

TEARFUL SOWING AND JOYFUL REAPING

NO. 867

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”
Psalm 126:6.

THE whole of our life we are sowing. In activity, in suffering, in thought, in word, we are always scattering imperishable seed. Some sow amidst laughter and merriment—they sow unto the lusts of the flesh, and shall of the flesh reap corruption. Theirs is easy work, and suitable to their inclinations. All around them siren songs cheer them in the fields of transgression, as they go forth with the seed of hemlock to scatter it broadcast in the furrows. Alas, for them, they shall reap under other skies, they shall gather sheaves of flame in the harvest of fire, in the day of vengeance of our God. They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind, and who shall help them in that hour of terror?

A chosen company are sowing unto the spirit, and in their case, albeit that they are blessed among men, and shall reap amid eternal songs, they sow in sadness, for sowing unto the spirit involves a self-denial, a struggling against the flesh, a running counter to the fallen instincts of our depraved nature, a wrestling, and a life of agony involving plentiful showers of tears.

To sow unto the spirit, in the field of obedience or patient endurance, is such a work as only the Holy Spirit can enable us to accomplish. And even then the oppositions from outward circumstances, from the powers of hell, and from the depravity of our nature is oftentimes so severe, that we are compelled with bitter tears and strong cryings to lift up our heart unto God out of the depths of anguish. They who sow unto the spirit as a rule have to sow in tears, but their reaping will so compensate them that even in the prospect of it they may dry their eyes, reckoning that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in them. Our momentary weeping, while we let fall the precious seed, is scarcely to be thought of in comparison with the mighty sheaves of the exceeding glory in the land where tears are divinely and finally wiped from every eye.

The principle that the mournful sowing of the saints will end in a joyful reaping, stands good in regard to the whole spiritual life, but it is equally applicable to individual incidents in that life. For instance, many prayers are offered under circumstances of great depression of spirit, with mighty vehemence and desire, but perhaps under strong temptations to unbelief. Over such prayers cataracts of tears are poured forth, and brethren, you may count it a blessed sign when you can sigh and cry in your supplications, for your tears are like the prevalent wrestlings of Jacob when he won the name of Israel. Your agony of spirit, like the plea of Moses, shall hold the Lord, and bind His hand.

There is a conquering power in the heart's tears in prayer. You shall have what you desire, when you desire it unto weeping. Take the anguish of your spirit to be the premonition of the fulfillment of the promise. You shall come out of your closet crying, like Luther, “I have conquered.” You shall see sheaves of blessing, since you have sown your prayer amid a shower of tears.

Some believers also sow in sadness through daily sufferings. It is appointed unto some to be the daughters of affliction, the sons of pain. Happy is it when those who are thus called to suffer continue to sow while they suffer. It is not always easy to be practically useful when one has at the same time to maintain patience and resignation. We are apt to think that one form of service at a time is enough, and perhaps it may be so, but if we can add another, our blessedness will be doubled. To shed tears, and yet

to sow, to be racked with pain, and to turn the couch into a pulpit. To make the sick bed a tribune from which to tell of the love of Christ—oh, this is blessed living!

To work for Christ Jesus under such terrible disadvantages shall surely win a double recompense—and if the preacher fails from the pulpit, yet shall not the sick saint be foiled from her bed? And if the orator shall not prevail in the strength of his manhood, yet shall the pining consumptive, when he warns his friend to escape from the wrath to come, assuredly win success—his weakness shall be his strength, and his sickness shall put force into his speech.

I doubt not that the text may be so read as to imply that the heart-sorrow of men engaged in the Lord's service shall help to secure for them from the hand of divine mercy a double reward. Those who can sow while yet they weep, shall beyond all question, come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

There are many other instances which I might thus detain you with, but I prefer at once to proceed to the main business of this morning, and that is to consider this text in its relation to every Christian worker. Let us first *describe his service*—"He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed". Let us, secondly, *contemplate his reward*—"He shall come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him". And let us in the third place, notice *the certainty which, like a golden link, binds these two things together*—the weeping service and the rejoicing success.

I. First, then, dear friends, behold THE CHOSEN WORKER FOR GOD, the man who shall reap an abundant harvest.

It is said of him that *he goes forth*. Every word here is instructive. What is intended by going forth? Does it mean, first, that he goes forth from God? Observe that our text speaks of his coming again—but where is he to return at the last with his sheaves but to his God? Then, as he returns to the place from which he went forth, surely he goes forth from God. And I understand by this that the chosen servant of God has received consciously a divine commission from heaven. If he has never in the Temple seen the glory of God, high and lifted up, if he has never seen an angel fly with the golden tongs to bear a live coal from off the altar to touch his lips, if he has never heard the voice saying, "Whom shall we send? and who will go for us?" yet his heart has said, "Here am I, send me."

