

1: SIMON CYRENE, the cross bearer - GOD'S ARMY, CONTENDING for the FAITH

In Luke , we read: "When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.". I want to comment on this situation and make points that we can apply to our lives today.

Simon the Cross-Bearer i. Simon the Cyrenian Who was he? What does history tell us about him? Cyrene received a Jewish settlement in the time of Ptolemy I. At Jerusalem the name of Cyrene was associated with one of the synagogues Acts 6: Whether this Simon had become a resident at Jerusalem, or whether he was a visitor at the Passover, it is impossible to decide. This additional statement of St. Mark adds greatly to our interest. He speaks of the sons, Alexander and Rufus, as if they were well-known disciples of the Lord; and St. Paul, in his greetings to the Christians at Rome from Corinth, sends special words of love to Rufus and his mother, who had acted in a peculiarly tender and motherly manner to him: If this were true, he would assume the new name of Christian, which we know originated in that city. Well might Simon extol the strange arrangement of Providence which brought him to the place where he should meet Jesus, at the very time when they were leading Him out to be crucified. Well might he bless the rough violence of the Roman soldiers, who compelled him to bear the cross for his weary and fainting Master. The bondage of man proved to him the liberty of Christ; the shame of earth turned into the glory of heaven. How grateful must he have felt afterwards that he had this unique honour; that it was given to him to alleviate in some small degree the unparalleled sufferings of his adorable Redeemer—to share with Him the ignominy and the degradation of the cross. Imagination helps us to fill in what tradition tells us about this victim of brutal power who was compelled to take part in the crucifixion of the Saviour. He may have been a proselyte who had come all the way from Africa to observe the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. He had, perhaps, never previously heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and was not thinking of Him at the time when he saw Him on the way to execution. Probably, instead of pitying the sad case of the Sufferer beside him, he was occupied with the hardship of his own case, and filled with resentment on account of the odious service so ruthlessly exacted of him, including even Jesus in his indiscriminate wrath. But forced, in spite of himself, to accompany our Lord to Calvary, bearing the hated cross, he was made a witness of all the memorable incidents of the transcendent tragedy that took place there. He saw the Divine meekness and patience of the Sufferer; he heard the wonderful words of love and pardoning mercy that flowed from His lips; he beheld the supernatural darkness gathering round the cross, and felt the ground trembling under his feet; and, dismayed by these awful portents, he heard the loud cry with which Jesus gave up the ghost. He must have learned enough in the brief companionship of a few hours with the Prince of Sufferers—in such unexampled circumstances—to change the current of his whole life. He must have been one of the first who were drawn to Christ when lifted up upon the cross in fulfilment of His own words. Coming to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, he found in the cross of Christ the true fulfilment of the great historical rite; he found in that dying life a perfect example, and in that death an atoning sacrifice. Simon of Cyrene, the cross-bearer of Christ, was the first-fruits of Africa to Christianity. A Forced Disciple 1. At such seasons Jerusalem was always densely crowded, and many of the pilgrims who could not get lodgings in the city itself stayed in the huts and booths which were erected on the hills or in the valleys outside, or put up in some of the quiet villages like Bethany, which were within easy reach of the capital, and, above all, of the Temple. Simon had either not been in the city the night before, and so had not heard of the arrest and trial of the prophet from Nazareth, which had caused such excitement amongst those there, or else, if he did know of it, he cared so little about it that he was not in the slightest hurry to get back to Jerusalem and hear the news. He was walking quietly and leisurely towards the town, ignorant of, or utterly uninterested in, the tragic events which were happening there, knowing nothing of the Nazarene, and not troubling himself about His guilt or His innocence, when his attention was arrested by the approach of a strange procession. He had no doubt seen executions before, but there was something about this procession which roused his curiosity. Just as the crowd comes close to him there is a sudden pause. One of the prisoners falls beneath the weight of His cross, and Simon comes near to look at Him. The officer, seeing that it is useless to force the fallen King of the Jews to

carry His load farther, casts his eye on the stranger, and struck, perhaps, by his stalwart appearance, and seeing doubtless that he was but a common man, orders the soldiers to seize him, and to bind the cross of the Nazarene on his shoulders. And so Simon meets with Jesus. How often do events, upon which the whole course of our natural and of our spiritual life turns, seem to hang upon trifles! The Providence of God arranges not only the great, but also the small, occurrences of human life and destiny. And so it is always. You go down one turning rather than another, and your whole career is coloured thereby. You miss a train and you escape death. Our lives are like the Cornish rocking stones, pivoted on little points. The most apparently insignificant things have a strange knack of suddenly developing unexpected consequences, and turning out to be, not small things at all, but great and decisive and fruitful. Let us look with ever fresh wonder on this marvellous contexture of human life, and on Him that moulds it all to His own perfect purposes. Let us bring the highest and largest principles to bear on the smallest events and circumstances, for we can never tell which of these is going to turn out a revolutionary and formative influence in our life. And if the highest Christian principle is not brought to bear upon the trifles, it will never be brought to bear upon the mighty things. The most part of every life is made up of trifles, and unless these are ruled by the highest motives, life, which is divided into grains like the sand, will have gone by, while we are preparing for the big events which we think worthy of being regulated by lofty principles. Look after the trifles, for the law of life is like that which is laid down by the Psalmist about the Kingdom of Jesus Christ: Compelled to bear the Cross. For let it be remembered that then it was a shameful cross. What is now our ornament and pride, the symbol of all that is worthiest in man and divinest in God, was then the badge of shame and lowest degradation. So that it was an outrage and an insult of the very last degree that was inflicted on Simon the Cyrenian when they compelled him to bear the cross of Jesus Christ. Then how came they, how dared they, inflict this insult on Simon the Cyrenian? Was it the swarthy hue, the dusky complexion, the slave mark on skin or dress, which singled him out as one who might be safely wronged? Was it for that reason they dared to inflict on him this wanton insult, and compelled him to bear the cross of the doomed Nazarene? When Cyrus, the Persian king, conquered Palestine, he introduced into it several of the customs of his own country. One of the most remarkable of these was what might be called the postal service, which forwarded the messages of the government to all parts of the land. It was called the *Angareion*, from a Tartar word which means compulsory work without pay. Herodotus gives an interesting account of this custom; from which we learn that, in order to transmit messages with the utmost possible speed, relays of men and horses were kept ready at intervals along the principal roads, which handed on the despatches from one to another without pause or interruption, whatever might be the inclemency of the weather, and by night as well as by day. Such mounted couriers were further empowered to press into the service, should it be found necessary, additional men and horses, even if they had to leave their own work in the field for the purpose; and boats, if they had to cross a river or an arm of the sea. It can easily be imagined that such a system could be used by a government as an engine of oppression; and the people who were compelled to render this gratuitous service, often at very inconvenient times, and at great risk and loss to themselves, would doubtless feel very keenly the injustice of it. In Palestine it was greatly disliked, for, besides its own inherent evils, it had the additional one of being a foreign custom imposed upon a conquered people. The Tartar word for this disagreeable labour, having been introduced into the language of the Jews, came to be identified by them with every oppressive service. Our Lord used this peculiar word when He laid down the duty of self-denial and goodwill, even towards those who act oppressively towards us. The Romans, who too readily made their own any instrument of oppression which they found among foreign nations, were familiar with the word, which crept into their own language, and with it the custom which it represented. No more appropriate word could have been used. It is a most picturesque, and at the same time gives a most touching pathos to the occasion. It links this single act of tyranny with the whole gigantic system. The world has been familiar with forced labour from the earliest days. As far back as we can go in the sorrowful history of our race, we find the stronger tribes making slaves and beasts of burden of the weaker, and of those whom they conquered in war. The brick-making of the Israelites, under the intolerable cruelty of which they groaned and died, was not by any means the first oppression in Egypt. Ages before that, we find proofs of the reckless disregard of human life shown by the Pharaohs, compelling thousands, without wages or even food, to

