

CONCEIT REBUKED

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A SERMON
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“Should it be according to thy mind?”
Job 34:33

ELIHU thought that Job had spoken too boastfully, and that there was too much of self about him, and therefore, he reproved him by asking this question, “Should it be according to thy mind?” It is a question which, in the original, has a great wealth of meaning in it, and as the language of the book of Job is extremely ancient, and very sententious, it is not easy to get the fullness of Elihu’s meaning.

But it has been said that upon the whole, our translation not only gives the meaning of his inquiry, but also more of the meaning than can be conveyed in any other words, so that we may be perfectly satisfied with it, and may pray God the Holy Spirit to apply it to us, and if we have grown to be high and mighty, and have begun to criticize the way of God in dealing with us, this question may come to us very sharply, “‘Should it be according to thy mind?’ Should everything be arranged just to suit your whims and wishes? Should everything in the world be fashioned according to your taste, and the whole globe revolve just to serve your turn, and please your fancy? ‘Should it be according to thy mind?’”

There are four things I am going to say concerning our text, and first I shall ask, *Are there really any people in the world who think that everything should be according to their mind?* Then secondly, I shall inquire, *what leads them to that notion?* Thirdly, I shall try to show you *what a mercy it is that they cannot have everything according to their mind*, and then, fourthly, I shall urge you *to keep this evil spirit in check*, so that, henceforth, you will not wish that things should be according to your mind.

I. Our first question has a measure of astonishment about it. ARE THERE REALLY ANY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO WOULD HAVE EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THEIR MIND? Oh, yes, there are such people! I should not wonder if there are some of them here right now, in fact, I question whether we have not, all of us, at times, drunk very deeply into this naughty, haughty spirit. If we have done so, may we be speedily delivered from it!

First, *there are some people who would have God Himself according to their mind.* Now, as a matter of fact, all that I can know of God I must learn from God revealing Himself to me. I cannot discover Him by myself, He must unveil Himself to me, and that He has done in Holy Scripture. All that He intends us to know about Himself, He has revealed in the written Word and in the Incarnate Word, His ever-blessed Son.

But there are some people who get their idea of God out of themselves. You may have heard of the German philosopher who evolved the idea of a camel out of his own consciousness, at least, so he said. I do not think it was much like a camel when he had evolved it, but there are many persons who try to evolve the idea of God out of their own consciousness. It cannot be, they say, that certain statements in the Bible are true, because there is something or other, in their inner consciousness, that contradicts the Scriptural declarations. God, as they believe in Him, is what they think He ought to be, not what He really is.

And there are some, in these days, who have even gone so far as to reject the Old Testament altogether because its teaching concerning God does not meet the approval of their very marvelous minds. Practically, these people are idolaters, for an idolater is one who makes a god unto himself. The

true worshipper of God—the accepted worshipper—is one who worships God as He is, and as He reveals Himself in His Word, but there are many persons who make a god out of their own thoughts.

The teachers of the modern school of theology work in a kind of god-factory. The people in some heathen lands make their gods out of mud, but these men make their gods out of their own thought, their imagination, their “intellect.” That is what they call it, though I am not sure that it is that organ which is at work in this instance. But when a man makes a god of thought, he is just as much an idolater as if he had made a god of wood or of gold.

The true God—the God of Scripture—thus revealed Himself to His ancient people, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” This God is our God, “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” “the God of the whole earth shall he be called.” Many a man refuses to accept this God as his, but I would like to ask him, “Should God be according to thy mind?”

That would be a strange god indeed. Should He have no other attributes but such as you would give to Him? Should His character and conduct be only such as you can comprehend and justify? Must there be nothing in Him that shall puzzle you? Are there to be no divine deeps that shall be beyond the reach of your finite mind? Are there to be no heights beyond your power to soar? That is what seems to be your notion, and if there is anything that staggers you a little, you say, “I cannot believe it.” If it were possible, you would eliminate from the character of God everything that is stern and terrible, though these attributes clearly appertain to the Most High as He has been pleased to reveal Himself in Scripture.