He has felt within his soul a yearning to be useful, a panting which could no more be quenched unless he can win souls, than the panting of the hart could be stayed unless it could bathe itself in the water brooks. I will not believe that any man can be useful in the church of God unless he feels a divine vocation. Especially is it a sin beyond all others for a man to take up the ministry as a mere profession, and to follow it as though he might have followed something else.

I remember the saying of an old divine who was asked by a young man whether he should enter the ministry. He replied, "Not if you can help it." No man has any right to be a preacher unless he is one who cannot help it. He must be one who feels that he is driven into it, and that woe is unto him unless he preaches the Gospel.

In the same way is it in the other departments of Christian service. You Christian people all have a duty, you all have responsibilities, but your duties and responsibilities, somehow or other, never move you until they take the active form of a vocation. I would to God that every Christian in this church felt that he had a call as from the Christ of God exalted on His throne to go out and tell others of the way of salvation. I wish that the men and women who have here banded themselves together in a sacred confraternity felt every one of them commissioned of God, each one according to his ability, to pluck brands from the burning, to rescue souls from going down into the pit. It is in going forth from God with His call upon you that you have the prospect of coming back successful—not else.

This going forth from God seems to me to imply that the worker had been with God in *prayer*. We must go fresh from the mercy seat to the field of service if we would gather plenteously. Our truest strength lies in prayer. I am persuaded, brethren, that we are losing much of blessing which might come upon the church through our negligence in private supplications. I cannot pry into your prayer closets,

but I believe that in the conscience of many of you there will be an affirmative voice to the charge I lay against some of you—you have restrained prayer before God.

Your restraining of prayer, if you seek to serve God, is binding your own hands and cutting the sinews of your strength. As you could not expect to be vigorous if you denied yourselves food, so neither can you hope to be strong if you deny yourselves prayer. Get close to God, for strength flows out of Him. Keep at a distance from Him, and you lose all power and become weak as water. “He that goes forth,” must mean, then, that he has stood before the mercy seat, that he has told out the story of his wants where the blood is sprinkled, and then has gone forth in the power which prayer alone can bring from heaven to scatter his precious seed among men.

Does not this going forth from God also imply that the man has been in communion with God? He wears a shining face who has looked into the face of God, and in the power of that brightness he shall make the desert bloom, and the wilderness rejoice. He has looked up to the God of Miracles and held fellowship with Him. The Lord lends much of Himself to the man who is much with Him. He endows with marvelous power the man who has learned to live close to Him, and to walk in the light of His countenance.

To “go forth,” however, may be looked at from another angle. Does it not refer to whither the man is to go as well as to the place from which he comes? “He that goes forth,” that is, away from the world, without the camp. If you would be serviceable, you must come right out from the common track, and in holy decision step out of the ranks for Christ.

Of all the men who lived on the face of the earth, the most remarkable and the most singular in His age was the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no man who was so manly, no man so unlike a mere monk or separatist as Christ. He eat and drank just as other men did, and yet there was a something about His character which distinguished Him altogether from the whole mass of humanity. He had gone forth evidently without the camp, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

If you want to win golden sheaves for Christ, you must come out, my dear brother, as your Lord did. Depend upon it, the world’s religion is not that which breeds useful men. Nor, though I may be rebuked for saying it, is the ordinary character of our churches equal to the production of successful servants of Christ. Common religion has become, nowadays, so cold, and dead, and sleepy a thing, that unless you can come out of it and get above it, you cannot expect to be one of those who shall come again rejoicing in abundant sheaves.

Aspire to be something more than the mass of church members. Lift up your cry to God, and beseech Him to fire you with a nobler ambition than that which possesses the common Christian—that you may be found faithful unto God at the last, and may win many crowns for your Lord and Master, Christ. He that goes forth taking up Christ’s cross, leaving the multitude, and separating himself for service—he shall win the great service.

Going forth may represent, also, entire giving up of yourself to that particular field of labor to which God has called you. As when the day dawns, as the laborer goes forth to plow in the field, so the consecrated man hastens to his department of service. He is not running here and there wasting time, but like a man who knows his vocation, he goes straight to it, and abides in it until the evening of his life.

I am inclined to think that there is a version of these words which may be very useful to enterprising believers. “He that goes forth”—that is, gets beyond the range of ordinary Christian labor—he shall find a double harvest. The most successful servants of God have been those who have not built upon other men’s foundations, but have ventured to break up new soil.

There comes very little reward to me from preaching to the many who regularly attend this Tabernacle, because the most of you have heard the Gospel so long that if there were any probabilities of its converting you, in all likelihood you would have been converted long ago. The probabilities seem to be that the soil upon which the seed will germinate is already sowed, and only rock remains—that the elect of God have been gathered out of my congregation, and that we may not expect in our ministry to see great results in the future among our older hearers.

