

“WHAT SHALL THE HARVEST BE?”

NO. 2632

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 23, 1899
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind:
it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, strangers shall swallow it up.”
Hosea 8:7*

PRUDENT men look before them to see the result of their actions. Their eyes look right on, beyond the present to the future. They look before they leap. It is only the foolish man who goes blindly on, till at last he stumbles and has a desperate and probably fatal fall. Brethren, I hope that I am addressing those who have enough wit and wisdom to look at the consequences of what they are doing. This is how I wish to live—not merely doing what may give me today a temporary pleasure, but asking myself what will be the result of those actions by-and-by. How will they appear to me when I come to be old? What aspect will they wear when my eyes are failing me in death? What will be the result in that life after death—that endless future which is so sure to come to me, let me live as I may?

I say that I hope I am speaking to those who do look a little ahead, and are not, “like dumb driven cattle,” satisfied if there be grass enough within the reach of their mouths, but who look before them to see the consequences on the morrow, and especially on that last great day for which all other days were made—“the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

We are all sowing, brethren—we cannot help it. You sisters, too, are sowing—perhaps but a little garden plot, or possibly a broader acreage in public life—but you are all sowing. And every day there is a sowing. No man goes forth in the morning without a seed-basket. What may be in it, is not so easily told. There may be nought in it but the wind. There may be darnel in it. There may be in it curses which shall grow up to plague himself and others, but it is certain that we do not move an inch along the furrows of life without scattering some kind of seed. He that does least is seeding his idleness, and like the thistle that stands still, and offers its downy seed to be carried by every wandering wind, so does the sluggard—he does mischief by doing nothing.

As we are all sowing, the great question we have to consider is, “What will the harvest be?” Every wise man will ask himself that question. I may have sown very little in my small plot, or I may have walked far, and scattered the seed broadcast over the wider field committed to my charge—but what have I sown and what shall I reap? What sheaves shall I gather into the garner? Sheaves of fire that shall burn into my soul forever, or sheaves of glory that I shall bring with rejoicing in the last great day?

Brethren, if it be rightly examined, this matter of the harvest from our sowing will be found to be full of very rich encouragement to those who are seeking to serve God. If you have believed in Christ and received eternal life by faith in Him, and if now you are trying to labor for Him, you are sowing blessed seed—and if it comes not up today, or tomorrow, yet grace ensures a crop and you shall have precious sheaves which you shall gather in one of these days. Therefore, be encouraged to labor on.

The husbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth through the long and dreary winter, through the checkered days of spring, through March winds and April showers, he waits, until at last the golden harvest rewards him for all his toil. Labor on, then, beloved, “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

That which you sow, you shall also reap. Your Lord has told you so. Therefore, be not dismayed by the long waiting but—

*“Sow and faint not,
Till the seed a harvest bear.”*

But while this truth is full of encouragement to God’s people, it ought to be a very strong and powerful check to those who are living in sin. As you sow, you will have to reap. Those “wild oats” about which you laugh now, are easily sown, but they will make hard and sorrowful reaping. That act of iniquity, that indulgence in lust, that lie, that blasphemy, that revolt against God in stifling conscience and refusing to yield to Christ—all these will produce a harvest in due season.

It is easy to toss these pigeons up into the air, but they will all come home to roost. At nightfall you shall see every one of them—and they will have grown greater than when you set them flying, and they will be bearers of messages of misery to the rash hand that sent them flying abroad. It is a dreadful thing to be so living that you would not wish the result of your actions to come home to you. And if any of you are so living, I pray God, the Holy Spirit, now to give me something to say which shall, like a strong hand lay hold of your bridle and compel you to stand still, and race no longer in the downward course to hell.

My text naturally divides itself into two parts and at first sight, they do not seem to be very closely connected, but I think that I shall be able to show that they are. From the first part of the text we may learn that *some sowings will have a horrible harvest*. “They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.” Then the rest of the text will teach us that *some sowings must end in failure*.