I beg you, dear friends, never to attempt to mold the character of God with the fingers of your own fancy. Worship Him just as He is, though you cannot comprehend Him. Believe in Him as He reveals Himself, and never imagine that you could, by making any change in Him, effect an improvement in Him.

By toning down His justice, you think that you are increasing His love, and by denying His righteous vengeance, you imagine that you are honoring His goodness, but instead of doing so, by the removal of these things which alarm and annoy you—if you could do so—you would take away part of God’s grandeur and strength which make His goodness and His mercy to shine so brightly as they now do. Leave God just as He is, remembering how He has said, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” The infinite God must be past finding out by the creatures whom He has made.

I confess that it is one of my greatest joys to find myself completely baffled when I am trying to comprehend the character of God. Sometimes, when I have tried to preach upon the deity of Christ, I have been fairly staggered under the burden of that stupendous truth, and I have felt the utter uselessness and poverty of human language to describe our great and terrible yet loving Lord, and I have been glad to have it so, for verily, God is altogether above our comprehension, and none of us can speak of Him as He deserves to be spoken of, but never let us try in any way to diminish His glorious perfections.

A more common way of offending against God, and setting up our self-will, is by *quarreling with His providential dealings*. If anyone here is doing so, let me ask, “Should it be according to thy mind?” You look, sometimes, upon the arrangements of providence on a great scale in reference to the nations of the earth—you see them at war with one another, and you note how slow is the progress of civil and religious liberty, and how few there are to rally in defense of right principles.

Sometimes, you get greatly distressed about the general state of affairs, and you wish you could alter it, but the Lord looks down from His eternal throne, and He seems to say to you, “Should it be according to thy mind?” The world was wisely ordered by God before we were born, and it will be equally well ordered by Him after we are dead.

When Alexander Peden, the Covenanter, was dying, he sent for one of his brethren, a fellow minister of the Word—James Renwick, and he bade him stand out in the room, and turn his back to his departing friend. When he had done so, Peden said to him, “I have looked at thee, and I perceive that thou art only a little man, and thou hast but feeble shoulders and weak legs.” “Yes,” replied Renwick, “that is true, but

wherefore hast thou made that observation?" "Because," said Peden, "I perceive that thou canst not, after all, carry the whole world upon thy back, thou art not made for any such work as that," and I may say of all of us who are here that we were not made to carry the world on our backs.

Yet some of us attempt to play the part of Atlas, and not only try to carry the world, but seek to set the church right as well. We fancy that we can do that, poor worms that we are, but the Lord knows that we can do nothing of the kind. "He remembereth that we are dust," though we are apt to forget it ourselves.

Well, beloved, after all, "should it be according to thy mind?" Will you, like Jonah, sit pining, and mourning, and complaining? Does not the eternal Ruler understand the politics of nations, and the best way of governing the world, infinitely better than you do? Do not you attempt to drive the horses of the sun, your puny hands are unfit for so tremendous a task as that. Leave all things with God, they are ordered well so long as they are ordered by Him.

Probably, however, it is with the minor providence that we more often quarrel when we are in an ill state of heart. You think that you would like to be rich, yet you are poor. "Should it be according to thy mind?" You would have liked to be healthy and strong, but you are weak and sickly, or you have a suffering limb that troubles you, and you sometimes think, "Mine is a very hard lot, I wish it could be altered." "Should it be according to thy mind?"

Should the fashioning of yourself and your circumstances have been left to you? What think you? Possibly you have recently sustained a great loss in business, and you cannot quite get over it. "Should it be according to thy mind?" Should providential circumstances have been arranged otherwise so as to suit you? Should God have stopped the great machinery of the universe, and put it out of gear in order to prevent you from losing a few pounds? "Should it be according to thy mind?"

