

The Shank-bone Sermon—Or, True Believers and Their Helpers

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true believers are saved and sustained solely by Divine Grace and that it is a noble and necessary ministry to help and strengthen fellow believers in their faith.

Scripture: Acts 18:27, John 6:44, Ephesians 2:8, Romans 9:15, John 3:16, Romans 5:1, John 10:28, John 14:16

Topics: "Divine Grace", "Faith and Salvation", "Christian Ministry"

Description

In "The Shank-bone Sermon—Or, True Believers and Their Helpers," C.H. Spurgeon expounds on the vital role of Divine Grace in salvation and the ongoing need for believers to support one another. Drawing from Acts 18:27, Spurgeon highlights how true faith is a gift from God and stresses the importance of ministry that strengthens, consoles, and defends the faithful. This sermon encourages Christians to embrace their unique roles in edifying the body of Christ and to find assurance in the sustaining power of God's grace.

Transcript

"Who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through Grace." Acts 18:27.

APOLLOS is not Paul, and Paul is not Apollos. To blend the two in one would be to spoil each one of the two without producing a good third. It is a great mercy that we have Paul, Apollos, Cephas and other varieties of preachers, for not only is variety charming, but it is necessary. It is not everybody that can be profited by Paul, for it requires a great deal of fixed attention to follow him and many hearers cannot concentrate their thoughts for long. It is not everybody that can be profited by Apollos, for fine speech is thrown away on simple souls. It is written, "Then shall the lambs feed after their manner," and assuredly each one of them have a peculiar manner of feeding.

Some of God's people are edified by one minister and some by another—it is not mere whim—it arises out of conformation of character and habit of mind. Let Paul be Paul and edify the Pauline class—and let Apollos be Apollos and instruct those of his own sort. For my part, I would try to profit by either Paul, Apollos, Cephas, John, or James but, alas, I do not know where to go to hear them! I am happy in hoping that their successors are still with us, each one with his peculiar style of things. I am not going to compare them with each other but I would commend each one and thank God by whose Grace he is what he is. It would be a very bad day's work, if we could do it, to reduce Paul to Apollos, or to bring Apollos to the style

of Paul.

You see that the Holy Spirit has been pleased, by the pen of Luke, to give to Paul's travels and labors a very large proportion of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. This passage from the 24th to the 28th verse is an episode—a corner marked off to be a record of Apollos. What Apollos did afterwards we do not know. He may have been a very great evangelist—he certainly was an exceedingly useful Brother. But, dear Friends, I find no complaint from Apollos because, being mentioned in the sacred dispatches, he has so small a space allotted to him. He does not sulk because he has only four or five verses while Paul is described at great length!

If you and I should work for Christ and never be mentioned in the records of earth at all, let us not be sorry—there is most peace to those who are least talked about. God, who is Sovereign, dispenses according to His will and it may be that one working Brother will have all his story told and his life will make a useful biography, instructing and stimulating many for generations. Be it so. Another Brother, equally earnest and fervent, may never have his life written—there may only remain in the traditions of the Church one or two anecdotes about him, helpful and good. But let him not mind his obscurity—his real usefulness may have been great, none the less. Our record is on high! If the chronicles of earth are faulty, the registers of Heaven are perfect.

Many a man who has been forgotten here shall be remembered there. And I know that in Heaven it will give no saint the least trouble that he was not honored among men. What if no monument was set up, yet all true work is immortal.

The diligent workman will be perfectly contented when his Master says to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The echo of those words shall be Heaven to him! Sweeter than all the harps of angels shall be the voice of his Lord's approval! Go on, Apollos! Work on, though there is little said about you and do not envy Paul, whose name the halls of the Church are ringing! He did not seek himself any more than you did and his content in the published record lies only in the fact that it honors his Lord.

But now, to come close to the text, I want you to notice these words—"When he was come, he helped them much which had believed through Grace." Apollos, following Paul at Corinth, did useful service by confirming those who had already believed in the Lord Jesus. Our first head is—true Believers have believed through Grace. Secondly, such Believers need help, and thirdly, it is a worthy work in which to engage—to help those who have believed through Grace. May the Holy Spirit use many of us in this hallowed service! May we ourselves be helped through Divine Grace at this time!

