

“<sup>11</sup> Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. <sup>16</sup> And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. <sup>17</sup> From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. <sup>18</sup> Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.” (Ga 6:11-18)

- I. There are those who desire to make a fair show in the flesh. Properly speaking the verb here means “to be handsome or lovely.”
  - a. There is no requirement that I know of for a minister to be handsome. That is really fortunate for some of us.
  - b. The false teachers among the Galatians were Jews who gloried in their circumcision. They thought that this brought the approval of God, and they thought that others should be just like them.
  - c. This is a common failing of men. Men glory in their own works and want to glory in those same works in others. When men glory in their works as meritorious, then they wish to impose those same works on others. It always involves some rite or ceremony that they imagine brings them favor with God.
  - d. The hidden motive of the heart is praise of men. If men can persuade you to do what they do, then this is a feather in their cap, and they fancy that they are approved of God and man. If they can get you to stand on the corner and pray long prayers, then they have reinforcement for their own hypocrisy.
  - e. Here Paul rips off the mask of hypocrisy. These people are not moved by zeal toward God, although they profess to be. Instead they are moved by the desire to be acceptable to men—the favor of men is what they court. You remember that Peter dissimulated on this matter, because of fear of the brethren that came from Jerusalem. If such a great and godly man as Peter could be deceived, none of us is immune from such diseases.
  - f. It is not because of a strong attachment to the law that they would bind you. They themselves do not keep the law. The Jew in the Old Testament did not keep the law; David did not keep the law; Aaron did not keep the law; Abraham did not keep the law. What they received, they received by grace, for there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.
  - g. They want to glory in your flesh—they want the applause of men. In this case, it was the applause of the Jews and the applause of Jerusalem. There was no regard for the law, or the fear of God, which moved them to these things—it was in order to please people.
- II. What is the glory of a Christian?
  - a. To seek to avoid the cross is to deny Christ. The perfect happiness of a Christian was purchased by the cross of Jesus Christ. The joy of the Christian is not given by ceremonies or by the world.
  - b. It is by the cross of Christ that the world is crucified to me. “World” is contrasted to newness in Christ. It is by the cross that my sins are forgiven, that the curse of Adam is removed, that my old nature which I inherited from Adam is given the sentence of death.
  - c. It is by the cross of Christ that I am separated from Adam—for I am crucified to the world—to the old man to Adam, so that I might be married to another, to Jesus Christ. As Calvin says, these words are exactly parallel with Phil. 3:7,8: “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” The Cross is God’s emphatic statement upon all the glory of this world—it is by the Cross that we see the world as it truly is, a strumpet with painted face, to lure us away from God, to entice us, just as the serpent enticed Eve.
  - d. By this, Paul is saying that he is as a dead man, and the things of the world were no longer of any point to him.
  - e. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. Others would live for such things, but Paul looked on them with contempt.
  - f. In Christ, it is the new man that counts. This new man is a citizen of heaven; a new creature in Christ Jesus, blessed of God, forgiven and adopted into the family of God. In Jesus Christ all the things of the law which pointed to Christ are now irrelevant and indifferent.
  - g. This conforms to the rule set down by the Apostle in other places: put off the old, and put on the new. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:19: Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Only God knows who the elect are; but if you name the name of Christ, you must depart from iniquity.
- III. The blessing of God is upon those who live by this rule: Vs. 16 The word rule means a plan or model. Builders work from a plan. If you do not have a plan you will get a result like the Winchester Mansion in California. Sarah Winchester

married an heir to the Winchester Rifle fortune. When her daughter died, followed by her husband, she thought that she was cursed. She went to a spirit medium, who told her to move west, buy a house, and keep building on it, or she would die. She went to San Jose and began a building project that lasted 38 years to her death. There was no plan—one stairway goes no place to the ceiling. There is no rhyme nor reason, just a sprawling monstrosity, that people claim is haunted, and the source off all kinds of craziness.

- a. The tabernacle in the wilderness was built according to the plan given by God to Moses on the holy mount.
- b. The temple at Jerusalem was built according to the plan given by God to David, who gave it to Solomon.
- c. The temple of Jesus Christ is to be built according to the plan given to the church by Jesus Christ Himself. “May they enjoy all peace and prosperity” is the blessing upon those who will do the will of God.
- d. Upon the Israel of God; we are the true Israel of God who walk according to this rule. The true Israel of God are those seek the purpose and plan of God in Jesus Christ.
- e. Let no man trouble me: This one thing—the new man in Christ—is all that matters. Paul was settled on this matter, and not willing to be contradicted about it. “From henceforth” literally is “in all the remaining.” Either of time or other things. “Don’t bother me in the time I have left,” or “Everything else will be resolved if you are right on this.”
- f. I bear the marks: I bear as a trophy in my body marks that in the eyes of the world are disgraceful—the marks of whips, of torture, of chains. But they are the marks that barbarian slaves, fugitives, and criminals were marked. Paul bears these gladly, because Christ had also born such marks—the marks of the Cross, which showed a death cursed of God. Paul did not run from this designation, but acknowledge that the cursed death of Christ was his way of liberty, and he gladly bore the marks that identified him with Christ and the Gospel. You can bear your mark of circumcision, and rejoice in your self-righteousness---I will bear the marks of Christ, my identification with His cursed death, for I am not ashamed of it. The marks of my persecution for Christ are the marks I glory in.

May the grace of God be with your spirit—may you rejoice in that grace and enjoy it in your hearts.

See HC Q58: What comfort do you receive from the article "life everlasting"?

A58: That, inasmuch as I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy,[1] I shall after this life possess complete blessedness, such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man,[2] therein to praise God forever.[3]