Perhaps it is worse than that, a dear child has been taken away just when he had become most closely entwined around your heart. You would fain have kept him with you, but was it right that he should go, or right that he should stay? Come now, there is a difference of opinion between you and God, who is in the right? Should it be according to His mind, or according to thy mind?

"Ah!" says someone else, "it is the mainstay of the home who has been taken away from us—the husband, the father of the family." Well, though it is so, again I ask concerning this bereavement, or any other trial that comes to you, "Should it be according to thy mind?" It should be sufficient for you to know that the Lord has permitted it, or actually performed it.

Should it be according to thy mind, or according to His mind? It is not easy, I know, to submit without murmuring to all that happens to us. I am probably touching very tender places in many who, at divers times and seasons, have really felt that God, in His providential dealings with them, had been unkind to them, or that, at least, He had been showing His kindness in a very strange way.

There are some who carry this difference between them and God into another sphere, for *they do not approve of the Gospel as it is taught in the Bible*. You know that the Gospel, as revealed in the New Testament, is so simple that a child can understand it, and you may go and teach it to the poorest and the most illiterate, and many of them will leap at it, and grasp it at once.

But there are others who think that it should be something which is much more difficult to understand, something which would need a higher order of intellect than the common people possess. Do you really think so, my dear sir? "Should it be according to thy mind?" Would you shut out the poor, and the needy, and the illiterate from the privileges of the Gospel, and keep them to yourself, and to a few others who have been highly educated?

Surely not. O brethren, if it were possible for us to preach a Gospel that we had made obscure, or which could only be comprehended by the *elite* of society, we should soon have cause sadly to deplore before God that we had lost that simple, blessed, plain way of instruction which the wayfaring man, though a fool, can understand, and in which he need not err.

Many try to trim down the doctrines of grace. They would get rid of election if they could. Anything like the specialty of the atonement of Christ they cannot bear. The sweet and blessed doctrine of

effectual calling they abhor, and they would fain make a Gospel of their own. But should they want to do so? Is it not your duty and mine, brother, rather to try to find out what the Gospel really is than to seek to make it what we consider it ought to be? “Should it be according to thy mind?”

We have known some people take a text of Scripture, and because it did not square with the system in which they were brought up, they tried to cut it down to make it fit in with their notions, but sirs, is not the Gospel grander than any of our comprehension of it? Are there not in it great truths that cannot be cut down to fit any system that the human mind can make? And ought we not to be thoroughly glad that it is so? For, surely, it is better that the Gospel should be according to God’s mind than that it should be according to the mind of Toplady, or the mind of Wesley, or the mind of Calvin, or the mind of Arminius! The mind of God is greater than all the minds of men, so let all men leave the Gospel just as God has delivered it unto us.

Sometimes, this difference comes up *concerning the church of Christ*. Some people do not like God’s order of church membership and church government, they would like to see the world welcomed inside the church. They do not approve of the ordinances as they were instituted and observed by our Lord Jesus Christ, believers’ baptism is peculiarly objectionable to them.

Sometimes they disapprove of God’s ministers, they pick holes in the most useful of them, this man ought to be so-and-so, and that other man ought to be something else. I can only ask again, with regard to the whole matter, “Should it be according to thy mind?” Are you to make the ministers, and to teach them what they are to preach? Are they your servants or God’s servants, and are they to deliver their message in your way or in God’s way?

Let the question be honestly considered, and then, perhaps, much of the murmuring that is sometimes heard, and much of the discord that often arises among professing Christians, would be cleared away. For, surely, these things should not be according to our mind, but we should let God appoint, and equip, and send forth His own servants just as He pleases, and not as we please. Christ must decide everything concerning His own church, he must be free to choose whom He likes to be members of it, and to fashion His church after His own model.