I. First, then, THOSE WHO HAVE TRULY BELIEVED HAVE BELIEVED THROUGH DIVINE GRACE. I suppose Luke felt it necessary to insert those words, "through Grace." Nobody in his day doubted the fact that salvation is worked in men by the Grace of God—but the Holy Spirit foresaw that many, in later days, would conceal or obscure this Truth of God and therefore He moved the Evangelist to note it very plainly.

We have it under hand and seal from the Holy Spirit that those who believed in the Lord Jesus believed through Divine Grace. Surely Grace is to the front in all good things. And here let me say, it is Grace that gives us the Gospel which we believe—

"Grace first contrived the way To save rebellious man And all the steps that Grace display Which drew the wondrous plan."

It was Grace that chose the people whom God would save and gave them over to the Lord Jesus. It was Grace that gave Jesus Christ to stand in their place and bear for them that which was due to the justice of God on account of their sin. It was Grace which led the Savior to undertake and carry through the work of Substitution. Grace wrote the first letter of the Gospel—Divine Grace will write the last letter of it. Salvation is all of Divine Grace from first to last.

I would to God that all preachers and hearers knew the meaning of that word, "Grace," and did not confuse it and mix it up with human endeavors and creature merits, for, indeed, "it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." If it is of Grace, it is no more of works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. And if it is of works, it is not of Grace, otherwise work is no more work. "By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Grace signifies free, undeserved favor and as it comes from God to us, it is Sovereign Grace which is moved only by the good pleasure of Jehovah's will.

Grace is the active movement of the Divine will to produce the results which have been graciously determined. Grace makes a distinction between man and man and it must have all the glory of what it does. Grace is exercised according to the will of God and not according to the will of man, for the Lord has said it—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Grace sat in the council chamber of eternity and devised the scheme of mercy, the plan of redemption, the method of peace through the blood, the whole dispensation of salvation by Grace through faith in Christ Jesus!

I say, then, that while Grace gives us the Gospel to believe, Grace also gives us to believe the Gospel. We are personally to believe the Gospel and so only can we be saved. But if I came before you tonight and had nothing further to say than, "Believe the Gospel and you shall be saved," the message would add to your solemn responsibility and yet it would not save you—for you would not believe but would continue in your sins. Man left to himself is an unbeliever and an unbeliever he will remain. To meet the deep depravity of our nature and its settled unbelief, He who gave the Gospel to be believed also gives the faith that believes the Gospel! This is a wonder of Divine Grace! But then, in the realm of Grace everything is wonderful.

We are so set on mischief, so proud, so vain-glorious, so unbelieving that we never do come to receive the Gospel except through the operation of the Grace of God upon our consciences and wills. The faith which comes to God first came from God. I remember when I believed in Christ and took Him to be my Trust and was saved—I believed, and thus I entered into life and peace. It was not till some time after that that I understood the reason why I had believed. I said to

myself, "How is it that I have believed in Christ while others who have attended the same Gospel ministry and have enjoyed the same advantages, have not believed in Him?"

The enquiry was not, "Why did they refuse to believe?" I saw at once that their unbelief was their own fault and folly and that the blame must be laid at their door for they willfully refused the Savior. But this was not the question—I was not judging them—I was examining myself and enquiring why I had believed in the Lord Jesus. I saw that if I had believed it was not to be set down to my personal credit. I could not take to myself any honor because of it. My believing, when they did not believe, did not spring from any better nature on my part. God forbid that I should dream such a thing! It did not spring from any natural excellence of my will. There was a submissive will in me—but a something from above made that will

submissive—and that something lay at the back of everything. Then I understood that it was God's Grace that had made me to differ—and I gave to God, then and there, the glory of my faith—and the credit of my choice of Christ.

I have never met with any Christian man, whatever his doctrinal views, but he has been willing to give to God the glory of his conversion. He has ascribed it to the working of the Holy Spirit and not to himself—and he has joined with me in praising God for it. Though the Brother may quibble at the doctrine of Distinguishing Grace in the Cross, yet, in his own case in particular, he has been willing to confess that not only did Divine Grace give him a Gospel to believe, but Grace gave him to believe the Gospel. We come—but God draws. We come to God because He draws us! We came to believe in Christ because His Spirit enlightened and persuaded us and brought us into the happy state of salvation by faith in Christ.

