

## **SOWING AND REAPING**

– *NOVEMBER 8. – GALATIANS 6:1-10. –*

**"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."**  
– Verse 7.

TODAY'S Study was intended, by those who mapped out these lessons, to be a temperance lesson. There is surely a sense in which it is true that those who yield to appetites which crave injurious stimulants and narcotics will certainly reap a slavery to those appetites, a corresponding weakening of their own characters. All good people – all who have at heart their own welfare and the welfare of humanity – must surely deplore the ravages of intemperance; and any word or example that would be helpful to fellow-creatures, that would assist them to become strong characters and useful members of society, should not be withheld.

We may, however, be fully sure that nothing will completely and thoroughly liberate mankind from the weaknesses of their fallen nature, except God's appointed remedy – Messiah's Kingdom. But this conviction should not hinder us from taking our place publicly on the side of righteousness and of the best interests of humanity in respect to every question.

Let us not, on the other hand, go to the extreme which some would approve, but let us follow strictly on this, and on every subject, the teachings of the Bible. Following this course now, in this lesson, it is our duty to call attention to the fact that the Apostle's words have no reference whatever to intemperance of one kind more than another. The Apostle is not addressing the world in general; much less is he addressing some poor inebriates. He is addressing the consecrated people of God, as he declares in the opening verses of the Epistle.

These consecrated Christians the Apostle speaks of as brethren, and instructs them how they should deal with any of their fellows who might be overtaken in a fault, who might become entangled with some form of sin, not by reason of sympathy with sin, but by reason of weakness of the flesh or by unfavorable environment. The most spiritual ones of the Church should exercise themselves to bring about a restoration of the erring one to a condition of righteousness and fellowship with God. This they should do in a meek manner, remembering that they also are imperfect in the flesh, and that they also may at some time or other inadvertently fall into sin, contrary to their heart intentions. [R5562 : page 317]

In this manner they were to "bear one another's burdens" – assisting one another in battling against the weaknesses of the flesh and the besetments of sin. In this way they would be fulfilling the general law of Christ.

The law of Christ is a law of service and self-sacrifice in the interests of others. Those who, finding a brother overtaken in a fault, merely throw back their heads, denouncing the brother in a haughty, imperious manner, in a holier-than-thou manner, have not yet attained a proper appreciation of what is the Law of Christ – the law which is to govern all the members of the Body.

This law of Christ, the Apostle points out, is a Law of Love. Governed by this law of love, Jesus laid down His life, not merely for His friends, but even for His enemies. All therefore, who would claim to be disciples or followers of Jesus should have the same mind, the same disposition, the same spirit, and should seek to follow the same law of love. Thus the Apostle says, "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16) – in seeking to assist the brethren out of difficulty and to bring them nearer to the Lord and to His standards.

## TOO MUCH SELF-ESTEEM

The Apostle points out that one great danger which besets all the true followers of Jesus is headiness – thinking too highly of self and, therefore, not thinking highly enough of the brethren, especially of the brethren who stumble in some particular in which this individual has not himself, as yet, stumbled.

One of the first lessons to be learned is that we are really nothing, that we are bundles of imperfection, that on the strength of our own merit we could not commend ourselves to God nor have His favor. Furthermore, we are to learn that in proportion as we think of ourselves as somebody, to that same extent we are not pleasing to God, and are in His sight all the more nobodies. If, therefore, anybody think of himself as a somebody in God's sight, he should begin to realize that he is nothing, a nobody unworthy of Divine notice, except through the favor of God in Christ. Such a person is deceiving himself and is hindering his own progress in the good way.

Each one, therefore, instead of seeking to judge or to reprove his neighbor or his brother in Christ, should seek to prove out his own work. He should carefully discern to see to what extent he has made progress in the things which God has declared will be pleasing in His sight. He should seek to ascertain to what extent he has put away anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, and to what extent he has put on the graces of God's Holy Spirit; namely, meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

To whatever extent he can see that he is making progress along these Scripturally defined lines, to that extent he has ground for rejoicing, without in any sense or degree seeking to compare himself with others and thus **[R5562 : page 318]** to estimate himself wholly by the imperfections which he may see in others. By following this course, each should be seeking to find out his own weaknesses, seeking to bear his own burdens and seeking,

therefore, not to be a burden or a reproach to others – either to the Lord or to the brethren.

Along the lines of this teaching, there is no room for clericism. Rather, as the Apostle says, "Those who are taught in the Word should communicate with those who teach in all good things," telling them of any blessings received or of any clearer views of the Word of God which have come to them. The Apostle may also have meant that those who receive blessings from a teacher may properly seek opportunity for recompensing that teacher, either with thanks or with co-operation or in some other way helping the teacher to forward his work of teaching in any good and profitable manner.