II. Now, secondly, we are to inquire—WHAT LEADS PEOPLE TO THINK THAT EVERYTHING SHOULD BE ACCORDING TO THEIR MIND?

My answer is, first, that *there is a great deal of self-importance in such a notion*. There are some people who seem to fancy that they are the center of the whole universe. The times are always bad if they do not prosper. If the earth does not so revolve as to bring grist to their mill, then the times must be out of joint. But who are you, dear friend, that you should suppose that for you suns rise and set, that for you seasons change, and that God is to have respect to you, and to nobody else? “Should it be according to thy mind?”

Then, if so, why not according to my mind also? And why not according to the mind of another brother? And why not according to the mind of yet another? But no, it is according to your mind that you would have it. Ah, does not this show what overweening importance we attach to ourselves? We are mere ephemera, creeping insects upon the bay-leaf of existence—here today, and gone tomorrow—yet we suppose that all things are to be ordered for our special benefit, and we quarrel with God if we suffer even a little inconvenience.

This notion also arises from *self-conceit*. We really seem to fancy that we could arrange things much better than they now are, we would not dare plainly to say so, much less would we be willing to write it, but we talk and feel as if it were really so. If we only had had the ordering of things, we are quite sure that they would not have happened as they have done, but then, depend upon it, they would have happened wrongly if they had been other than they have been. “Should it be according to thy mind?” No, unless you are self-conceited enough to put your folly in comparison with the wisdom of God, you know that it should not be according to your mind.

Then there is *the spirit of murmuring* that so easily comes upon us, we have known some who really became slaves to that evil spirit. They complained of everything, nothing was right in their eyes, it was

not possible, it seemed, even for God Himself to please them. "Should it be according to thy mind?" How would it be possible to please one who is so changeable, so whimsical, so fanciful, as you are? Poor simpleton, surely you cannot think that such a thing should be.

But oftentimes, this quarrel arises from *want of faith in God*. If we did but believe in Him, we should see that all things are ordered well. If we did but trust in God as a loving child trusts in its father, we should feel safe enough at all times, and we should not want to have anything different from what it is.

Have you never heard of the woman, who was in a great storm at sea, and terribly frightened? She saw her husband, who was the captain of the ship, perfectly composed even while the vessel was tossed about by the mighty billows, but he could not calm her troubled heart.

So he drew a sword from its scabbard, and held it close to her breast. As he did so, he said to her, "Do you not tremble, my wife?" "No," she replied, "I am not in the least afraid." "But this sword is close to you." "I am not afraid of that," said she, "because it is in my husband's hand." "Well," said he, "is it not even so with this storm? Is it not in the hand of God, and if it be in His hand, why should we be alarmed?" So, if we have true faith in God, we shall accept whatever God sends us, and we shall not want to have things arranged according to our mind, but we shall quite agree with what His mind ordains.

So would it be, too, if you had *more love to God*, for love always agrees with that which its object delights in. So, dear friends, when we come to love God with a perfect heart, we are glad for God to have His way with us. If He wills that we should be sick, we would not wish to be otherwise. If He wills that we should be poor, we are willing to be poor, and if He wills that we should pass through a sea of trial, we would not wish to have a drop less than His blessed will appoints.

III. But now, thirdly, WHAT A MERCY IT IS THAT THINGS ARE NOT ACCORDING TO OUR MIND!

If they were, I wonder what sort of world we would live in?

If things were according to our mind, *God's glory would be obscured*. He knows what will best glorify Him, and He has been pleased to so arrange His providential dealings with men that all shall glorify Him to the highest possible degree. And beloved, if we were to alter anything of this, if we could alter anything, it is evident that the glory of God would not be so well promoted, so, "should it be according to thy mind" that God should lose a measure of the glory that is due unto His name? God forbid!

If it were according to our mind, *others would often have to suffer*. At any rate, if things were arranged according to the mind of some people, they would grind the poor in the dust, and utterly crush them. If things were settled according to the mind of man, we should often be in a terrible plight. Did not David say to God, "Let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man"?