Furthermore, I wish to add that such believing is a sure evidence of Divine Grace. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart—you have the Grace of God in you. There is no surer proof of it than this. Where there is faith there is Grace—the one is the inseparable fruit of the other. "He that believes on Him has everlasting life." "He that believes on Him is not condemned." These are not sentences of mine! I am quoting Holy Scripture to you and the Scripture cannot be broken. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." It is the believing that brings us into this condition of peace with God! I care not what works you shall bring me, be they ever so many—if you do not bring with you faith, which is the chief of all works—you have brought me nothing. If you believe in Jesus Christ, whom God has sent, you have the one sure and certain evidence of Divine Grace!

If you believe in Christ, alone, and are resting your salvation upon His finished righteousness, you have the clearest evidence that the Grace of God is in your heart. Will you not search and see whether you have real faith in the Lord Jesus? Make sure work on this point! If you believe not, you are condemned already. And what is more, if you believe through Grace, that Grace which made you believe is the best guarantee that you shall keep on believing. Faith which is born of self will die of self—but that which is the child of Grace will live forever! If you have begun to believe of yourself you will leave off of yourself—but if God's Grace began your believing—God's Grace will continue your believing and you will abide in this faith wherein you stand even to the end.

This gives me great comfort whenever I think of it, for I desire certainty for days to come. If the faith whereby I have laid hold on Christ to be my Savior is altogether worked in me by the Holy Spirit, through Grace, then I defy the devil to take away that which he never gave, or to crush that which Jehovah Himself created in me! I defy my free will to fling away what it never brought to me! What God has given, created, introduced and established in the heart He will maintain there! "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up," but what He has planted none shall root up, for it is written, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

The men of Corinth to whom Apollos came had believed through Divine Grace. Beloved, there is a sweet ring about this description. They "had believed," and their faith secured their souls. But they "had believed through Grace," and that secured their faith. "Through Grace" is the hallmark upon the precious metal of believing. There is no such thing as true believing where Grace is not present. We believe—it is an act of our own mind. But we believe through Grace—it is the result of God's Grace working upon our mind. We both will and do because God works in us to will and to do. We believe because the Holy Spirit leads us to trust in the Lord Jesus. So much upon the first point. May Divine Grace work in us true believing! O my Hearers, how I wish that you were all such Believers!

II. Now for the second consideration. SUCH BELIEVERS NEED HELP. I know they do, because we are told in the text that Apollos, "helped them much which had believed through Grace," and his work was not a superfluous one, or it would not have been mentioned here with commendation. In what respects do those who have Grace need help? In what ways can true Believers be helped?

Many Believers need help in further instruction. Young Christians cannot be supposed to know much when they first come to Christ—but they come to be disciples, that is to say, learners. They know the three R's—Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration—and that is by no means a small part of spiritual education. But they do not know these elementary Truths of God so fully as they might know them—and even about these things they will be the better for more teaching. Oftentimes they need somebody to open up passages of Scripture, to expound to them the analogy of faith and to help them to compare spiritual things with spiritual.

Beloved, you may be a great help to new converts if you will teach them "the way of God more perfectly." Oh, that ministries were more instructive! Alas, it seems often as if the preacher skimmed the surface and did not dare to enter into the treasure house of doctrine and open up the deep things of God! If public ministry falls short, private Christians must try to make up for it. We need the people instructed, for ignorance is the mother of superstition and skepticism. The uninstructed are easily carried away with novelties and delusions. Those who are established in the faith and know what they believe generally stand fast. Had the teaching from the pulpit been more clear and decisive during the past 20 years we should not, now, be living in an age of uncertainty.

Many who have believed through Grace also need help by way of consolation. You would be astonished if you knew the large number of Believers in Christ who are tempted to doubt, despondency and distress of mind. In the present congregation there are a number of persons so depressed in spirit they can hardly look up—but who will judge, when I am speaking—that I am referring to them. And I must confess that I am thinking of them and do very often think about them—and long to see them come forth from their present gloom. It is a great joy to me if I can help them at all by describing my own experiences of being downcast and lifted up. These bruised and broken ones need binding up!