They are such poor, windy things, that they shall never come to anything that is good. If a blade shall come up, yet “it hath no stalk.” And if it should seem to come to a stalk, “the bud shall yield no meal.” It shall be like the devil’s meal—all bran—there shall be no good flour in it. Or if it should yield meal, “if so be it yield, strangers shall swallow it up.” The old proverb says, “There’s many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip,” and these sowers find it to be so with their sowing. Strangers come in and steal away the fruit out of the very mouth that hoped to be fed by it, so that no good result comes of the sowing as far as he is concerned.

I. The first part of our text teaches us that **SOME SOWINGS WILL PRODUCE A HORRIBLE HARVEST**.

Some have a horrible harvest even in this world, as, for example, *the sowing of oppression, which leads to revolt and revenge*. I do not know a better instance of this than France affords. Some two hundred years ago, or even less than that, the owners of the land in that country treated the peasantry worse than they treated their cattle. Poor and almost naked men might have been seen dragging the plow over the soil themselves, because they were reduced to such poverty by excessive rents that they could not afford to keep animals to do the hard work.

Kings, princes, and the great ones of the land cared for nothing but their own pleasures—and those pleasures were often of the most vicious kind. Read the first chapters of Carlyle’s *French Revolution* and see in what a state France was. Yet, for a time, everything seemed to go on favorably for the oppressors. If the peasantry revolted, they were put down with an iron hand.

The mighty rulers thought that their empire would never come to an end, and as for the Grand Monarch himself—was there ever such another mortal as he thought himself to be, and as his courtiers spoke of him? Might not his kingdom last forever—at least, in the hands of his successors? Yet, one after another, those kings and nobles sowed the wind and at the end of the last century, they reaped the whirlwind.

Having, themselves, defied all law and justice, they had taught the people to do the same—and when the masses once rose in rebellion and got the upper hand—you know how they worked the terrible guillotine and how the streets, not only of Paris, but of many another city and town, were deluged with

blood, and the oppressors were made to realize that their cruelty and oppression had come home to them at last.

It is always so, sooner or later, according to the rule of God’s righteous government. Men may stretch the cord for a long while, but at length it snaps, and woe be to those that are holding it when it gives way! The people may be, for a time, trodden down beneath the tyrant’s hoof, but in the long run, the tyrant gets the worst of it. France has more than once furnished an awful instance of the retribution that comes upon those who do not regard the dignity of man and who treat him as if he were merely a beast, or something worse. They have sown the wind and they have reaped the whirlwind.

Now take another view of the picture presented by our text. We have lately had, over in Ireland, a terrible proof that *the justification of outrage leads on to murder*. Certain persons say, “We never meant to urge our countrymen to commit the crime of murder and we are shocked at the Phoenix Park tragedy. We wash our hands in innocence, for we are clear of guilt in this matter. We denounce it, we have no part in it, we abhor it.”

So they say, but what led up to that awful deed of blood? When men have used expressions in which they have not condemned, but have almost justified outrage and murder in other cases, what could come of it but that their disciples should go a little beyond what their masters may have intended? You cannot scatter fire and then when, at last, the city burns, say, “Oh, we never meant it to spread like that! We only intended to burn down that cottage, or that wretched shanty, but we never thought of burning down the city. We are as innocent of the crime as newborn babes—we never meant to do anything of the kind.” Yes, but you cannot say to fire, “Thus far shall thou go, and no further.” And in like manner, if you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind.

There is a whole province of Holland protected from the sea by a dyke, and there is a man who wants to let in a little water to the other side for a certain purpose. He says he is only going to let a little stream run through, so he takes his pickaxe and he works away till he has made a passage through the dyke, and then, of course, the whole dyke is swept away and the province gets drowned. The foolish fellow says, “God forbid that I should have the blame of this catastrophe! I never meant to do anything of the sort.” Of course he did not—he intended something far less than that, but his action naturally produced the result that followed, and therefore, he is rightly regarded as responsible for it.