When God is most grieved with His people, He never deals with them in so harsh a manner as the ungodly would deal with them if they had them in their power. Let us trust in the Lord, my brethren, and thank Him that He does not allow things to be according to the mind of man, for it would be terrible indeed for us then.

Here is another reflection. If things were according to our mind, *we should have an awful responsibility resting upon us*, because we should feel that if anything went amiss, we should be the cause of it. If we had the choosing of our circumstances, and the details of all that happened to us, we should straightway feel that we should be called to account for everything by our fellow men and by our own conscience. But now that it is according to the mind of God, you have no responsibility concerning it. If it be according to His will, it must be that which is right, and that which is best, so let us bless His name that all things are left at His disposal.

If things were according to our mind, I am afraid *our temptations would soon be greatly increased*, for many who are poor would speedily become rich, and they do not know what the temptation of riches might be, nor the grace they would need to resist it. And some, who are sick now and are praising God

upon their sickbeds, if they were well, might find much of their spirituality departing, and they might be thrown into a thousand troubles which they now escape in the quiet of their own room.

Some of you are in a condition of life where you may not have many comforts, but on the other hand, you are not subject to those trials which come to us who are prominent in public life. Be sure that you are in your right place if God put you there. “Should it be according to thy mind?” If so, you would have more temptations, and less grace—more of the world, but less of your Lord. So thank Him that it is not according to thy mind.

If it were according to our mind, *we should seldom know our own mind*. If a man could manage everything as he liked, he would not long like his own management. Unrenewed men, especially, are never satisfied. The way for a man to be happy is not to have his own will, but to sink his will in the will of God.

Look at Solomon when he had his own way. At one time he gave all his thoughts to grand buildings, and when he had built his palaces, he got quite tired, so he took to making gardens, and aqueducts, and fountains of water. When he had made them, he did not get much satisfaction out of them, so he got instruments of music, and singing men and singing women, but he was soon tired of them.

Then he took to study, but he said, “Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” He had whatever he chose to have, yet it was all vanity and vexation of spirit to him, and he never had what filled his soul till he came to rest alone in his God, which, we trust, he did in his old age.

I do not know a more horrible endowment that a man could have than for God to say to him, “Everything shall be as you like to have it.” He would probably be the most miserable and most dissatisfied person under heaven. “Should it be according to thy mind?”

Ah, then sin would go uncorrected in you, for you would never have a mind to use the rod! Then your dross would remain, for you would never have a mind to be put into the furnace. Should all things go with you according to your own will, then your flesh would get the mastery over you, and be pampered and indulged, you would be settled on your lees, not emptied from vessel to vessel, and you would bring upon yourself unutterable woe.

O beloved, for this reason also it is a thousand mercies that things are not arranged according to the mind of even the best saint out of heaven except when his mind is brought into full subjection to the will of God.

“Should it be according to thy mind?” Then *there would be universal strife*. If this were the case, think what a terrible condition the church of God, and the world too, would soon be brought into, because, as I have already hinted, if it were according to your mind, why should it not be according to my mind, or according to the mind of every other body? Then what chaos, what confusion there would be! How would the world be managed if you, and I, and fifty others, each one with a different mind from all the rest, must have it according to our minds?

It would mean that the King of heaven must resign His throne, and give place to universal anarchy. It could not be, it would be impossible that such an arrangement should continue for an hour. We should have to go, in tears, before the Lord, and cry to Him, “O Lord, come back, and reign over us, for we cannot get on without Thee! Everything is going to destruction for want of an almighty will to manage it.”

Should it be according to thy mind? “No, Lord never let it be so except when you have made my mind to be filled with Your mind, and then it shall be well.” “I always have my way,” said a holy man. “How is that?” asked one who heard him, and the good man replied, “Because God’s way is my way.” “I always have my will,” said another, and he gave a similar explanation, “because it is my will that God should have His will.” When God’s will gets to be your will, then it may be according to your mind, but not till then, thank God, not till then.

