrones on the right and left of Christ, in his kingdom, who like Zebedee's sons, are just as far from obeying this precept, as the man whose highest motive is to get a fortune with which to retire to some fine spot to rest and enjoy. For what is the religion of many but just a bargaining for so much in eternity, for a certain price of sacrifices and observances in time, a denying themselves to a variety of things they would otherwise indulge in, in consideration that it will be repaid to the full hereafter. They deny themselves, but not for Christ's sake, simply for their own sake. They choose to be religious because it's a prudent thing, not very difficult now, and promising an eternity of ease and enjoyment. I care not what austerities such men practise, I care not what religious name they wear, *self* is still everything. They are not practising that self-denial Christ asks and approves.

The great change that takes place on a man's heart when the Spirit of God has wrought on it and brought him to Christ, is that he becomes thoroughly *unselfish*. He feels that he cannot live for himself, that he is not his own but bought with a price, that God has a claim on him, that he is bound by constraint of love, to make himself over with all he is and has, to Jesus Christ. That he is not here for the purpose of seeking the greatest measure of happiness, but that he may grow to the highest possibility of manhood, and do the greatest possible amount of work *for Christ's sake*. This is his unselfish motive, and while he acts on it, *he is happy*. Every Christian has opportunities of practising this self-denial; times when that which is lawful may not be expedient; times when your inquiry must be *not*, will this or that be the more easy and agreeable, but which of them, this or that is consistent with what I owe to my God and Saviour, and for his sake to my fellow-men. Yea every purpose we form, be it great or small, should be based on this, that the will of God, not our own will, should be our will, and the glory of God, not our own pleasures, the end of all we do.

Would that all might realise and act upon this principle; would that this were the permeating spirit of our Churches, instead of that self-seeking, that miserable littleness of soul that appears in so many forms. 'Tis this is causing envy and dissension among professing Christians. 'Tis this is hindering the diffusion of the Gospel among the heathen. 'Tis this, the lack of the self-forgetting spirit of Christ, explains your apathy in religious work. The foundation of the great spiritual temple was laid by him who subordinated his own

will to his Father's will, his own feelings to the finishing of the work given him to do. And not till the workers in raising that temple shall have learned how likewise to deny themselves, will they speed on the great consummation.

The leader in the Christian warfare is He whom no selfish gain could divert from his Divine purpose. His great, unselfish soul appeared the more, the nearer he came to the cross and victory. Self-denial was in every hour of his life. Self-denial was in every labor and sorrow. Self-denial was in every restraint of feeling, in every forgiving prayer. Self-denial was consummated when he submitted to the death of a common criminal, that thereby the world might be blessed. From all these, the experiences of his life, he is saying to his followers, with the power of a living example, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself."

This brings me now to speak more briefly of the further duty required of every follower of Christ, *cross-bearing*. The cross is used as a figure to express the trials men have to meet in life. The cross of the Christian is thus, *his* burden of trouble. I shall look on it in two lights successively, and show what in each of these respects is implied in a man's taking up his cross and following Christ. I take the cross as representing: *First, the troubles, or powerful experiences, common to all men.*

"Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." 'Twere in vain to attempt to enumerate all the phases of human ill, the various forms the cross assumes. It would lead me to speak of misfortunes in *business*, of *family* cares, of *personal* sorrows. It would include every wound in the flesh, and every sorer wound in the spirit. It would comprehend the causes of every cry I hear, from those of childhood to those of frail old age. It would be the sad record of innumerable lives, in which every one has its own bitter drop. I shall not attempt to enumerate for the text tells us that we are to take up, *not* the cross of *every* man, not the cross of *any other* man, but every man *his own* cross and bearing it, to follow Christ. Every man knows his own sorrows best, yea he alone can know the most bitter of them, for the law of nature, as of grace, is "that every man shall bear his own burden." Observe the text *does not* mean that you may or may not carry *this* cross. It cannot mean that you may or may not as you choose have care and pain. It comes whether you will or not. Every man has a cross made for him, and every man, sooner or later, shall have it laid on him. The text prescribes the *Spirit* in which it should be submitted to or undertaken.

We are to *take it up*. To do so unmurmuringly, and to bear it cheerfully. When we are exposed to affliction of any kind, we are to look on it as meant for us, and good