Beware, I pray you, of trifling with the eternal principles of justice, and of right and wrong. Beware of ever sanctioning what you consider to be only a little evil, for, if you do, the greater evil is sure to follow at its heels. It is like the boy that the burglar takes and pushes through a little window, that he may open the door and let in those who commit robbery and murder. So, if any of us begin to advocate principles which sap and undermine the foundations of law and order, we cannot tell to what mischief our talk will lead—it is well for us to always be careful not to sow the wind, lest we should, by-and-by, reap the whirlwind.

Passing from those great instances which prove the rule, I want you next to notice that there are many persons who fall into this same fault. Take, for instance, *the teacher of error*. He is, perhaps, in other respects, an excellent minister, but he is unsound on one important point. Just so, and before long, his unsoundness on one point will lead to unsoundness all round. It is like a single speck of decay in fruit—it is very apt to cause the whole to go rotten.

Have you never heard the story which was told by Augustine, concerning a young man who had been, at one time, a professed believer in God, but who had given up all trust in Him? It occurred to him, when he was very much tried by the buzzing and biting of flies, that God could not have created such troublesome little creatures. They were such a nuisance to him that he concluded that the devil had made them, and having once gone the length of believing that the devil made flies, he thought it highly probable that Satan created some other nuisances. And he went on till at last he actually came to believe that the devil made everything, and he did not believe in God at all. “Ah!” remarks Augustine, as he relates the story, “He that erreth about a fly soon erreth about all things.”

Look at the progress of Romanism in our own country. When the most of us were boys, we used to hear our fathers talking of a Mr. Pusey and of baptismal regeneration—and it was thought then to be a wonder if a man wore a cross down his back. All England was stirred about the matter and everybody was horrified. But look at the so-called “priests” now—they have gone all the length of Rome. “Where?” you ask. Well, where are they not? They seem to be everywhere now, swarming over the land and they have brought back rank Popery into what used to be called “the Protestant Church of England.”

How has that come to pass? Well, first of all, there was a little of it tolerated, and then a little more of it was wanted, and gradually more was sucked down until now I believe that many of the Ritualists would be prepared to receive the Pope and all his cardinals, red hats and all. I really cannot see why they should not, for, if they did, they could scarcely be more Popish than they are, already.

Only go a little way in the course of error and it is like sliding down an inclined plane—there is no knowing where you will stop. Go to the top of St. Paul’s Cathedral and throw a stone down from that height. You say that you only mean to throw it a yard. Ah! but it will never rest until it gets to the ground, and perhaps it will kill someone before it reaches the earth.

So, when once you start in the way of error, there is no possibility of stopping unless divine grace shall interpose to save you from the consequences of the first false step. You sow the wind and you reap the whirlwind. A little error leads to more, and that to still more, until the very idea of God is given up.

I therefore love to meet a man who is stiff-backed in his orthodoxy and in this age of laxness and looseness, I am prepared to clap my hands even when I see a little bigotry. I like a man to believe something—to stick to it, to know that it is true, and not to be ashamed to avow it in the teeth of his fellow men—let them oppose as they will, for there must be something true and oh! that God’s gracious Spirit may teach us what it is. And when we once know it, may we hold it fast, come life or come death—for if we do not, we shall sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.

Here is another instance of the same truth—*an ill example at home*. I will confine it to that one point, though it is of general application. You probably know a man who is very lax in the management of his family. He professes to be a Christian himself, perhaps, but his sons and daughters are allowed to plunge into every frivolity and every vanity. Ay, and they may even go into open sin and all that they will hear will be some gentle word like that which fell from the lips of soft-hearted Eli when he did but hint that his sons were not doing well when they were doing much that was terribly ill.

The man even hears that such-and-such a vice has been committed by his son, yet he scarcely upbraids him. He is so easy-tempered that he says nothing, though he sorrows within his own heart. Peradventure, his own example and the example of his wife are not such as could be desired. Family prayer is neglected and holy living is not known in the house. He gets prematurely old—his son has died very soon—he has drunk himself to death, or destroyed himself by vice. His daughters, too, are unhappy in their marriages. The whole family has virtually gone to ruin as to any connection with the Christian church.

