

## **BURDENS.**

In the last chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians are these two sentences: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," and "Every man shall bear his own burden."

It is a burdened world. Every shoulder has its load, the carrying of which often becomes exceedingly tiresome. This is so far true as to make the invitation of Jesus, "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy-laden," a universal invitation.

There are real loads, and there are fictitious burdens. There are some things which a man ought no more refuse to bear than a ship should refuse to carry its freight. He was made to carry just such burdens. It is unmanly to strive to shirk them. But, sometimes, people take on themselves that which there is no need for them to bear: and then they make great complaints against fate, or God, or whatsoever or whomsoever they suppose to be at the head of universal affairs.

A little study of the two sentences we have quoted above, which occur very near one another in the same chapter, may be of assistance to us.

Their contiguity exposes them to the suspicion of being contradictory. In one breath the Apostle teaches us to bear one another's burdens, and in the next breath tells us that every man shall bear his own burden.

There are two things to be noticed here. One is, that whereas we have the same English word in both sentences, in the Greek there are two different words. In the first quotation the word translated "burden" means that which tires; in the second, it means that which loads. Whatever makes a man grow weaker and weaker is the first

kind of burden. Whatever is needful to carry – such as a soldier's kit, or a ship's freight – it is the meaning of the second kind of burden.

Moreover, we are to consider the occasion of the employment of these phrases. A Christian man is overtaken in a fault, through some infirmity of character or temperament. He is not to be thrown away, therefore, any more than a brave soldier who has not the strength to carry his heavy knapsack and gun must be thrown out of the ranks, simply because, for the reason, he is too weak to bear his burden. His comrades must come up and restore such a one, in the spirit of meekness; for that comrade, spiritual as he is, and strong now, may sometime hereafter become tired, by either an increase of what he was carrying, or a decrease of his strength. Now the stronger comrade must assist the infirmities of the weaker comrade, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Those who are spiritual ought to be considering their Christian brethren all around them, to see how they can help the weak; but every Christian man ought, as far as possible, to bear his own burdens and discharge his own duties so as to throw nothing on his brother. The burden ought to be sought by the stronger; it ought not to be shirked by the weaker. If there be burdens which I cannot bear, and have no neighbor to assist me, then I have a comfort which is afforded me in Psalm 55:22.

– Dr. C. F. Deems

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