IV. So now, in the last place, dear friends, I am going to say to you, let us try, by the help of God's Holy Spirit, to CHECK THAT SPIRIT WHICH LEADS MEN TO THINK THAT ALL THINGS SHOULD BE ACCORDING TO THEIR MIND.

First, *because it is impracticable*. As I have already shown you, it is quite impossible that all things should be according to the mind of men so long as their mind is in its natural carnal state.

Again, *it is unreasonable* that it should be so. In a well-ordered house, whose will ought to be supreme? Should it not be the father's? Do you expect everything in your home to be ordered according to the will of your little boy? No, you know that you take a comprehensive view of all who are in the house, and all their concerns, and you are better able to judge than he is, what is right. It would be very unreasonable for your child to say, "Everything is to be managed according to my will." If he were to talk like that, you would soon teach him better, I warrant you, and it is unreasonable to imagine that the Lord should make your will to be the rule of His dispensations. Do not cultivate a spirit which you cannot justify by any sensible and reasonable arguments.

In the next place, *it is un-Christlike*. "Should it be according to thy mind?" Why, if ever there was a Son of the great Father, according to whose mind things should be, it was our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, yet what did He say? "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." And as Jesus said, "Not as I will," is there one among us who shall dare to say, "Let it be as I will?"

Will you not join your Elder Brother in that sweet resignation of all desire to be the ruler in order that the great Father, who fills all things, may have His way? If you wish to have all things according to your mind, you are not like Christ, for in all things He did the Father's will, and suffered the Father's will too, and rejoiced in it. Let us pray the Holy Spirit to help us to do the same.

Once more, if we desire to have our own mind, *it is atheistic*, for a god without a controlling mind is no god, and a god whose will was not carried out, would be no god. If you were to have your way in all things, you would be taking the place of God, do you not tremble at the very thought of it? His throne ill beseems you. Would you—

***"Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge His judgments, be the God of God"?***

If you are truly converted, you shudder at the bare mention of such a thing as that. Yet, dear sister, was not that the spirit in which you came into this house? Did you not feel, "The Lord has dealt very hardly with me, I can scarcely be reconciled to Him"? Oh, drop that rebellious spirit! You are but a poor, helpless creature, and He is God over all! Let His supreme will sweetly rule your heart at this hour, and labor to get rid of that waywardness and that revolting from the Most High.

I knew one who was in mourning many, many years for a child, and a good Quaker said to her, "Friend, have you not forgiven God yet?" There are some to whom we might put the same question, and we have heard of some who professed to be Christians, who, when they met with a very terrible reverse, said they never should understand it—meaning really that they could never acquiesce in the divine will about that loss.

It must not be so with us. Whenever a child falls out with his father, the best thing he can do is to fall in again, for a sullen child who is angry with his father, will have to come round if he has a wise father. The father will say to him, "My dear boy, there is one of us who must alter before we can be perfectly agreed, and I cannot, for I know I am in the right. It is you who must alter, and come round to my way of thinking."

And if you have fallen out with God by willfulness and stubbornness, He cannot come round to you, but you will have to come back to Him. So yield to Him at once, bow down before Him—your own Father in heaven, who loves you infinitely. Do you mean to say that you will keep up the quarrel with Him? You began the dispute, and you know that you are in the wrong, and He is right, so say, "It is the LORD; let him do what seemeth him good."

Or if you cannot say as much as that, at least do what Aaron did in his great bereavement, “Aaron held his peace,” or what David did when he said, “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.” Oh, for that blessed silence which springs from acquiescence to the divine will!

I should like you to go further than that, however, and even to praise and bless the Lord for poverty, and pain, and bereavement. In heaven, among the sweetest notes of your song will be those you sing over your trials here below.