Brothers, if you are like Barnabas, "sons of consolation," be not slack in your blessed service! O you spiritual men, trained in the school of sorrow, put forth your best endeavors to minister to diseased minds! Pour in the oil and wine of the Gospel wherever there is a gaping and bleeding wound. A word fitly spoken, a promise seasonably quoted may help much those who have believed through Grace. Apollos helped them much, also, by defending them against opponents. We find that, "he mightily convinced the Jews," and in doing this he screened believing Gentiles from many a rude assault. He disputed with all his might and with great fervor of spirit against those who tried to subvert the faith of the Christians.

Nowadays the Christian had better go fully armored, for arrows fly thick as sleet in a storm. Objections are always being raised—doubts are always being insinuated. It is hard for a man to keep his feet amidst the present torrents of unbelief that sweep down our streets. You that can stand fast should help those who cannot. You that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak in the matter of doubt. Give tremblers a word to encourage them in "the faith once delivered to the saints." Older Christians can do much in this direction by mentioning their own experiences of the certainty of Divine Truth. Tell the young people how God has helped you in the days of trial. Tell them how He has answered your prayers. Tell them what joy and peace you have had in dark times by trusting in God. Tell them, I pray you, the way by which the Lord has led you—and when you do this they will not be so likely to be staggered and cast down by every

quibbler who may assault them. "He helped them much which had believed through Grace."

Elderly Christians can do very much of this by baffling the adversary with those blessed facts of their own lives which, even to skeptics, are stubborn things. And we can also help those who have believed through Grace by giving them a word of direction. They frequently do not know what to do. They come to the end of their wits and their knowledge— and then the Christian who, by reason of use has had his senses exercised—may be of great service to the bewildered. We are commissioned by the Lord to be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame and guides to wanderers.

It is the lot of some of us to be employed by the King to conduct trains of pilgrims to the Celestial City—and full often we have to put ourselves in front of the women and the children to fight with Giant Grim or Giant Despair. For their sakes we enter the fight with lions, dragons and other monsters. The journey of the weaker ones to Heaven is a personally-conducted tour and the Lord of the Way employs us to be their guardians. All that have spiritual strength

should carry out the commission which is implied in the very possession of that strength. You should help the weak and give a brotherly word of advice to the inexperienced.

Beloved, do we lay ourselves out for this—those of us who have been long the people of God—as we ought to do? Do you not think that there is a tendency among many to despise the weak and leave them to themselves? How are they to grow wise and more instructed if they have no better society than their own? Do I hear an older one say, "Oh, that young lad, what does he know? What can he do towards my edification?" This is a very selfish question—let it not be heard among you! "I never got much out of the Church," one said to me—and he was somewhat surprised when I replied, "I never joined the Church to get anything out of it." "What did you join it for?" "Why, to do all I could for all who are in

it."

This wretched self-seeking poisons everything it touches. A certain lady went out with a number of Christian friends and being very easily displeased, she was soon complaining. Turning to a friend she asked him if he enjoyed himself. "No," he said, "I did not come here to enjoy myself, I came here to enjoy other people." There is a great deal in that. If you live for yourself, your object is mean and unsatisfactory. In fact if you live to yourself, you will die. But if you will learn to live to help the feeble and guide the doubtful—and to be a Great-Heart for King Jesus—you will live abundantly, for God will bless you.

Dear Friends, the bulk of Christians, when first converted, need leaders. They need somebody to show them the way and to go before them. I would to God that many here present who have been taught of God, if they do not become preachers and ministers, may, nevertheless, by their conduct and conversation vie with Apollos in this blessed work of helping much those who have believed through Divine Grace! By word and by example may the Holy Spirit teach you how to be convoys to the little ships which are now making the voyage of life.

III. So I come to the third observation which is this—IT IS A WORTHY WORK IN WHICH TO ENGAGE. Helping those who have believed through Grace is a work worthy of the highest talent and the greatest experience. I want to impress upon many of my instructed Brothers and Sisters that they should engage in it at once and keep at it continually. We are going to have a great number of converts in this place. We have been praying for them and we are sure to have them, for the Lord hears prayer and blesses His own Truth.

I want you to get ready to receive the new converts and nurse them for Christ. Whenever children are expected, somebody is warned of it and a skilled person is in readiness to cherish the weaklings. God will not send His babes to a Church that is not prepared to nurse them—and I want to stir you up to be ready to help much those who shall believe through Divine Grace. I claim this assistance of you and I feel sure that you will cheerfully render it, even as Apollos thus aided Paul.