What shall I say of the old gentleman? He will not say it himself, but I must say it for him—he sowed the wind and he has reaped the whirlwind. The father’s character is usually seen in his sons. It has been said that ministers’ sons often turn out badly—if it is so and I am not sure that it is—it must be because the ministers have not kept their own vineyards, for the rule still holds good, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Generally, though not always, if he does depart from it, it is because there has been some fatal neglect in his training—and there are some Christian parents who are acting thus. They are so indulgent, not only to their children, but to themselves also, that they do not like to give themselves the trouble that ought to be taken in all such cases. They are sowing the wind and they will reap the whirlwind.

Let me give another illustration of the truth of the text with reference to *persons who fall into evil habits*. At first, those evil habits are under restraint. They admit that they drink, but they say that they cannot be called “drunkards.” They may, now and then, take more than is good for them, but still, it is

not very often. That is the beginning of the evil. And by-and-by, where are they? They have sown the wind and they reap the whirlwind.

Did you never hear the story of the Persian prince, who dreamed that he was drinking from a cup, and a fly came and tried to sip from it? He drove it away, but as he kept on drinking from his cup, it came back—and it had grown as large as a bird. He drove the creature away, but it returned as large as an eagle—the largest kind of bird. He tried to chase that away, but it soon came back in the form of a man, who grinned at him most horribly. He strove to get that man away, but soon he was back in the form of a giant, who trod on him and crushed him to death.

That is just the picture of the growth of an evil habit. At first you say, “Is it not a little one?” But it grows and increases, till it becomes unconquerable. That parable illustrates our text—if you sow the wind you will reap the whirlwind. You cannot live in sin, you cannot do wrong of any kind, or in any form, but it will come back to you, not merely as wind, as you sowed it, but as a whirlwind, as a horrible tempest, as a rushing tornado, carrying everything before it.

I will not tarry to give more illustrations of this solemn truth, because I want to leave a few minutes for the consideration of the second part of the subject. Only I pray that God may write on the memory and heart of any of you who are living as you should not live, the great fact that, as surely as you so live, “That which a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” And he will reap even worse than he sows, for if he sows the wind, he will reap the whirlwind.

II. Now let us turn to the second part of the subject which is that **SOME SOWINGS MUST END IN FAILURE.**

There are some people who do not think that they are doing any hurt, yet they are *living an aimless life*. Go to them and ask what they are sowing? “Nothing,” they answer. They say that they are doing no hurt to anybody, for they are not doing anything at all—but is not that kind of life an injury to themselves and to others also? If you have no aim in life, no high ambition, no object, no noble purpose—does anything ever come of it?

People talk of what they call, chance, but I never found any chance of a man’s getting to be holy without intending to be so. I never yet heard of a man doing any great good in the world if he did not mean to do it. I never heard of a man glorifying God by accident, nor of anyone getting to heaven as it were by the throw of the dice—somehow finding himself there, but not knowing how it all happened.

No, if you lead an aimless life, what will come of it will be just what the text says—“It hath no stalk” There will be no upgrowing from it, and even if there should be some kind of stalk to the seed that you have sown, yet when it springs up, “the bud shall yield no meal.” It cannot be any comfort to you, even if things should go pretty well without your intending that they should, for the comfort, after all, lies in the motive and in the intention. And even if your life should somehow turn out to be better than that of other aimless persons, though you never intended it to be so, “if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.” If you meant it to be nothing, it will be nothing.

I daresay that I am speaking to a large number of people who do not know what they are living for. You have come into the world, and here you are, and in due time, you will go out of it—but that is all that can be said of you. You are doing nothing. You have no noble end in view, no glorious purpose to accomplish, no sublime aspiration to realize. Then take it for granted that if all you sow is the wind, you will reap nothing but wind—only it will come to you in a fiercer form—as a whirlwind, for God will say to you, “I made you for My glory. I sent you into the world with a purpose. I entrusted you with talents. I made you a steward of My goods and now you are accused of having wasted My goods. Give an account of your stewardship.” What will you say then? Alas! in that day the trifler, the idler, the mere butterfly in the garden of the world will find things going hard indeed with him. God save you all from leading an aimless life!