There was one who lost his eyesight, but he always praised God for that, for he said that he never saw till he was blind. I have heard of another, who had lost a leg, and he said that he never stood on the Rock of Ages till he had that leg amputated. We, who are branches of the true vine, will have more of Christ’s sharp pruning-knife than of anything else, but let us praise and bless God for it, and henceforth labor, by the Spirit’s power, to chase out of our soul the idea that things should be according to our mind. Get away to your room, and confess your willfulness and pride, dear brother, if you have fallen into that sad state. Ask the Lord to make your soul even as a weaned child—

*“Pleased with all the Lord provides,
Weaned from all the world besides.”*

I know that I have been speaking to some who do not love the Lord. I wonder what it is that keeps them where they now are—out of Christ. You want something to be altered, you say. Well, ask the Lord to alter you, for that is the alteration that is needed. The plan of salvation does not quite suit you. Well, there will never be another. Does not Jesus Christ please you? God will never lay another foundation for a sinner to build his hopes upon, so you had better be pleased with God’s way, and build upon Christ Jesus, the sure foundation stone.

We tell people, sometimes, that they had better not fall out with their living, and I can tell you, soul, that you had better not fall out with your salvation. God’s way of saving you is the best conceivable way, and it is also the only way.

He says that whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. May the Eternal Spirit bring you now to believe in the Lord Jesus, and if you do so believe, you shall be saved at once. But do not think that the plan of salvation will be altered to please you. It will not be made according to your mind. There is the Gospel, have it or leave it, but change it you cannot. May the Lord grant that you may accept it, and rejoice in it, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

GALATIANS 6:6-18

Verses 6-7. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Paul puts that in connection with the support of those who are teachers of the truth, and I have sometimes thought that in certain churches where God’s ministers have been starved, it was not very full of wonder that the people should starved too. They thought so little about the pastor that they left him in need, so it was not strange that, as they sowed little, they reaped little. One of these misers said that his religion did not cost him more than a shilling a year, and somebody replied that he thought it was a shilling wasted on a bad thing, for his poor religion was not worth even that small amount.

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

He shall reap what flesh turns to in due time, “he shall of the flesh reap corruption.” What is the end of flesh? The fairest flesh that ever was molded from the most beautiful form, ends in corruption, and if we live for the flesh, and sow to it, we shall reap “corruption.”

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

He shall reap what the Spirit really is, and what the Spirit really generates, “life everlasting.” Of course, if a man sows tares, he reaps tares. If he sows wheat, he reaps wheat. If we sow to the flesh, we reap corruption. If we sow to the Spirit, we shall “reap life everlasting.”

9. *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

It is a pity to faint just when the time is coming to reap, so, sow on, brother and sister, sow on!

10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

Extend your love, your charity to all mankind. But let the center of that circle be in the home where God has placed you—in the home of His people, “especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

11. *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

I suppose that he meant, “See what big characters I have made. My eyes are weak, and so, when I do write a letter,” says Paul, “in the dimness of this dungeon, with my poor weak eyes, and my hands fettered, I have to write text-hand, and give it to you in large letters. Well,” he says, “then carry it out in big letters. You see with what large letters I have written to you, now emphasize it all, take it as emphatic, and carry it out with great diligence. As I have written this with mine own hand, and not used an amanuensis, I beseech you to pay the more attention to it—you Galatians who seem to be so bewitched that, to deliver you from false doctrine, and an evil spirit, I would even write a letter with my own blood if it were needful.”

12-13. *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.*

“See,” they say, “these Gentiles. We have converted them, and we have got them circumcised. Is not that a wonderful thing?” No, not at all, for he says—

14. *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

“I have ceased to care,” says Paul, “about glorying in men, and making other people glory in my converts. The world is dead to me, and I to it.”

15-17. *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

I have the marks of the whips upon my body. I am the branded slave of Jesus Christ. There is no getting the marks out of me. I cannot run away. I cannot deny that He is my Master and my Owner, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

18. *Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

And that is our benediction to you. The Lord fulfill it to each one of you!

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.