I feel you will help, first, because you have been helped. Apollos became a helper because he had himself been helped. He began to preach and he preached all that he knew—but his knowledge was very defective. What he said was good—very good—but it was not fully the Gospel, for he had only learned of John the Baptist and had not yet been taught the doctrine of Jesus. Apollos teaches very eloquently, but still there is something missing in his teaching. He has not yet reached the full chord—he does not sound out the blessed music of the Gospel to perfection. Aquila and Priscilla ask him into their tent warehouse and they say to him, "Dear Friend, do you notice you went just so far, but you should have gone a little farther. You spoke about the Lamb of God—but you did not tell them that Jesus was the Lamb of God and that He had died to take away sin."

Apollos replied, "I pray you, tell me all about it." And when they further informed him of the death, the resurrection and the ascension of the Lord Jesus—and of the coming of the Holy Spirit—Apollos said, "Thank you. Thank you. Now I have grand Truths to preach and my message will be more full and gracious than it has been! I shall go forth to the synagogue tomorrow to tell them about the Messiah who has truly come and I shall speak with greater freedom concerning Him." Apollos had been helped and therefore Apollos was bound to help other people! Do you not think, you Christian people, that you owe something to the Church of God as well as to the Christ of God?

You were converted—was it not by a pastor's preaching, or by a teacher's instruction in the school, or by a book that had been written by a Christian man? Will you not repay the Church of God that which you owe to her instrumentality? If you have been helped as well as converted, you are especially bound to lay yourself out to help others. When a person who has been very despondent comes out into comfort, he should look out for desponding spirits and use

his own experience as a cordial to the fainting. I do not think that I ever feel so much at home in any work as when I am trying to encourage a heart which is on the verge of despair, for I have been in that plight myself. It is a high honor to nurse our Lord's wounded children. It is a great gift to have learned by experience how to sympathize.

"Ah!" I say to them, "I have been where you are!" They look at me and their eyes say, "No, surely you never felt as we do." I therefore go further and say, "If you feel worse than I did, I pity you, indeed, for I could say with Job, 'My soul chooses strangling rather than life.' I could readily enough have laid violent hands upon myself to escape from my misery of spirit." In talking to those who are in that wretched condition, I find myself at home—he who has been in the dark dungeon knows the way to the bread and the water.

If you have passed through depression and the Lord has appeared to your comfort, lay yourself out to help others who are where you used to be. If you are in prison and you get out, do not enjoy your liberty alone—hasten to set free another captive! Are your chains broken? Then be a chain-breaker in the Lord's name! A sailor who had long been a prisoner in France, gained his liberty. He went into Seven Dials, bought a cage full of birds, and when he had paid for them, he opened the cage and let them all fly!

People cried with wonder, "What did you buy them for?" "Oh," he said, "I bought them to let them fly. I know what it is to be a prisoner, myself, and I cannot bear that birds should be shut up in a cage."

Go to those who are what you were—caged birds—and let them fly by telling them of Jesus and the ransom price! Seek out poor, bound sinners and proclaim freedom to them. Proclaim liberty at the market in the name of Christ! I speak to some here who have a measure of natural ability for this work. Perhaps you resemble Apollos, because Apollos was an eloquent man. "Ah," says one, "I am not eloquent." I do not think that. There may be a difference of opinion as to what eloquence is. Eloquence is speaking out from the heart. I will tell you what I call eloquence in a child—it is the whole child working itself up to gain its wish and have its way.

There is a pretty thing that the child wants. He is very little, but he tries to speak about it and does his best to express his longings. He points to what he wants and clutches at it—he cries after it. Still he does not succeed and then he works himself up into an agony of desire. The boy cries all over—every bit of him pleads, demands, strives. Every hair of his head is pleading for what he wants. He not only cries with his eyes and with his tongue, but he cries with his fingers and his hair! He thinks of nothing but the one thing on which his little heart is set. I call that eloquence.