construct for them those enormous monuments, the ruins of which excite the astonishment of every traveller. Nor can any modern race lift up a stone against those ancient oppressors; for there is no nation that has not been guilty of similar practices. Our own country cannot plead guiltless to the charge. It brought upon America and upon the West Indies the curse of slavery, which could be removed only by a tremendous sacrifice of blood and treasure. Within the memory of this generation men have been carried away from their homes and pursuits, and forced into the naval service of our country by the ruthless press-gang. As the cross of Christ represented the sins of the whole world laid upon the Redeemer, it may be said, therefore, that that cross, laid upon the unwilling shoulders of Simon the Cyrenian, represented all the oppressive burdens which man has laid upon his fellow-men. It was the Angareion of the world. To have come all the way from Cyrene to worship in the Temple of his fathers, to refresh his faith by taking part in the great feast, to see the sights of which he might tell to his wife and children at home, to meet the friends whom he had not seen for years, and then to have come through such a bitter, degrading experience! Such a thing could hardly have happened to him even in Cyrene, where the Jews had full Roman rights; and yet in Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great King which he had so passionately longed to see, he had been treated like a criminal and an outcast, and branded before a crowd of fellow-countrymen with the mark of shame—the curse of the cross. If, as he read in his Bible, he was cursed of God who hung upon a tree—was not he too cursed upon whose shoulders the tree hung? And yet for Simon we have no pity, we have only congratulation, almost envy. His dishonour has changed into an honour which many a saint might covet. Simon had to be compelled to take up this burden for Jesus. We might have wished this had not been necessary. Where was that other Simon? What a silent and yet strong rebuke this must have been to him. Where was the beloved disciple? Where were they all? Holy women were gathering round, but where were the men? If this has ever happened to us it ought gently to rebuke us as long as we live. We learn this lesson from the Cyrenian. Keep your place, and let not another Simon occupy it. The Way of the Cross 1. One special indignity connected with the punishment of crucifixion was that the condemned man had to carry on his back through the streets the cross upon which he was about to suffer. In pictures the cross of Jesus is generally represented as a lofty structure, such as a number of men would have been needed to carry; but the reality was something totally different. A soldier was able to reach up to the lips of Christ on the cross with a sponge on a reed. It was not much above the height of a man, and there was just enough wood to support the body. But the weight was considerable, and to carry it on the back which had been torn with scourging must have been excessively painful. Another source of intense pain was the crown of thorns, if, indeed, He still wore it. We are told that before the procession set out towards Golgotha the robes of mockery were taken off and His own garments put on; but it is not said that the crown of thorns was removed.

2: PRAYER: Simon Of Cyrene, Cross-Bearer – The Value of Sparrows

they arrived at the place of execution, Simon laid the cross down. Then the procedure of nailing Jesus to it began. This incident of Simon's carrying Jesus'.

This broke His heart, and the day that surpasses all previous days of history had begun. Then they took Him to Pilate, and there He was again falsely accused. Pilate questioned Him, and then Pilate sought a way to not have this obviously innocent man to be punished. He gave the people a choice between a feared and hated criminal, named Barabbas, and this Jesus, a healer and teacher of righteousness. The people chose to have Barabbas freed. Jesus was then beaten, spat upon, mocked, crowned with thorns. The trip to Golgotha, for a crucifixion, began. Six soldiers led by a centurion walked with Jesus. One carried a sign, supposed to notify on-lookers of the crime of the criminal. The walk was a long one, walking about the town, so many would see and know the fate of criminals. Jesus was weak from the 39 stripes, the mocking and jeering had weakened His stamina, and the long night of no sleep made Him unable to carry this heavy cross. He falls under the weight of the cross. The soldiers press into service a slave from Cyrene, named Simon. The Old Testament had prophesied that the Messiah would be weak in His crucifixion time. Cyrene was a city of Libya, in North Africa. It was where Barca and Tripoli are now. This city was feet above sea level, and ten miles from the ocean. There was a high range of mountains to the south, about 80 miles away. This range of mountains sheltered this area from the Sahara heat. The area has a great variety of climate and vegetation. The soil is very fertile. Cyrene was a Greek colony in B. It was a center known for its great education. Many Jews were transported there in the dispersion. The Jewish occupants and the converts of such made frequent trips to Jerusalem for feast times. In Jerusalem, the Jews who had been raised in Cyrene, had their own synagogue. Acts 6: At the time of the persecution of Stephen, some Cyrenians converted to Christianity. Mark, at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus was a young person, and he is the one who mentions Simon as being the father of Alexander and Rufus. So, it is likely that Mark and these two boys were near the same age. Likely, Simon was in Jerusalem for the Passover feast, and had brought his family with him. These two young persons became well known in the Christian church, and Mark seems to assume the readers all knew who these two were. The mother of the two sons, and wife of Simon, had obviously done some kindness to Paul, and Paul considered her like his own mother. This pressing into service by the Romans may have been made permanent, and this family was transported to Rome to serve further. In the lists of names of the servants of Nero, we do find the names of brothers, Alexander and Rufus. So it seems that these two became household servants of the most wicked and despicable man of the age. Servants of the emperor of Rome, indentured to the most anti-Christian gentile of the time, these two not only had found Jesus as Savior, but were in the toughest place to serve their Lord. This is quite a challenge, in fact, it is more than that, it is a command. We are to bear a cross. Sometimes, we feel we do not deserve the cross, like Simon may have initially felt. We may want to put it down, let another carry it. Yet, sometimes, even though we do not feel we deserve the cross, we must carry one. Crosses are heavy, and they are not just a weight, they are a place where we will be nailed, lifted up for the world to mock, and left to die there. Yet, there is also a resurrection for us. We do not bear these crosses to be defeated there, but we bear the cross to go to the victory Jesus has assured us by His cross. Jesus was betrayed by a friend. Crucifixion was not a mode of punishment of the Jewish people. The Maccabean King, Jannaeus, did use it once to kill over in Jerusalem once. Even the Romans did not use crucifixion until the time of Caesar. During the last siege of Jerusalem 68 to crosses a day were utilized for crucifixions. The soldiers began to amuse themselves with variations of the crucifixions. Crucifixion was of Phoenician origin, and Rome had later adopted it. The punishment was reserved for only those crimes of idolatry and blasphemy. There were three kinds of crosses used. Most believe it was the last one, for a sign was posted above the head, and this is only possible with the third one. The site is located two to three minutes from the roadway, and it has a high, rounded, skull-like rocky plateau, with a sudden depression beneath, as though the jaws of a skull had opened. The results of Simon of Cyrene bearing the cross were that Simon himself was saved; Alexander and Rufus, his sons, were saved; the church at Rome was blessed with their testimonies; Rufus became a