But there are some who are sowing the wind in another form. They are *leading a selfish life*. Self is the beginning and the end of their life. They open a shop simply to make money. They live at home to be comfortable. Perhaps they enlarge themselves a little by taking the wife and the children into the

circle of self, still, that is all—they have no care for God, no love for Christ, no wish to help the poor, no thought about eternity. That is a life of sowing the wind and it will end, sooner or later, in reaping the whirlwind, for no man lives unto himself without earning for himself a fearful reward. Selfishness is often like the serpent that stings itself to death. It is not possible, within the compass of a man’s own soul, that he should satisfy the cravings and desires of that soul. When he loves God and loves his neighbor—he is really most of all blessing himself—for then is he living to true purpose.

But when self is everything to a man, he confines his soul within the morgue of his own ribs, and his spirit dies within him and becomes like a stone. In the case of the man who lives only for self, it may be said of his life, in the words of the text, “It hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal.” He gathers riches, but has no happiness or contentment in them. He is like Solomon, who, with all his possessions, had to cry, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Or if he gets to be rich and seems to enjoy himself a little, he suddenly dies and strangers swallow up his estate. All that is left of him is a massive tomb and the notice in the newspapers that he died worth so many thousands of pounds—which is not true, for he never was really worth a farthing all his life. He was a worthless man whose only value consisted in the money he possessed.

O my dear hearers, I implore you, with all my soul, not to live unto yourselves! If you desire the highest, grandest selfishness that can ever be attained, I charge you, throw selfishness away, remembering our Savior’s Words, “He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.” He who casts his life away for the sake of Christ and for love of the truth, shall be the man who shall really save his life, and find true joy and blessedness. But for anyone to live for self is to sow the wind and to reap the whirlwind.

So, once again, will it be if a man *lives a self-righteous life*. A self-righteous man is generally very great at sowing—so many prayers—so many almsgivings—so many sermons—so many ceremonies. Yes, wind, wind, wind. He is sowing wind, but what will come of it all? This very good religious man—I forget whether his name is Good Enough, or Too-Good, but I believe the families are cousins—is, in his own opinion, so very excellent that he does all he ought to do and perhaps a little more. Yet he is only sowing the wind. And what will he reap from it?

Well, if God is very gracious to him, he will soon reap the whirlwind, for he will find, to his confusion, that all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags and they shall be like the withered leaves of the forest borne away by the wind. I pray that he may, in this sense, reap the whirlwind very soon, for, if not, he will do so in the next world, when all his pretended good works and all his formal observances of external religion will be nothing but so much whirlwind to blow in his face, and to fan the flames of hell forever.

O dear friends, shun self-righteousness and trust alone to the righteousness of Christ! May the Spirit of God lead you to wash in the atoning blood and then cover you with the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ! Then it will be well with your soul—but all self-righteousness shall end in delusion and confusion forever and ever. May God grant that none of us may, in this sense, sow the wind!

The text is pre-eminently true of every man who *leads a deceitful life*. Oh, have I the misery of speaking to one who makes a profession of religion and who wishes to be thought to be a Christian, but yet is not really so? It is hard for a true believer to maintain a Christian character, but it is very much harder to keep up that character when there is nothing at the back of it. Oh, how desperately does the man who is a hypocrite have to labor! He has to patch up here, and patch up there—daub with untempered mortar here, and whitewash there, and he never has any peace. And all the while he is only sowing the wind.