There is, in the Vatican, the famous group of the Laocoon. I stood one day looking at it. You remember how the father and his sons are twisted about with venomous snakes and they are writhing in agony as the deadly folds enclose them? As I stood looking at the priceless group, a gentleman said to me, "Mr. Spurgeon, look at that eloquent statue." Well, yes, I had looked at that statue. It was like a live thing, though only marble. I had not called it "eloquent" till he gave me the word—but certainly it was eloquent, though silent. It spoke of anguish and deadly pain. When a man speaks in earnest he is eloquent even though he may be slow of speech. His whole nature is stirred as he pleads with sinners for the Lord Jesus—and this makes him eloquent!

O my Brothers, you know not what you can do till you get at it with your whole souls! But if you happen to have the gift of fluent speech, I pray you use it in helping those who have believed through Divine Grace. "I have not the gift of speech," says one. Well, dear Brother, have you tried? Have you tried? Many a man has great powers of speech but he has been too bashful to develop them. Shall I put it in Saxon? He has been too much of a coward to find out his own capacity! If he could but have got rid of his fear under the impulse of a strong affection for others, he could have spoken and, by degrees, he would have spoken well.

We need more young men in this Church to go forth and preach the Gospel. Where are you, you dumb dogs? How will you answer for it if your Lord is robbed through your sinful silence? All our organizations are in need of speaking men and of earnest, loving Christian women who can plead with souls. I believe that there are more gifts lying idle than we have ever suspected. I charge you—place your talent in the Lord's treasury at once lest its rust should witness against you! But if you have not a great measure of gift, never mind about that. I do not know but what Apollos did mischief through being too gifted and too ready of speech. When he went to Corinth he could speak better than Paul and, after a while, to his grief, he weaned the fickle ones from the Apostle.

Apollos did not do this intentionally—it was not his fault—but some of them said, "Listen to Apollos! Is he not a splendid speaker? Did you ever hear such eloquence? Paul cannot talk in that way." One said, "I like Paul, for he is so

deep but yet he is neither a polished scholar, nor an elegant speaker like Apollos. He has never been to the college at Alexandria—he has never been polished by Egyptian philosophy. Apollos is the man for me." One cried, "I am of Paul!" And another, "I am of Apollos!" And another, "I am of Cephas!" While a few even said, "I am of Christ"—as if Christ could head a party within His own Church!

This led to a grievous dividing into parties and wretched following of men. When he saw it, Paul told them they were carnal and mere babes in Christ. Talent and education may stand in the way of a Believer and may not help him. But in your infirmity there is no such danger—so get to work in spite of your weakness! If you can only stutter, go and stutter the Gospel! And it is the Gospel that God will bless—not your stuttering nor your orating! If you can only write a letter in the simplest words about Jesus, go and do it! And the simplicity with which you write, while it looks like a weakness, may really be a source of strength fitting it the better for God to use!

If we have a measure of natural ability, be it great or small, let us use it—but if we have not that ability, we may acquire one form of capacity in which Apollos abounded. He was mighty in the Scriptures. Now we can all study our Bibles. If we believe in Jesus in our hearts we ought to have the Bible at our fingertips—and, if so, we shall help many by our instructive talk. The good Bible student has lips like a springing well. When the Word of God dwells in a man richly his speech drops fatness. Those who speak Scripture sow seed—and it is living and growing seed—whose harvest is salvation! It is God's Word, not our comment on God's Word, that saves men! Keep on quoting God's Inspired Truth and be yourself inspired by it so as to explain it by your own experience—and in that way you will help much them that have believed through Grace.

But, dear Friends, in addition to this, you will not do much unless you are like Apollos, fervent in spirit. Notice that 25th verse—"fervent in spirit." He was a burning man—a man on fire. He burned his way by his zeal. He was not content to speak calmly and coolly—he threw his soul into his preaching. That is half the battle! I do not know whether it is not three-quarters of it. "Fervent in spirit." If you are full of fire, full of life and full of heart, you will be a blessing to others. "How can I get warmth of heart?" asks one. Live in the Presence of God! I cannot give you any other prescription. Let the Lord shine upon you as the Sun of Righteousness and you will be fervent—all other methods are mere speculations and will fail.

The famous naturalist, Buffon, had, once, a large number of the wise men of the Academy of France at his estate. They were all philosophers—and you know what a philosopher is. If you do not know, you should meet one and I do not think that your appreciation of the sect will be increased. However, these were all philosophers—great men walking in a great man's gardens—all great together. In the grounds there was a glass globe and when one of these profound philosophers touched this glass globe on the shady side, he found that it was very, very warm—while on the side that was exposed to the sun it was comparatively cool.