leader in the church at Rome; many in the household of Nero were saved including the wife of Nero ; and the story has been in the Bible for countless more to be blessed by it. Our cross bearing will lead to souls being saved too, if we do it as we are called to do. Jesus had a purpose in His carrying of the cross, and He has a purpose in telling us to do the same. The first one to bear the cross of Jesus, was this Simon of Cyrene. He bore it, and his family became part of the early church. Many have been blessed by his story, and by the following events due to his carrying of the cross. The wounds of the cross we bear, are great. So are the benefits of carrying this cross. Jesus arrived at Golgotha around 9 a. First, the upright of the cross was planted into the ground. The lips could be moistened with a sponge attached to a short stalk of a hyssop. The transverse part of the cross was placed on the ground, and the victim was laid upon it. The arms would be bound, then ropes were used to draw up the victim to the upright piece. In the case of Jesus, his hands and feet were also nailed to the wood. Women in Jerusalem collected money to pay for strong wine with myrrh in it, to deaden the pain. Two others were crucified on this day. One was to the right of Jesus, the other was to His left. This was meant by Pilate to be a mocking of those who had pressed him to crucify this man he had deemed innocent of any real crime. Before the nailing, the soldiers gambled over the garment of Jesus. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. Jesus was oppressed, afflicted, betrayed by a friend, led as a Lamb to slaughter, falsely accused, forsaken by all. These afflictions are real and at times, the pain is felt deep through our souls. The supreme religious council had plotted and planned His death. An insulting price of a slave was paid to a betraying friend to secure the arrest of Jesus. The words of others, crying out, to or about us, hurt us deeply. Jesus felt the pain of unkind, unloving words. We too, bearing this cross He gave for us, feel the hurt of cutting words. Yes, Jesus bore a cross for us, paid that great price for us. Simon the Cyrenian carried it for a time, but it was Jesus Who died upon it for us. It is by this wondrous work of the Lord, done on that cross, that we crucify the world unto ourselves, and crucify ourselves to this wicked world. We have a ministry of crucifixion, that depends totally on the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. His work makes our work possible. Taking up the cross of Jesus and glorying in it, and in what the cross has done for us, creates two more crucifixions. If you truly glory in the cross of Jesus, you will crucify the world and its sin to you, and you will crucify yourself and your cravings and desires for the world. In place of those, we glory in the cross of Jesus. He bore that cross, and then was placed upon it, and it bore Him. He laid down His life, shed His blood, brought victory to us, gave us the right to a resurrection too, by what He did for us on the cross.. With our cross, that we each bear, we need to realize too that there is no miracle, unless we have a problem. There are no victories, unless we enter the battle. There is no resurrection, without cross bearing. The early church often portrayed Jesus as a Shepherd, often holding a cross instead of a crook. Soon, early depictions of Jesus showed the cross with a Lamb upon it. Jesus is the Lamb of God, Who bore a cross for us, taking our place as the Sacrifice of God, paying the price for our sins. If any man will come after Me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

3: Evangelistic Sermons : SIMON OF CYRENE

As Jesus was carrying his cross out of Jerusalem to the place of execution, a man named Simon of Cyrene was coming in (M ; P ; L), and the soldiers compelled him to carry the cross of Jesus.

He, she, it, they, them, same. From the particle *au*; the reflexive pronoun *self*, used of the third person, and of the other persons. It is clear that it had a special interest for himself and the readers for whom he wrote; what that interest was we can only conjecture. The two names were so common that we cannot arrive at more than a probable identification, but the mention of a "Rufus chosen in the Lord" as prominent among the Christians of Rome Romans But if so, then we are led on to some other facts of no slight interest. Paul speaks of the mother of Rufus as being also his mother--*i*. This, in its turn, connects itself with the prominence given to "men of Cyrene" in St. See Note on Matthew Pulpit Commentary Verse It seems from St. The tablet, with the inscription afterwards attached to the cross, would be carried before him; and a certain number of soldiers would be appointed to go with him to the place of execution, and to see the sentence carried out. The Cyrenians had a synagogue in Jerusalem Acts 6: He must have been a Hellenistic Jew, a native of Cyrene, on the north coast of Africa. Alexander and Rufus, his sons, were no doubt, at the time when St. Mark wrote his Gospel, well-known disciples of our Lord. Paul, writing to the Romans Romans Paul of something like maternal care bestowed upon him by the mother of Rufus. It is probable that his father Simon, and perhaps his brother Alexander, may have been dead by this time. Rufus is also honorably mentioned by Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians. There is a tradition, mentioned by Cornelius a Lapide, that Rufus became a bishop in Spain, and that Alexander suffered martyrdom. To go with them, that he might bear his cross. It was the death of the vilest malefactors. Thus the cross and the shame are put together. God having been dishonoured by the sin of man, Christ made satisfaction by submitting to the greatest disgrace human nature could be loaded with. It was a cursed death; thus it was branded by the Jewish law, De Shall a purple or scarlet robe be matter of pride to a Christian, which was matter of reproach and shame to Christ? He wore the crown of thorns which we deserved, that we might wear the crown of glory which he merited. We were by sin liable to everlasting shame and contempt; to deliver us, our Lord Jesus submitted to shame and contempt. He was led forth with the workers of iniquity, though he did no sin. The sufferings of the meek and holy Redeemer, are ever a source of instruction to the believer, of which, in his best hours, he cannot be weary. Did Jesus thus suffer, and shall I, a vile sinner, fret or repine? Shall I indulge anger, or utter reproaches and threats because of troubles and injuries?

4: The Cross Bearer by E. James Harrison

Simon of Cyrene: The Cross-Bearer's Legacy is a novel that tells about the life and experiences of Simon; Miriam From The Community. Amazon Try Prime Books. Go.

It was a bright and balmy sunny spring day in Jerusalem. Simon, a Jew of the dispersion, had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the fest of the Passover. Simon was a native of Cyrene. His forefathers had lived for many years in this Greek colonial city near the shore of the blue Mediterranean in North Africa. One of the earliest memories of his childhood was the family celebration of the Passover feast. He remembered the words of his father as he recounted the marvelous act of God in redeeming His people from bondage in the land of Egypt. He was filled with awe by the retelling of how the angel of death and passed over the homes of the children of Israel which had been sprinkled with blood from a freshly slain lamb. He was enthralled as his father told of escape from Egypt, delivery at the Red Sea, the march through the wilderness, the capture and settlement of the land of Palestine, the building of the capital city of Jerusalem with its magnificent Temple to Jehovah God. Even then there was kindled within him a desire to this ancient land and above all to visit Jerusalem at the Passover season. Now at long last his dream had been realized. It had been many years in coming to fulfillment. Many times in the past he had saved enough to pay for this long, arduous journey but always there had been some more pressing need. There was the expense of his marriage, another time his saving had to be put into his business, there had been illness, and a dowry had to be provided for his daughter and his sons education. But now he was in Zion the city of God. The city was bulging at its seams with Jews from all over the world, who came to celebrate the feast of the Passover. And Simon mingled with the pilgrims along the crowded streets and in the market places, one name that of Jesus of Nazareth, kept cropping up in conversation. Fantastic stories were being told concerning this man "he had miraculously fed hungry people, a man blind from birth had received sight, he preached love for your enemy and taught obedience towards Rome, Lazarus of Bethany had been dead four days and this man raised him. He found it difficult to believe his ears and yet there was those who claimed to witness and hear these things. One morning near the end of his stay in Jerusalem, Simon, as he left the inn where he was staying, was attracted by a loud and noisy crowd down the street. He hurried to see what was taking place. He pushed his way through the crowd until he stood on its inner edge and there he saw a man with a crown of thrones on His head, a seamless robe cast about Him, and He was dragging a cross over the rough cobble stones of the narrow street. There was something strangely regal about this man even in a time of extreme suffering. Impulsively, motivated by pity tinged with a little compassion, Simon reached out to put his arm under the arm of the Nazarene. For a moment in time, Simon of Cyrene emerged from the unknown, appeared for a fleeting moment on a line of recorded history and then vanished for all time. Simon is a proto-type for all true believers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free? Man speaks of some calamity as a cross they must bear. Some identify a particular sorrow, disappointment or weakness as a cross. To endure tragedy in a triumphant fashion, to bear a burden as a blessing in disguise is true Christian virtue. But such should not be confused with carrying a cross. The burdens of life are universal and inescapable. Everyone has some burden that he bears. For one it may be light and for another it may be heavy. The only way to escape its weight is to fall asleep in the arms of death. Is it guilt for a past sin committed? Remember, the promise of God: Many Christians never carry a cross. It can be refused and many so refuse. The burden is inescapable, the cross is chosen as a voluntary act of the will. Jesus had burdens which even He could not escape: These He carried as must all men. But He chose the cross. It is a voluntary act of service deliberately chosen for the glory of God and the pre-eminence of Christ. It is not playing a fiddle while the world burns. It is to care for the glory of God above everything else. It is to lay your time, talent and treasure on the altar of sacrificial service to Christ. Christ bore His cross that He might save men, we bear our cross that we may become the saviors of men. Christ bore his cross that He might redeem mankind. We bear our cross that we might become a redeeming agent of God in society. It is true we cannot give ourselves an offering for the sin of man, but by our consecrated living we can so reflect Christ that others will want to accept Him. We cannot give ourselves a