There is nothing real in his religion, and what will come of it when that hypocrisy is discovered, when he stands revealed before the bar of God? Will his hypocritical religion do him any good? No, “it hath no stalk” even now. It cannot yield him even present comfort. If there be a “bud” that looks a little like self-respect, it “shall yield no meal.” I have already quoted the old proverb, “The devil’s meal is all bran,” and I may add that the hypocrite’s meal is all bran. There is nothing substantial in it. And even if

he should seem to die in the odor of sanctity, yet the stranger shall come in and devour his supposed religiousness, for somebody shall tell the truth about him and so his fine reputation shall be utterly blasted.

Now, brothers and sisters, I have come to the end of this discourse. And what should be the practical result of it but that, if we have been sowing anything that we ought not to sow, we should pray God to come and plow it all up. Lord, drive the plow straight through every life that is not according to Your Word! Oh, to have all the evil obliterated—every seed of sin crushed and destroyed! Would God that it might be so with all of us!

What next? Well, let us then go—oh, may the divine Spirit lead us!—to Jesus Christ and ask Him to give us the good seed. Let us have our hands washed from the evil in which we formerly delighted and He alone can cleanse us. Then let us take the clean good wheat which He will give us out of His own granary, and let us go and sow it. God help us to sow it right and left, from morn to eve, without weariness, that, at the last, we may gather in a glorious harvest, not to our own glory, but to the praise of Him by whose rich, free, and sovereign grace we were enabled to sow to the Spirit, and of the Spirit to reap life everlasting! Amen.

Before we go, we will sing that very solemn hymn in Mr. Sankey’s book, “What Shall the Harvest Be?” It will help to impress the subject upon our memories and hearts.

*“Sowing the seed by the dawn-light fair,
Sowing the seed by the noon-day glare;
Sowing the seed by the fading light,
Sowing the seed in the solemn night:
Oh! what shall the harvest be?”*

*“Sowing the seed with an aching heart,
Sowing the seed while the teardrops start,
Sowing in hope till the reapers come,
Gladly to gather the harvest home:
Oh! what shall the harvest be?”*

*“Sown in the darkness, or sown in the light,
Sown in our weakness, or sown in our might,
Gathered in time, or eternity,
Sure, ah, sure, will the harvest be!”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GALATIANS 5:13-26 AND GALATIANS 6:1-10

Remember, beloved brethren, that the epistle to the Galatians is one in which Paul, with especial clearness, proves the doctrine of justification by faith alone. So much is this the case that the famous Commentary of Martin Luther upon this epistle is perhaps the strongest work extant upon the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith.

But that doctrine was never intended to be separated from the Scriptural teaching concerning the fruit of faith, namely, good works, and hence, we find, in the close of this very epistle, the strongest possible declaration that if men live in sin, they will reap the result of sin—and that only if, by grace, they are brought to walk in holiness, will they win the rewards of grace.

Galatians 5:13. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.*

“Do not make license out of your liberty. Remember that liberty from sin is not liberty to sin.”

13-14. *But by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

The condensation of the whole law is contained in that one word, “love.” In the first table we are taught to love God. And the commandments of the second table teach us to love our neighbor.

15. *But if you bite and devour one another,—*

Finding fault, slandering, injuring, bearing malice and so on—“If ye bite and devour one another,”

15. *Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

“You will eat one another up. You will, each one, condemn his neighbor.” Paul represents the great Judge coming and waiting outside the door. And when He hears two men condemning one another, He says to Himself, “I will confirm their verdict. They have mutually condemned each other, I will say ‘Amen’ to it.” What a sad thing it is if professed Christians are found thus condemning one another!

16. *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

Walk under the Spirit’s power, following His guidance. The Spirit never leads a man into sin. He never conducts him into self-indulgence and excess.

17. *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

How often that is the case! You would be perfect, but “ye cannot do the things that ye would.” We would, if possible, escape from every evil thought—we would not even hear of anything sinful, if we could help it.

18-19. *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,—*

Any kind of sensual indulgence—whatever it may be—a lustful glance, the cherishing of an unclean desire—the utterance of a foul expression—all this is condemned, as well as the overt acts of adultery and fornication.

