

A NEW YEAR'S APPEAL TO REASON AND FAITH

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"Should it be according to thy mind?" Job 34: 33

Poor Job found his trial too great for his patience, and he complained, he fretted himself, he reflected on God's dealings with him, and stumbled at the dispensations of Divine Providence. How often, how very often, we do the same! We complain when we ought to be grateful; we fret when we ought to praise. We reflect on God's ways when we ought to condemn ourselves and we stumble at providences when we ought to be resting on the promises.

Complain! What can a sinner have to complain of who is out of hell? Fret! What can a believer have to fret about whose heaven is secure? Reflect on God's dealings! What, when all His ways are mercy and truth to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies? Stumble at providences! What should cause us to stumble, who are assured that all things work together for our good? With such conduct God may well be displeased. For such conduct God may well chastise us. But He condescends to reason with us. He appeals to our sense of right. He makes us reprove and correct ourselves. He asks us by Elihu, "Should it be just as you fancy, ought I to consult your whims, Should it be according to thy mind?"

To what does this apply? **To God's dealings with us as individuals.** Should the Most High consult us before He gives, or takes, works, suspends His operations? Are we to be consulted as to the way in which He will lead us home, or the means by which He will prepare us for the joys which are at His right hand? If the Lord promises to do us good by all things, is He to consult us as to how He shall work, or by whom, or by what He shall accomplish His purposes?

It will apply, also, to **God's dealing with others.** It may be our friends, or our foes; our relatives, or strangers; the Church, or the world. God has taken the management of the world, and every individual in it; of the Church, and every believer that composes it, into His own hand. He says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10). He is at work, who shall hinder him? Yea, who has a right to question Him, or to find fault with Him? Friend, do you claim such a right? From whence did you derive it? How do you vindicate it? Things may be done that baffle your reason, perplex your mind, confound your judgement, and grieve your spirit, but may they not be right for all that? May they not be the wisest and the best? "Should it be according to thy mind?"

Now, **are you wiser than God is?** His wisdom is infinite. He is the only wise God, and He displays His wisdom in all He does, and in all He overrules to be done. Is it possible that you can fancy yourself capable of devising a wiser plan, or of executing God's plan in a more judicious manner?

Are you kinder than God is? His loving kindness to man is declared in His word, proved by His works, and is gloriously displayed in our salvation by His Son. His loving kindness is great beyond conception, and tender beyond description. Kinder than God! - *You* kinder than God? But if not, "should it be according to your mind?"

Are you better informed than God is? He is holy in his nature, and holy in all His works. He does nothing but what is strictly just, perfectly right, and calculated to produce the greatest good. If you are not more holy, more just, more righteous than God, "should it be according to *thy* mind?" *Are* you better informed than God is? Do you know more of the nature, dispositions, and tendencies of his creatures than He does? Can you see the end from the beginning, and the working of all things to bring about the end, fixed by His wisdom and grace, better than He does? In Him dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He knows the whole and every part, the present and the future, which you do not; your mind is dark, confused, selfish, unsettled, and often undecided; "should it then be according to thy mind?"

In order to calm your mind in trouble, to compose your spirits under losses and crosses, remember that **God acts in infinite wisdom**. His plan, according to which He governs the world, and manages the affairs of every individual, is the perfection of wisdom. It will admit of no improvement. To alter would be to injure. Whatever God does, He purposed to do; and whatever God purposed to do is infinitely wise and good.

God's motives are just and gracious. God always has a reason for what He does, though He may not reveal it; and He is prompted to do what He does by justice and grace. He is just to all, but gloriously gracious to His own people. Whatever God has purposed to do, or permits, is worthy of Him. We often act unworthily, and repent of doing it, feeling ashamed of it; but God never does anything, or overrules anything, that is unworthy of His nature and character. We may not see this now, for His work is not finished, His plan is not fully carried out, and until it is, "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing" (Proverbs 25:2). But He has told us for our comfort, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7).

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

The least we can do is to submit. We ought to approve and acquiesce. True, many things are very painful to flesh and blood, and are very trying to faith and patience; but we have only to give God time to explain Himself, and all will be made clear and plain. Then we shall see why it was that we were robbed of our property, bereaved of our children, separated from our friends, deprived of our health, and persecuted by the world. "The day shall declare it (1 Corinthians 3:13) and we shall see what we now profess to believe, that God is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. Oh, Christian, you should prefer God's wisdom, way, and work, to your own! Whatever He does, He does well; in all He does, he keeps your good and His own glory in view; and, therefore, when you are displeased with any of his dispensations, He asks you **SHOULD IT BE ACCORDING TO THY MIND?**