ransom for many, but by living redeemed lives we can make our world a better place in which to live. We can shine as lights in the darkness that men may glorify God because of us. At long last there are only two courses open to the Christian. Like Pilate we may hand Him over to the crowd to be crucified, or like Simon we may share His cross. We either help to crucify Him or we help to carry His cross.

5: Christ's Cyrenian Cross-Bearer

Mark, in his Gospel, says, "A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross." Let me quote from two prominent Biblical theologians.

Background[edit] Cyrene was located in northern Africa in eastern Libya. A Greek city in the province of Cyrenaica , it had a Jewish community where , Judean Jews had been forced to settle during the reign of Ptolemy Soter 305 BC and was an early center of Christianity. The Cyrenian Jews had a synagogue in Jerusalem , where many went for annual feasts. Tradition states that they became missionaries ; the inclusion of their names may suggest that they were of some standing in the Early Christian community at Rome. It has also been suggested that the Rufus in Greek: Sukenik , belonging to Cyrenian Jews and dating before AD 70, was found to have an ossuary inscribed twice in Greek "Alexander son of Simon. This was later to precipitate further Jewish insurrection in the area in the reign of Hadrian and Trajan. According to the supposed visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich , Simon was a pagan. So since Simon Peter fails to take up his cross, Simon the Cyrene does so instead. The Cyrenes were famous at the time as a sect of hedonistic, atheist philosophers, and as part of a failed military uprising that it, a military messiah rather than a spiritual one. Hence, figuratively, the military messiah and the human philosopher are put on the cross at this time when Simon the Cyrene takes up the cross [11]. Lending further credence to this is the naming of the two sons, Alexander and Rufus. There is no literal reason to mention them, nor are they mentioned elsewhere, despite the traditions alluded to in this article. But the most famous Alexander of the time was Alexander the Great , a symbol of military power. The most famous Rufus was Musonius Rufus who was a pacifist philosopher. According to Origen, Rufus was second only to Socrates in fame [12]. So, figuratively, the worldly offspring of Simon the Cyrene are military power and human philosophy. Mark is saying that neither way is correct and both should be sacrificed on the cross. On a figurative reading, Mark reveals great brilliance. It has as its guiding principle "sharing the burden" which it uses to explain its approach to providing services to homeless and other disadvantaged groups in society, often using volunteers. This is the story presented in the Second Treatise of the Great Seth , although it is unclear whether Simon or another actually died on the cross. He states the teaching that Christ in Jesus, as a wholly divine being, could not suffer bodily pain and did not die on the cross; but that the person crucified was, in fact, Simon of Cyrene. Thus he himself did not suffer. Rather, a certain Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry his cross for him. It was he who was ignorantly and erroneously crucified, being transfigured by him, so that he might be thought to be Jesus. Moreover, Jesus assumed the form of Simon, and stood by laughing at them. This can be considered believable due to the fact that the Synoptic gospels write of an outsider from North Africa who assists Jesus on the Via Dolorosa. The film *The Passion of the Christ* portrays him as a Jew being forced by the Romans to carry the cross, who at first is unwilling, but as the journey to Mount Calvary continues, shows compassion to Jesus and helps him make it to the top.

6: Simon of Cyrene - Wikipedia

*Simon the crossbearer: A family is affected by their father's chance meeting with the Savior (Starlight books) [Harry J Cargas] on www.enganchecubano.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Simon the Cyrenean who was forced to carry the cross of Christ begins to see his role as one of honor, not shame.*

Print Sermon The purpose of this website is to provide free sermon manuscripts and sermon videos to pastors and missionaries throughout the world, especially the Third World, where there are few if any theological seminaries or Bible schools. These sermon manuscripts and videos now go out to about 100 countries every year at www. Hundreds of others watch the videos on YouTube, but they soon leave YouTube and come to our website. YouTube feeds people to our website. The sermon manuscripts are given in 40 languages to about 100,000 computers each month. The sermon manuscripts are not copyrighted, so preachers can use them without our permission. Please click here to learn how you can make a monthly donation to help us in this great work of spreading the Gospel to the whole world, including the Muslim and Hindu nations. Whenever you write to Dr. Hymers always tell him what country you live in, or he cannot answer you. We are indebted to John for telling us this. The other three Gospels say that Simon of Cyrene carried the cross, but John tells us that Jesus went out carrying it at the beginning. Jesus was very weak by now. He had been awake all through the night. He had taken no food or drink since He ate the Passover meal the night before. He had prayed in the darkness of Gethsemane, sweating as it were great drops of blood, under the weight of human sin, in the hour of His agony Luke He had been arrested there, and dragged before the high priest, where they spit in His face and beat Him with their hands Matthew He had been brought before the Roman governor Pilate, then before King Herod, and then before Pilate again. He had been scourged by Pilate, beaten half to death with a cruel Roman whip that left His back torn to ribbons. The soldiers had crammed a crown of thorns down on His head, which must have caused Him inexpressible pain and torture. Then the soldiers spit on Him and beat Him on the head with a wooden rod Matthew It should not seem strange, after experiencing all that cruelty, that Jesus was completely exhausted. None of us can fully understand the love He had for us that made Him suffer so! The Catholic Church tells us that Jesus fell three times on the way toward His crucifixion. Perhaps He did, but the Bible tells us none of that. Whether He fainted once, or twice, or three times, we are not told. The Scriptures do not say why the soldiers compelled Simon to carry His cross. We can only guess that, in all probability, Jesus was too weak to carry it any farther " for we can be sure that these cruel soldiers did not do this out of kindness, or any sympathy for the bleeding Saviour. We are told in the text that he was a Cyrenian. That is, he came from Cyrene, a major city of Lybia, in northern Africa. A large number of Jews lived there, who had been there so long, with intermarriage between the Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism, that there is little doubt that Simon was a dark skinned African Jew. He had doubtlessly scraped and saved his money to make the long trip up to Jerusalem for the great Passover feast and celebration at the Temple. He was attending the Passover in Jerusalem. Providence means that God controls the events of our lives. Hamlet, Act V, scene 2, lines He did not realize that his steps were being directed by an act of divine providence! I am thinking about Mr. God moved in a mysterious way in Mr. Griffith stayed and was converted! He has been singing before I preach for over thirty years! Griffith came to our church by an act of providence! And you are here by the providence of God this morning. Someone spoke to you. They invited you to come. And here you are! Perhaps thirty years from now you too will be able to say, with Mr. Perhaps coming here and hearing the Gospel this morning will be life changing to you as well! How we pray that it will! It means he was drafted or conscripted. He was not a disciple of Christ at that time. They loaded the cross upon his shoulders! It was then that Simon must have looked at Jesus for the first time. He had been jostling with the soldiers. Then he must have looked at Jesus. I can only say that he must have seen the greatness of His love. He must have heard about the wonderful things Jesus had done " the miracles, raising the dead, feeding the hungry, healing them that had need of healing. But now he must have seen the love of God in the very face of Christ. The Saviour then went ahead of him, and Simon carried the cross behind. He was now resigned to do so. Now, as they reach the top of Mount Calvary, and he drops the cross, I can see him standing