There is a principle at stake here. God operates along the lines of justice, and He cannot be deceived. His eye reads the heart, the motive, the intention. We might even temporarily deceive ourselves with specious arguments, but no one can deceive God. It is a principle of the Divine arrangement that sowing shall bring reaping, and that the thing reaped shall be of the same character as the thing sowed. – Galatians 6:7.

## **THE CHRISTIAN'S ARDUOUS TASK**

The world does not engage in this sowing and reaping that the Apostle speaks of; only the Church do so. The Church is composed of those who have heard the Voice of God offering forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ to all those who become His disciples – offering also Divine assistance and the begetting of the Holy Spirit to a new nature and to glory, honor and immortality. All who have really and truly become followers of Christ, who have taken up their cross and have covenanted self-denial in walking in the footsteps of the Master – these alone are true Christians.

It is for these to order their steps in harmony with the Lord's leadings and to know that the results of their lives will be in

proportion as they follow their Covenant of Self-sacrifice and faithfulness as disciples of Jesus. These have covenanted to give up the world, its aims, its objects, its ambitions – to sacrifice all these, that they may become "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" Jesus their Lord in the Heavenly inheritance. – Romans 8:17.

These should understand that it is not sufficient to agree to sow to the Spirit, but that the reaping of spiritual blessings and of heart development will depend upon their faithfulness in sowing to these ends. "He that soweth to the Spirit" – that is, he that lives a spiritual life, seeking to serve the will or Spirit of God in all of his words, deeds and thoughts – will reap the largest crop of spiritual development in the various qualities which go to make up the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, those who sow to the flesh – that is, who live after the flesh, seeking to please their own flesh, seeking to do according to their fleshly minds or wills, or seeking to please the fleshly minds or wills of their friends or relatives – these must only expect that in their case the flesh thus cultivated will grow the stronger in power to control their lives, and that they will make proportionately less progress along the lines of the Spirit.

In other words, the Apostle explains that every time we give heed to the fleshly inclinations of our fallen natures, we are hindering our own spiritual progress, and that the tendency of all such yielding to the flesh is toward corruption, toward death. On the other hand, to whatever extent we mortify the inclinations of the flesh and seek to live in harmony with the Spirit of the Lord, in that same proportion we shall grow strong spiritually, and be prepared for the everlasting life on the spirit plane which God has promised to those who shall demonstrate their love for Him and their loyalty to the principles of righteousness.

This does not mean that only those who attain the complete mastery of the flesh will receive any blessing from the Lord, but that unless we manifest to the Lord an appreciation of the spiritual things, we shall not make progress therein, shall not be fit for everlasting life and shall not receive it; whereas, on the contrary, if our conduct shall manifest to the Lord our love for truth and righteousness and our desire to please Him, however weak our flesh, He will account such worthy of everlasting life, knowing that when they shall have the perfect bodies of the resurrection, they will be glad to live in absolute harmony with the Divine arrangements. Thus the Apostle on another occasion wrote, "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who are walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." – Romans 8:4.

### **FAITHFUL CONTINUANCE IN WELL-DOING**

In verses 9 and 10, the Apostle draws his argument to a conclusion. All who wish to do right – all who wish to live according to the lines marked out by the Holy Spirit through the words of Jesus and the Apostles – should not only start out well by making a full consecration, but should continue faithful, and not be weary of striving against sin and of being faithful to righteousness.

God is seeking to develop and to fix character in His people; and in due time, after they shall have suffered awhile, fought and battled for a time against the weaknesses of the flesh, they will reap the reward; they will get the new bodies that God has promised – the Resurrection bodies. Then their battling and trials will all be ended; for the new bodies will be in perfect accord with the new will, and there will be no cause of conflict between the two. The work of grace will then go grandly forward, through them, for the blessing of the world.

And, says the Apostle, let us not merely avoid harshness toward those who have been overtaken in a fault, let us not merely

guard ourselves that we shall sow to the spirit and not to the flesh, and let us not merely avoid weariness in this good way; but let us additionally, "as we find opportunity, do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the Household of Faith." In so doing, we shall be copying our Heavenly Father's character. He is the Fountain of Blessing. From Him come the blessings of the present life – the sunshine and the rain – upon both the just and the unjust, upon the evil and the good.

As the Heavenly Father is continually giving blessings, rather than seeking favors, so we as His advanced and developed children are to seek to have the same character-likeness, the same disposition, the same mind; namely, a disposition to do good to everybody, but especially an earnest desire to do good unto all who are the Lord's children – unto all who are of the Household of Faith.

-----

**page 318**

"Go, labor on; spend and be spent –  
Thy joy to do thy Father's will;  
It is the way the Master went;  
Should not the servant tread it still?

"Go, labor on; enough, while here,  
If He shall praise thee – if He deign  
Thy willing heart to mark and cheer;  
No toil for Him shall be in vain."

=====