20-21. *Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness,—*

Is drunkenness actually put by the apostle after murder, as though it were something worse than that terrible crime? Or is it not, oftentimes, the case that drunkenness lies at the bottom of the murder?

21. *Revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Paul never said, nor ever thought of saying, that a man might live in sin that grace might abound. No, no—these evil things must be given up. Christ has come to save us from every evil work. And this is the salvation that we preach—not simply salvation from hell, but salvation from sin—which is the very fire that has kindled the infernal flame.

But how different from all this evil is the fruit of the Spirit!

22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love,—*

Universal love—first, to God. Next, to His people and then, to all mankind. Have we that fruit of the Spirit? If so, it will make us of a very amiable disposition. It will dethrone selfishness and set up holy affections within our heart.

22-23. *Joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:*

Joy and peace seem to blossom and ripen out of love. Long-suffering, too, is part of the fruit of the Spirit. You will be hourly tried, but the Spirit of God will give you patience to suffer long and to endure much. You will also have gentleness. Some people are very hard, stern, severe, quick-tempered, passionate—but the true follower of Christ will be gentle and tender, even as He was.

23. *Against such there is no law.*

Neither God nor man has ever made a law against these things—the more there is of them, the better will it be for everybody. Oh, that they prevailed all over the world!

24. *And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

A crucified Christ is the leader of a crucified people. Oh, to have all the affections and lusts of the flesh nailed up! They may not be actually dead, for those who are crucified may still live on for some hours, but they are doomed to die. Their life is a very painful one and it is hastening to a close. A man who is crucified cannot get down from the cross to do what he wills, and oh! it is a great blessing to have our sinful self thus nailed up.

Ah, sir! you may struggle, but you cannot get down. You may strive and cry, but your hands and feet are nailed—you cannot go into active, actual sin. The Lord grant that the nails may hold very fast, that none of the struggling of our old nature may be able to pull out those nails that have fastened it up to the cross!

25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

If that be our real life, let it also be our course of action.

26. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory,—*

Do not let us want to be accounted as somebody, for, if we do, we prove that we are really nobody. Nobody is anybody till he is willing to be nobody—as long as he wants to be somebody, he is nobody and nothing.

26. *Provoking one another, envying one another.*

God save us from that and every other form of evil!

Galatians 6:1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,—*

He is a slow traveler. He is not speeding swiftly on the way to heaven, so the fault overtakes him. Had he been quicker of pace, he might have outstripped it, but he is “overtaken in a fault.” What then? Turn him out of the church? Have done with him? No. “If a man be overtaken in a fault”—

1. *Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;*

Pick him up, help him to run better than he did before.

1. *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

Paul does not say, “Lest thou also fall,” but “Lest thou also be *tempted*”—as much as to say, “You will be sure to fall if you are tempted,” and that man who thinks that other people ought to be cast off because they have committed a fault is so proud in his own heart that he only needs to be tempted, and he would fall, too. This is a very expressive way of putting the matter. “Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

2. *Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Help your brethren. If you see that they have more to do than they can accomplish, take a share of their labor. If they have a heavier burden than they can bear, try to put your shoulder beneath their load, and so lighten it for them.

3. *For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

Paul does not say, “He deceiveth other people.” No, “he deceiveth *himself*.” As a general rule, other people find him out, they learn what he really is, but “he deceiveth himself.”

4-5. *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.*

There is, after all, a burden which we cannot carry for others and which we cannot shift upon others. There are burdens of care, and sorrow, and trouble which we can take from other men’s shoulders, but the great burden of responsibility before God, each man must himself carry.

6. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teaches in all good things.*

Those who are taught, and so receive spiritual things, should maintain those who are their teachers as far as they are able to do so.

7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.*

That is true under the Gospel as well as under the law.

8. *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;*

That is what always comes to the flesh—it decays and corrupts.

8. *But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

No corruption shall come to that which belongs to the Spirit. “He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

9-10. *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—416, 95 (SONG I), 654
AND FROM “SACRED SONGS AND SOLOS”—42, “WHAT SHALL THE HARVEST BE?”**

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.