back, in front of the soldiers and the howling mob. He sees them raise the cross into an upright position. His eyes are transfixed on Jesus, and he stands gazing at the blood-soaked Son of God dying on the cross. Sure, never, till my latest breath, Can I forget that look; It seemed to charge me with His death, Though not a word He spoke. My conscience felt and owned the guilt, And plunged me in despair; I saw my sins His blood had spilt And helped to nail Him there. The greatest converts were often men who were under great conviction of sin " so when they came to Jesus they felt that His yoke was easy, and His burden light! Spurgeon felt so relieved when they were pardoned by Jesus that it seemed easy to bear His yoke. They went to work for Christ with all their might, and never let up as long as they lived! We have seen this happen time and again in our own church. Looking at a photograph of the 39 original members of our church, I realized that most of them came, right away, into the work of the church. Chan immediately went to several of his classmates and brought them in. Right away, he brought in Mrs. Judith Cagan and Winnie Chan. Hymers instantly became a phoner when she was converted. This year marks the 30th anniversary of her doing telephone evangelism every week without missing. Salazar all went to work in the church instantly. They quickly found that His yoke was easy and His burden light! But I have also found that those we have to beg and plead with, just to be faithful in coming to one service on Sunday, seldom turn out to be strong Christians. But Simon of Cyrene was not like them. Our text strongly implies that he became a real Christian. Third, Simon became a Christian. Lenski said, Mark names his sons who, it is agreed, later on held prominent positions in the church. Paul speaks of the mother of Rufus as also being his mother [Romans And I feel I must also add the comments of C. Spurgeon on this subject: We are told [Simon] was the father of Alexander and Rufus" Surely Mark knew these two sons, or he would not have cared to mention them; they must have been familiar to the church, or he would not have thus described their father. It was their father who carried the cross. It is exceedingly likely that this Rufus was he of whom Paul speaks in the last chapter of his epistle to the Romans, for Mark was with Paul, and by this means knew Simon and Rufus. Pray, dear Christian friends, you that have an Alexander and a Rufus, that it may be an honour to you to be known as their father C. This has been an unusual sermon. I struggled in preparing it for two days, while I was sick last week. There is so little in the Bible about Simon of Cyrene. And yet he is mentioned by name in three of the four Gospels " and we are given additional information about his sons and his wife in the Scriptures. I have studied this very carefully for many hours " and I feel certain that this man Simon became an important person in the early church. It therefore seems evident that Simon became an important early Christian. May you follow the example of Simon of Cyrene " and become a real Christian. I pray that you will come to Christ, that you will take up His cross and follow Him no matter what it costs. For if you do, your life and destiny will be forever changed, as will the lives of many others that you influence. Be washed clean by His Blood! Come into the church! Solo Sung Before the Sermon by Mr.

7: Simon, the Cross Bearer - Christian Crusaders

Finally, rejoice in the birth of Simon Christopher, who, with his sister Mary, will take the cross-bearer's legacy into the next generation. This is a story of conversion and faith, of tragedy and triumph, of love and hope.

After Pontius Pilate had ceremoniously washed his hands and declared, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: The only thing left for the mob to do then was to rejoice over the success of their freshly-washed robes of self-declared righteousness. The history of death by crucifixion is an old one. Alexander the Great borrowed it from the Persians. Then it was copied by the Carthaginians. And finally it was adopted by the Romans who used it to execute slaves, thieves and prisoners of war. But the Romans considered death on a cross far too cruel for their own citizens. It was because of this that, according to rather firm tradition, Paul was beheaded by a sword instead of being crucified as was Simon Peter. As the mob faced Jesus, they faced a man who was utterly worn out. After His hours of agonized praying in Gethsemane He had gone from one weary trial to another, and He had not had a bite of food or a drop of water since the Last Supper the night before. There had been the trial before Pilate and the trial before Herod. And there was the final trial before Pilate. In addition to this, Jesus had gone through endless mental and physical torture. There had been the pain of three times finding Peter, James and John asleep while having Judas betray Him with a kiss. There had been the pain of seeing His disciples flee. There had been the pain of being bound and having His hands pulled high between His shoulders. There had been the pain of being before Caiaphas. There had been the pain of being scourged by the order of Pilate. The man delivered by the procurator to the mob was already half dead. He was a pitiful sight with the crown of thorns on His head and His raw back and swollen face. Presently an order was given, and two criminals were brought up out of their dungeon and placed with Jesus. Then each was given a cross on which he would be nailed. At a signal a platoon of legionnaires armed with spears formed a box around them so that they could not escape. Then a man appeared with a sign painted on thin pine board. The large black letters read: A Roman officer on a horse led the legionnaires, and the man with the sign stood immediately in front. When everything was ready the centurion on the horse shouted, "Forward march," and the solemn procession headed for the skull-shaped hill, Calvary. The road at the beginning of the Via Dolorosa was about twelve feet wide and led up a straight incline before it sloped toward the Damascus Gate. Jesus, with the heavy cross on His shoulders, did not walk as fast now as He had the day before when He led the Twelve into the Upper Room, the eleven to the Garden of Gethsemane and the three into the edge of the Garden. The cross on His shoulders was heavy enough, but added to that weight were the past sins, the present sins, and the future sins of the entire world. No one else but the Son of God could have carried that load! As the newly formed column moved toward the grim place of execution, there were multitudes who watched from the streets and the roof tops of stores and houses. Some of the people jeered. Some turned their heads and dabbed at their eyes. Some of them yawned with unconcern. Others giggled and laughed. In that crowd, however, there must have been people whom Jesus had healed of blindness. One can almost hear these former beggars shouting frantically, "No! He healed my eyes! Also in that crowd there must have been some whom He had cleansed of leprosy. And I think I can see them gesturing with the new fingers Jesus had given them and shouting frantically, "No! He healed my leprosy! And I think in that crowd there must have been some whom Jesus had made to hear and to speak. He healed my ears and gave me speech! Then all at once Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth who had carried many a beam on His shoulders, stumbled and fell to the ground. Someone kicked Him, but He could not get up. His humanity was exhausted. The centurion was now in a dilemma. He could not ask one of his soldiers to carry the cross, nor could he ask a Jew to carry it. For if a Jew even touched it, he would be defiled and not be able to partake of the Passover. And Roman officers were definitely forbidden to interfere with the religious practices of their subjects. One wonders where Peter and James and John were at this time. They could have carried the cross. They did not need to fear not eating the Passover, for they had already eaten the Last Supper with Jesus! But where were they now? Jesus had been very close to them for three years, but in this moment of trial they were not there to pick up the load for Him! And still He loved them! Oh, what a Christ! Then Simon of Cyrene, a large city in North Africa, came

