

HIS SIDE VERSUS OUR SIDE - OVERVIEW OF GALATIANS

Or, What is a TRUE Christian?

by Norman Harrison

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CHAPTER 14

SOWING AND REAPING - GALATIANS 6:7-8

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." -- Galatians 6:7,8.

The antithesis between the flesh and the Spirit is now carried to its practical conclusion. "None of us liveth to himself" (Romans 14:7). If I am living to the self-life, to please self, my brother will suffer from it and be robbed by it. If I am living an un-selfed life, un-selfed by the Spirit, my brother will have occasion to rejoice and be benefited by it.

Sowing to the Spirit

Our social contacts, especially among brethren of the faith, are a test as to whether we are living in the Spirit; they are also an opportunity for the Spirit to express Himself through us. Three illustrations are before us:

1 -- *Considerateness for a brothers "faults"* (vs. 1).

The brother is not persistently living in sin; he has been overtaken by it. GOD has made provision for his restoration, by confession: "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (1 John 1:9). But are we cooperative with GOD? If we are genuinely "spiritual," this is an opportunity the Spirit is giving us to manifest the fruit of the Spirit -- in a spirit of meekness.

One of the perils of advanced spiritual experience is a spirit of censoriousness. I have seen it time and again. We have accepted a high standard of conduct for ourselves; we think all Christians should measure up to the same standard. If they do not, we sit in judgment upon them. Before we realize it our spirit is harsh; we are not spiritual at all -- in our attitude toward our brother we have practically denied the Spirit.

2 -- *The bearing and sharing of burdens* (vvs. 2-5).

Here is the same sort of test applied to our daily contacts. Scripture has a threefold prescription for burdens, covering our obligation to self, neighbor, and GOD.

(1) Everyone must bear his own burden (vs. 5). Here the Greek word refers to one's personal, inalienable responsibility which he must not shirk -- such is my responsibility as a father and husband -- this I must "bear."

(2) The burdens caused by shifting circumstances, such as sickness or misfortune (vs. 2). Such burdens we are to share.

(3) The Godward aspect of burdens, as occasions for experiencing His sustaining and strengthening (Psalm 55:22). "**Cast thy burden upon the Lord.**" The Hebrew seems to say, "What GOD has given you, roll back upon Him"; thus the burden becomes a bond between you and your Lord for trusting Him and experiencing Him in a new way.

In each instance the burden is meant to be a blessing. Especially is this true of our brother's burdening need; it draws out our love and sympathy. Thus the fruit of the Spirit finds expression and grows thereby.

3 -- *Fellowship in giving and receiving* (vs. 6).

Christian people should enjoy a free exchange of values among themselves. The word for "communicate" is a beautiful word, meaning to share, to have things in common. The preeminent opportunity for this exchange, by way of sowing to the Spirit, is between those who are taught the Word of GOD and him who teaches. The latter gives the values he has -- a knowledge of the Word; the former acknowledge the value received by communicating to him "**in all good things.**" Paul commends the Philippians for this fellowship with him "**concerning giving and receiving**" (Philippians 4:15). Thus giving becomes a "grace," an expression of the Spirit (II Corinthians 8:7).

GOD has provided for the support of the gospel in this manner, on a basis of exchange, just as I buy a pair of shoes. I ask the merchant, "How much are they?" "Ten dollars." [1940] He prefers my ten dollars to the shoes; I prefer the shoes to the ten dollars. We exchange, and are both happy over it. Christian people grow in grace when they recognize this principle of giving and receiving as essential to spiritual practicalities.

These are but illustrations of the many and various channels the believer is to find for sowing to the Spirit.

As We Sow We Reap

Sowing and reaping are linked together by the inexorable law of kind. From the beginning this law has been in the constitution of things -- "**after his kind**" (Genesis 1: -- 9 times). In the physical realm the farmer respects the law; he sows his seed, expecting to reap in kind. In the spiritual realm, men think to beat the law; they sow to the flesh, hoping to reap in the Spirit. It

can't be done. And some even hope for a spiritual reaping from no sowing whatsoever. How very foolish!

Likewise, the harvest embodies the law of increase. We sow our seed, confident of a larger return -- "**some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred**" (Mark 4:20). While encouraging the sowing to the Spirit, this law solemnly warns against sowing to the flesh. "**For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind**" (Hosea 8:7). "**Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.**" (Jam. 1:15,16).

The other day I witnessed a suicide. A man, given to drinking, had attached a hose to the exhaust of his automobile, feeding the monoxide fumes into the car and into his lungs. I arrived as the police and ambulance men were giving up their efforts to resuscitate him. The family were moaning, "O, Dad, why did you do it?" Why? Sin had brought forth death.

And the son, a big, burly fellow, bent over the body, cursing GOD. I pleaded with him, but to no avail. He, too, was reaping from the sowing of a godless life. Just one sad case of reaping among the thousands, millions.

Thank GOD for the privilege of living on His Side. We who live in the Spirit, let us sow, and sow, and keep on sowing to the Spirit. "**Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not**" (vs. 9). Let us give fullest expression to the fact that we are on His Side by seizing every opportunity to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (vs. 10).

~ end of chapter 14 ~

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