Herein was a marvelous thing! He called his brother philosophers around him and I picture them as they gave out their various theories why this glass globe was hotter on the side away from the sun than on the side which was bearing the full blaze of noonday. One had a theory of reflection, another of refraction, another of absorption—I cannot give you all their words for they were wonderful words and wonderful theories—and they discussed, and discussed and discussed. Finally, Buffon, not quite satisfied with the philosophical conclusions which they had reached, called the gardener and said, "Gardener, can you tell me why this side of the globe, away from the sun, is hotter than the other side upon which the sun is shining?" "Yes, Sir," said the gardener, "Just now I turned the globe round because it was getting too hot

on one side."

This did not uphold the new philosophical theories, but it maintained an old-fashioned doctrine—namely, that the sun gives heat! You may depend upon it that the only answer to the question why a man is fervent in spirit is that he keeps his heart near his Lord! You need not enter upon any philosophical disquisitions as to how to maintain fervor and enthusiasm and all that. That is the most fervent heart which enjoys most of the light of God and that is the end of the whole matter. If you live in the light of God's Countenance you will be fervent—and if you turn away from Him you will grow cool. God give us to be fervent in spirit!

But now notice one thing more. Apollos greatly helped these people because he preached Christ to them. "For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." If we are going to help those who have believed in Christ our conversation with them must be full of Christ. Nothing will really feed the soul but

Jesus! His flesh is meat, indeed! His blood is drink, indeed! All else is froth, or wind. Reading yesterday, in "Israel my Glory," a book by Mr. Wilkinson who is the director of the Jewish mission at Mildmay, I saw a statement there which was quite new to me. He is speaking of the Jewish Passover at the present day.

Now you know what the Passover was according to the law of Moses—how a lamb was killed and the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and the two side-posts—while the flesh was roasted and eaten. The Jews at this day observe the Passover, but they observe it in a way which is according to the Rabbis and not according to Moses. On the table there are Passover cakes, lettuce, chervil and parsley as the bitter herbs. This I understand, but what is this concoction—a mixture of lime and mortar? And from where do they get the egg and the salt water? Moses knows nothing of eggs and mortar! What is there, do you suppose, besides? "Oh," you say, "the Paschal Lamb." No, no—they have left that out!

What is there at the Jewish Passover at the present time instead of the lamb? A shank-bone! A shank-bone, mark you—with no meat upon it! Only a shank-bone! The blood is gone and in place of it is an egg. The Lamb is gone and instead there is a shank-bone. "Ah, me! How can they thus make void the Law of God?" This I said involuntarily but very soon I remembered that I could not blame the Jews, for they are only imitating the Christians!

Go and hear many who pretend to preach the Gospel. Where is the Lamb, the Sacrifice, to be fed upon? Where is the sprinkled blood? Why they are ashamed to speak of "the blood"! They think the very word is vulgar. But what do they give us? A bone! A bone! A bone that no dog would care for—a bone of modern thought put in the place of the Lamb who ought to be fed upon by all the living Israel of God! I thank Mr. Wilkinson for such a simile. I smile to think of my Israelite friends sitting down to the table with their shank-bone and calling it the Passover—but they are quite as near the mark as my Christian friends sitting down to their divinity out of which the great doctrine of the Atonement has been taken—and calling it the Christian faith!

There is no food for bodies in the shank-bone, nor any food for souls in the modern theology—but in Christ Crucified there is every help that a soul can need. Are you burdened with sin? He bore it on the Cross. Are you afraid that sin will conquer you? You shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb. Trust in the atoning Sacrifice, alone and entirely, and you shall enter into a peace and joy which shall be the strength of your soul in future conflicts with evil. I need not say more—but I would press upon my dear friends who know the Lord to go "help them much that have believed through Grace."

As for those who have not yet believed in Jesus, may they now come and trust Him! The moment that you trust Him you are saved. "Look unto Me," He says, "and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." Look at once! Look and live!

"There is life in a look at the Crucified One." The Lord, by His Grace, constrain and enable you to give that look and to Him be glory forever and ever! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Acts 18.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/the-shank-bone-sermon-or-true-believers-and-their-helpers/>

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