walking by. Just in from the country, he was minding his own business when he saw the column on the way to Calvary. He stopped to see what it was all about. That stop changed history for him and for millions of others! The centurion noticed him immediately. He was just the man! Who was Simon of Cyrene? We do not know for certain, but we can make some pretty good guesses. Mark tells us that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. And since the gospel of Mark was directed to the Romans, it is evident that the sons were well known in the church at Rome. The greatest honor ever given to a human being was when Mary conceived and gave birth to Jesus Christ. But how unexpected the honor was! When Simon left home he had no idea that he was going to play such an important part in history! And perhaps as you read this the Lord will honor you and ask you to shoulder a burden. Or maybe in a voice that is soft and low He is saying, "I need you in the Sunday school. I need you to do regular church visitation. I need your money. Now we often hear that a cross is something that we voluntarily pick up; but this is not always so. The text tells us that Simon was compelled to carry it. Please remember that real Christians are obedient Christians, and that if we are to obey, we must pick up the burdens Jesus hands us and be thankful to carry them! I do not know what kind of cross the Lord may present to you. But whatever it is, carry it! The cross-bearer carries something that Jesus cannot carry in order to enable Jesus to do what the cross-bearer cannot do! The task Simon was asked to complete was not a very spectacular one. His job was simply to carry a cross a few hundred feet; tradition tells us that Jesus Himself had already carried the cross most of the distance. Although the job looked insignificant at the moment, it turned out to be extremely important! But it is very difficult to get them to assume the little crosses that are unnoticed by the crowd. Yet, frequently it is the little cross that does the most good! Teaching a Sunday school class is not always an easy thing. To some teachers it is a very heavy cross. To work on a lesson for a class with its quota of rowdies is not always easy. Many a teacher goes home and weeps over the happenings of the day. And yet it so happens that here and there a screaming toddler, a paper-throwing junior hears something from or sees something in the teacher that brings about a great change. Do not despise the seemingly little things! His task was not drawn out. But it was very necessary! And his name is written large in history as a result. You may be asked to assume a cross for the simple reason that no one else will carry it. Simon was not chosen because he was pious, strong or faithful. He was chosen because no one else could be had! And when he picked up the cross, without doubt he was met with jeers and boos.

8: Simon the Cyrenian

Simon, the Crossbearer. One never knows what the day may bring forth. It was a bright and balmy sunny spring day in Jerusalem. Simon, a Jew of the dispersion, had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the fest of the Passover.

As originally penned, it read: Each saint of Thine shall find his own, and there is one for me. John makes no mention of Simon at all, writing instead that Jesus "went out bearing His own cross to the place called Golgotha" John The writers who do mention Simon give very little information about him. Notice the three references: As we ponder and reflect upon this incident that occurred that morning as Jesus was being led to His crucifixion, a number of observations come quickly to mind. We behold the humanity of the Messiah: As Jesus began His journey to the place of execution outside the city gates, He "went out bearing His own cross," as John correctly points out. It was customary for the person being crucified to carry his own cross literally: Although Jesus is often depicted in paintings as dragging the entire cross, most scholars believe the more accurate depiction is this crossbeam tied to His shoulders. Rarely did one ever drag the entire cross. Although the Son of God, Jesus was also a son of man: He was human, and thus subject to the same hurts and failings of the flesh that you and I experience. Jesus simply did not have the physical strength to carry this heavy piece of the cross to Golgotha. Yes, He "went out," states John, from the place of His sentencing "bearing His own cross," but He only had the strength to make it past the city gate. When He collapsed, the guards escorting Him to the site of the execution found someone to carry the cross the remainder of the way. That "someone" was a man from Cyrene named Simon. In order to better understand this event, there are several things in the various accounts that need to be pointed out. First, this man named Simon is said to be from a place called Cyrene. In the first century, the city of Cyrene was the capital of the Roman province of Cyrenaica. Just a few miles to the southwest of Cyrene is a city known to us today as Benghazi a city that has been in the news a lot in recent years. Simon, therefore, was African. It is assumed and I stress this word that Simon was a proselyte to Judaism and that he may have been in Jerusalem for Passover. All of this is speculation, however. Mark, part 2, p. Yes, he was African, for that is where Cyrene was, but there is nothing in the biblical text that suggests he was a Jew. This is merely assumed because he was in the area of Jerusalem during Passover. He could very well have been there for other reasons, however. About the best we can say is: It is also possible he was simply in the area on business. We are told by Mark and Luke that he was on his way to Jerusalem "from the country," which some scholars feel indicates he was conducting business outside of Jerusalem, perhaps in a nearby city, and was on his way back to Jerusalem "from the country. All we know for sure is that this man named Simon, who was from Cyrene in northern Africa, was on his way to Jerusalem "from the country" when he got caught up in the procession of a crowd following a man being led to the site of his crucifixion. Some say he was a disciple of Jesus, some say he was Jewish, some say he was well-known to the followers of Jesus, others say he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time and was seized by the guards and pressed into service as a cross-bearer. All of this is nothing but speculation, for the biblical text says absolutely nothing about any of it. An interesting question arises at this point in our study: Why was this man singled out to carry the cross for Christ Jesus? Charles Ellicott, Commentary on the Whole Bible, vol. The Scriptures indicate there was a rather vocal crowd of people following along to witness this execution. It was also the time of Passover, and there would have been many people in the area for the festivities. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. So what made the guards choose this man from among this great company of people? The Roman soldiers were most certainly not going to carry this heavy crossbeam for this Jewish "criminal" who was about to die. That would have been beneath them, in their view. No Jew would have volunteered to even touch this cross, much less carry it, especially during the Passover season, as this would, in their view, make them unclean. Obviously, Jesus was in no condition to continue. Thus, someone had to be chosen. Who would that be? The guards entrusted with this prisoner would have to seek out a person appropriate to the task, for "so shameful a thing was the cross, that no Jew or Roman citizen could be induced to carry one" [The Pulpit Commentary, vol. It would have to be a person "recognizable as a stranger, with whom liberties might be taken" [Dr. In this large gathering of persons headed for Golgotha, one person stood out; as the soldiers cast

their eyes upon the people around them, one man drew their attention. In some way, most likely by his appearance, he was most clearly different. He was a foreigner, a stranger. Was it the way he dressed? But, I am convinced it was more. I am thoroughly convinced that he caught their attention that day in that place because he was African -- i. Racial bias is not a modern social and personal dysfunction, it has always been evident among men. The black races have especially been victims of racial discrimination and affliction, and the choosing of Simon of Cyrene may reflect that attitude among those seeking someone to "do the dirty work. Thus, when Simon was spotted in the crowd, he was singled out, and he was then "laid hold of" and "pressed into service. Perhaps it was done "in contempt of Simon There is no indication Simon was even a Jew except his name was a common one among Jews , and there was certainly no evidence he was a follower of Jesus. He was a foreigner from Africa, a black man who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The soldiers were searching for just such a person, and they found him. In fact, we are told in Matthew They were looking for someone like him, and when they "found" him, they laid hold of him and pressed him into service, most likely against his will. The Greek word translated "found" is "heurisko," and it means "to detect, discover, recognize. In one of His parables He spoke of a slave who "went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and he seized him" Matthew Here is another case of searching, finding, seizing just as with Simon. In the Greek lexicons it is made clear that the primary meaning of this word is: As you search through the paintings of this event over the centuries, many will show Simon as a black man. However, many will not. Some commentators, especially those in the past few hundred years, make a point of stating emphatically that "Simon was NOT a Negro! Sadly, racial bias infests even those presuming to speak for the Lord about spiritual matters. There are actually some paintings depicting Jesus carrying the forward part of the cross, while Simon brings up the rear carrying the trailing end. I guess some bigots can tolerate a black man providing this service to Jesus, as long as he does so "from the back of the bus! Jesus made a point to associate intimately with those whom the world rejected, so why not send that visual message here on the way to Golgotha as well?!! Keener made an excellent observation on this: While Jesus suffered for them, His own disciples, who should have borne His cross, abandoned Him, forcing the Romans to impress a foreigner" [A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, p. There is no evidence that Simon objected or made a fuss. He rose to the occasion, even though it was an unpleasant one, and even though it may perhaps have been intended as a personal insult to his own identity. This unknown Simon breaks the loneliness, and shares with Him the burden of His cross! Apparently, these were well known brothers in the Christian community. Likewise, there is an Alexander mentioned in Acts We may have one further insight into the identity of Simon from Acts As for Simeon, the name "Simon is a contraction for Simeon" [Dr. James Hastings, Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, vol. Some feel this is given validity by the fact his nickname was "Niger," which is Latin for "black. He was possibly the Simon from Cyrene whose sons Alexander and Rufus were later known to be among the Christians at Rome. The noted biblical scholar, Dr. Why was he given a Latin nickname? The reason for the nickname, apart from its Latinity, is at any rate hardly to be doubted: Mark mentions Alexander and Rufus presumably because they were well known in the Roman church when he wrote his gospel. One may speculate further. If, as I truly believe after having researched this in some depth, Simon of Cyrene was a black man from Africa as was the eunuch from Ethiopia - Acts 8: What should we learn from this? It was no accident, in my view, that Simon just happened to be at that place at that time. He was there for a reason. He was there to place his hands upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps even to touch the flesh of our beloved Savior, and to declare, in spite of what humans might think, that our God is color, culture and country blind! When the great multitude of the redeemed of all time assemble before the Throne of God one day, there will be no discrimination in the makeup of that crowd, for our Lord purchased with His blood men and women "from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" Revelation 5: It is time to lay aside our religious and societal factions and truly evidence in our attitudes and actions the reality that we are ALL blood-bought, and thus a redeemed Family.

9: Mark Bearing Christ's Cross

The first one to bear the cross of Jesus, was this Simon of Cyrene. He bore it, and his family became part of the early church. Many have been blessed by his story, and by the following events due to his carrying of the cross.

Since readers will probably not be able to locate the print versions of this text, I have included page divisions of the original. Luke; and we may think that three evangelists would scarcely have all inserted it in their narratives, had it not deserved more attention than it seems ordinarily to receive. The circumstance is not noticed by St. John enables us better to understand the laying the cross upon Simon: This is an important point, as you will afterwards see: But this is not affirmed either by St. These evangelists merely mention that th. John, omitting all notice of Simon, expressly says of our Lord, " He, bearing his cross, went forth into a place, called the place of a skull. Combining the accounts of the several historians, we now know that when our Lord was given up by Pilate to the will of his enemies, the soldiers, as was the ordinary practice in regard of those sentenced to crucifixion, laid upon Him the cross whereon He was to die. After He had carried it a certain distance, the soldiers, for one reason or another, took it from Him, and placed it on a Cyrenian whom they happened to meet; and this Simon bore it to Calvary. He is mentioned by St. Mark as "the father of Alexander and Rufus: But allowing the probability that he was known to favour the cause of Christ, we have no means of ascertaining whether he were a Jew or a Gentile: In the book indeed of the Acts of the Apostles, where the prophets and teachers in the Church of Antioch are enumerated, we have mention of "Simeon that was called Niger;" and many have imagined that this might be "Simon the Cyrenian" – the surname Niger, or black, being thought to accord with the birthplace; for Cyrene was a city and province of Libya in Africa. We must therefore be content to remain ignorant in regard of the individual who bore the cross of Christ; and we may find that this ignorance will not interfere with the lessons to be drawn from the occurrence. The occurrence itself, as we have already intimated, is one which may be easily overlooked, but which perhaps only requires to be carefully considered in order to the being found full of interest and instruction. Let us then join ourselves to the multitude who are thronging round Jesus, as, with slow and fainting steps, He toils towards Calvary. This is the incident which we are to ponder: One would have expected that, with prophecies in their hands which they themselves applied to the Christ, they would have taken pains to prevent, so far as possible, their apparent fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth. And yet, as if judicially blinded, they themselves brought about the fulfilment, and that, too, in cases where prevention seemed quite in their power. Did they not know what Zechariah had predicted in reference to the price at which Christ would be sold? Thus again, how easy it would have been – and for men who were seeking to disprove the pretensions of Jesus, how natural – to take care that vinegar and gall should not be given Him on the cross, and that the soldiers should not part his garments amongst them, nor cast lots upon his vesture. There would have been no difficulty, in these and other similar respects, in hindering the fulfilment of prophecy: It is a striking proof of the thorough certainty with which God can reckon on every working of the human mind, that He should thus have put it into the power of the bitter enemies of Jesus to arrest the fulfilment of prophecies. He could so shape predictions that a single thought, and that the thought most likely to arise, would be enough to prevent their being accomplished in his Son; and yet be as sure that every tittle would come accurately to pass, as if He had ordered it by a decree as abiding as Himself. He left the enemies of Christ to themselves, quite at liberty to take their own course: And we consider that we have in the narrative now under review an instance of prophecy thus accomplished, when it seemed within an ace of being unfulfilled. There is no more illustrious type of the Redeemer, presented in sacrifice to God, than Isaac [] whom, at the Divine command, his father Abraham prepared to offer on Moriah. And whatever the measure in which Abraham was instructed as to the figurative meaning of the offering up of Isaac, there can be no doubt with ourselves that herein was accurately portrayed the sacrifice of Christ – the sacrifice presented, in the fulness of time, on the very spot where Abraham was directed to immolate his son. But it is among the most significant, perhaps, and certainly the most affecting, parts of the transaction, that Isaac was made to carry the wood on which he was to be presented in sacrifice to God. We read that "Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon

Isaac his son. It is hardly credible. Abraham, full of tenderess towards Isaac, his whole soul yearning over the son of his love, and agonized by the command which he was hastening to obey, would not have laid the heavy burden on the lad, unless in conformity with an injunction from God. Of Abraham we are told, that he "took the fire in his hand, and a knife. We take it therefore as expressly ordered by God, that the wood of the burnt-offering should be laid upon Isaac: And to those who knew nothing of the exact mode in which Christ was to suffer, this might have seemed one of the obscurest portions of the type: But the type was thoroughly fulfilled in this singular particular, when our Lord was led forth, carrying his cross. This was, to the letter, Isaac, bearing the wood for the burnt-offering. Yet how near was the prophecy to the being defeated! It was only for a part of the way that Christ carried the cross. The soldiers then took it from Him, and placed it on another. And they might at the first have seized on some bystander and given him the burden. And if any of the Pharisees or scribes, remembering the typical history of Isaac, and determining that it should not foreshadow that of Jesus, had suggested to the soldiery, perhaps with affected compassion, that it might be as well to lay the cross on another, it is probable enough that they would have acted on the suggestion, and done that at first which they were ready to do after a little delay. So near may the type have been to the being unfulfilled; so little may have been wanting to prevent the accomplishment of a signal prediction. But God, who could speak through his servant Zechariah of thirty pieces of silver as the price of the Messiah, and be confident that a prophecy, which He made it easy to defeat, would be fulfilled to the very letter, could command also the wood to be bound upon Isaac, and know that, notwithstanding the palpable character of the type, the cross would be bound upon Christ. And this is the first reflection which we have to make, as we see that Simon the Cyrenian is constrained to carry the cross after Christ. Had we met the procession when a little further advanced, we might have said, This suffering man, who is led forth to death, cannot possibly be Messiah, the antitype to Isaac; for he does not bear the wood on which He is to die. But now we have beheld the transfer of the cross: And it is the transfer of the cross which makes so remarkable the fulfilment of the type. Had Christ borne the cross to the end, we might have thought it a matter of course that the type should be fulfilled, regarding the fulfilment as assured by the known customs of a Roman execution. But the fulfilment is here in jeopardy: And I seem to have before me a beautiful evidence how the foreknowledge of God can assure Him of the minutest particulars, of every turn of human thought, of every motion of the human will, when I find that Jesus did indeed come forth bearing his cross, and therefore accomplishing an illustrious prediction, but that shortly afterwards, in the course, for ought I know, of a very few minutes, the soldiers laid hold on one Simon, a Cyrenian, and compelled him to carry the cross after Christ. But what induced the fierce and brutal soldiers to grant the Redeemer this little indulgence, and relieve Him for a time from the burden of the cross? But it is not [] be imagined that this was the only, nor even the chief, reason. Had not the condition of Christ been such as to suggest, in some sense, the necessity of relieving Him of the load, we can hardly think that the cross would have been removed. It may have been that even the soldiers were moved to something like pity, as they saw the Redeemer tottering beneath the weight. It may have been that they feared, that, if they now goaded on: Or it may have been that those who were eager to crucify the Saviour were impatient of delay; his feeble steps were too slow for their malice; and they urged the removal of the cross, that they might accelerate the time of his being fastened to it with the nails. But in any case, it must have been the exhausted condition of our Lord which gave occasion to the removal of the cross: You cannot fail to be struck, when you read the accounts of the crucifixion, with the utter absence of those expressions of pain, or assertions of suffering, which abound in mere human histories of some tragic occurrence. And even this exclamation indicated mental, rather than bodily anguish: Indeed, it is also recorded by St. John, that Jesus, as He hung on the cross, exclaimed, "I thirst;" and this may be taken as an expression of corporeal suffering. But it is very observable, that the Evangelist distinctly states that Jesus said this, in order "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," for the sake of effecting the accomplishment of the prediction, "And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. John, that Christ would have said nothing as to his thirst, had He not remembered a prophecy which was yet unaccomplished, so that the exclamation is hardly to be given in proof of the greatness of bodily anguish. And it might not be very difficult to arrange something like a plausible theory that the Redeemer was incapable of suffering in the body: And we need not stay to show you how fatal such a supposition would be

to the whole Christian system: But a man like one of ourselves He could not have been, unless, like one of ourselves, He had been accessible to pain, so as to feel, and to suffer keenly in feeling, the scourging, and the buffeting, and the driving of. It seems therefore as if it would be inexpressibly valuable to us, were it only submitting to the fearful processes of crucifixion. Had but the least sign of anguish escaped Him "of bodily anguish; for mental is quite another thing; He evinced this in the garden as well as on the cross; but it was purely mental, and proved nothing as to his flesh; " had then the least sign of bodily anguish escaped Him, a look, a cry, a convulsive start, and had it been mentioned by Evangelists, it would have served to identify the Redeemer with ourselves, to make us feel that He was indeed "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. But here the incident, on which we are discoursing, comes in, and scatters all doubt. I could not spare this incident: For why is the cross taken from Him, and placed upon Simon? Because He could scarcely advance, so exhausted was He with what He had endured, and so oppressed by the burden. He had already been scourged and buffeted. He had been smitten on the head with a reed: He might have been more than a stoic, indifferent to pain; He might have been of a nature which was incapable of pain. He had felt, if He had not shown his feeling; and now as He tottered feebly on, almost prostrated by his burden, a sinking sufferer whose every step seemed likely to be his last, indeed, indeed, it was evident that He was but a man, in the having flesh which could quiver, if He were more than a man in his power over body and soul. And thus is the incident narrated in our text, and which may be easily passed by with but cursory notice, most consolatory to those who seek to be assured that the Mediator "suffered, being tempted," and that the mysterious fact of his combining in one person the Divine nature and the human, did not exempt Him from such capacity of pain as might qualify Him to sympathize with the groaning and oppressed. We tell you again, we could not spare this incident: We have indeed evidence that Christ could hunger, and thirst, and be weary; and all such evidence is most precious, as testifying to the real humanity of the Saviour. But nevertheless, the evidence is far from being considerable: What we want is a clear witness, that He was no more incapable of bodily pain than any other of our race: I look with a sort of fearfulness and awe upon the Mediator, as malice and cruelty seem unable to wring from Him a sigh or a groan. I gaze in utter amazement, as He is lacerated by stripes, stricken by rude hands, baited by the rabble, and yet suffers no sign to escape Him that He feels the wounds, and writhes under the indignities. And as He is nailed to the cross, and then that cross, straining under its living burden, is lifted from the earth, and made to quiver in its socket, I can but expect the low moan of anguish, if not the wild and piercing shriek; and it startles me more, that there should be deep, sepulchral, silence, than had the air been rent with the cries of the sufferer. Is this man, as well as God, over whom pain would seem to have no power? Is his humanity any thing more than a phantom? Ah, it is not inaccessible to pain: If yonder victim have power to suppress the indications of agony, his agony is not the less actual, not the less intense. For as He came out from the city, bearing his cross, so worn down was He by his sufferings, so faint with loss of blood, so exhausted by fatigue, that even his remorseless enemies either pitied Him, or feared that He would die before He was crucified: We have not yet treated the incident as itself typical or symbolical; though we can hardly doubt that an event, which has apparently so much of significance, was designed to be received by us as a parable, and interpreted as a lesson to the Church. It can hardly fail to occur to you, that, on more than one occasion, Christ had spoken of taking up and carrying the cross, when He wished to represent what would be required of his disciples. You are all aware that miracles served as parables; that much which Christ was in the habit of asserting in words, He set forth figuratively in those actions which attested Him to be a teacher commissioned by God. The miracles were thus not only his credentials as a Prophet: And if the duty of taking up the cross, frequently urged as it was in the discourses of Christ, had been one which admitted of being readily set forth in his miracles, we may believe that we should long before have had its figurative as well as its verbal announcement. Then however was it ordered that the truth, so often urged in discourse, should be displayed in significant action: And we do not know whether the figurative lesson ought not to be considered as going beyond the verbal. What the Saviour had spoken of, and what He had enjoined, was simply the bearing the cross "the performing duties, and the submitting to endurances, from which nature might be averse, but which were appointed unto those who would gain eternal life.

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