But whenever we have broken up fresh ground—when we have gone someplace not usually occupied for worship, when we have got at a new piece of unbroken prairie, what wonderful results have always followed! Why, I fear there were more conversions in the Surrey Music Hall than there ever have been here, and that in Exeter Hall God converted more in proportion by our ministry than He has done of late in this house—not because the ministry has changed, nor the blessing upon it, but because continuing to plow upon the same old soil again and again, we can hardly expect to reap much of a harvest.

Hearts have become seared. Consciences have become callous. By going forth to get fresh ears to hear, and fresh hearts to know the joyful sound, we may hope to see golden sheaves. I say, then, to you Christian workers, reach out after those who have been thought to be beyond the range of hope. Seek to convert those who have been neglected. Let it be the effort of Christian people to go after those who nobody else is going after—the best fruit will be gleaned from boughs hitherto untouched.

And let our missionary operations be continually breaking forth on the right hand, and on the left, as opportunity may be given. If the Burmans rejected the Gospel, the Karens received it. Sometimes when a superior race, so called, has rejected the truth, those who have been downtrodden pariahs of the land have been made ready by God to accept the Gospel. There is more hope, I think, of conversion work to be done in Italy, and in Spain than in any other parts of the world. Where the ministry of Christ has been all but silenced, the truth will come like an angel's hymn, and there it is that we may expect to hear glad hearts welcoming the good news.

“He that goes forth”—not he that sits at home, throwing random handfuls out of his window, and expecting the corn to spring up on his doorstep—but he who obeys the Word, “Go you into all the world,” and overleaps the hedges which shut in the narrow sphere of nominal Christendom, and labors to have fresh lands, fresh provinces, fresh wildernesses broken up for Christ, he is the man most likely to win the reward.

The next word is, “*and weeps.*” What means this word? I take it, brethren, that, as in the first words, “he that goes forth,” we see the man's mode of service, so here we note a little of the man himself. He goes forth and weeps. The man likely to be successful is a man of like passions with ourselves, not an angel, but a man, for he weeps.

But then he is very much a man. He is a man of strong passions, weeping because he has a sensitive heart. The man who sleeps, the man who can be content to do nothing, and is satisfied with no result, is not the man to win sheaves. God chooses usually, not men of great brain and vast mind, but men of true-hearted, deep natures, with souls that can desire, and pant, and long, and heave, and throb.

It is a great thing that makes a genuine man weep. Tears do not lie quite so fleet with most of us, but the man who cannot weep cannot preach, at least, if he never feels tears within, even if they do not show themselves without, he can scarcely be the man to handle such themes as those which God has committed to His people's charge.

If you would be useful, dear brothers and sisters, you must cultivate the sacred passions. You must think much upon the divine realities, until they move and stir your souls. That men are dying and perishing, that hell is filling, that Christ is dishonored, that souls are not converted to Christ, that the Holy Ghost is grieved, that the kingdom does not come to God, but that Satan rules and reigns—all this ought to be well considered by us, and our heart ought to be stirred until like the prophet we say, “O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears.”

The useful worker for Christ is a man of tenderness, not a stoic—not one who does not care whether souls are saved or not. He is not one so wrapped up in the thought of divine sovereignty as to be absolutely petrified, but one who feels as if he died in the death of sinners and perished in their ruin—as though he could only be made happy in their happiness, or find a paradise in their being caught up to heaven. The weeping, then, shows you what kind of man it is whom the Lord of the harvest largely employs.

He is a man in earnest, a man of tenderness, a man in love with souls, a man wrapped up in his calling, a man carried away with compassion, a man who feels for sinners—in a word, a Christ-like man. Not a stone, but a man who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, a man of heart, a man ready to weep because sinners will not weep.

“Why does he weep?” however, asks someone—“He is on an honorable work, and he is to have a glorious reward!” My brethren, he weeps as he goes forth because he feels his own insufficiency. He often sighs within himself, “Who is sufficient for these things?” He did not know what a weak creature he was until he came into contact with other men’s hearts. He fancied it was easy work to serve God, but now he is somewhat of Joshua’s mind, “You cannot serve the Lord.”

Every effort that he makes betrays to him his own want of natural strength. Well may he weep. He never teaches in the Sunday school class, he never prays at the sick bed, but what he feels ashamed when he has done his work, that he did not do it better. He never takes a little child on his knee to talk to it of Jesus, but he wishes that he could have spoken more tenderly of the sweet gentleness of the Lover of little children. He is never satisfied with himself, for he forms a right estimate of himself, and he weeps to think that he is so poor an instrument for so good a Master.

Moreover, he weeps because of the hardness of men’s hearts. He thought, at first, he should only have to tell these great truths, and men would leap for joy. Have you ever seen fancy pictures at the head of our missionary magazines, of respectable gentlemen dressed in black suits, landing out of boats manned by devout sailors, carrying Bibles in their hands, and these well-to-do evangelists are surrounded by Turks and Chinese, black people, and copper-colored people, who are running down to the seashore, and taking these precious Bibles in their hands, and looking as if they had found a priceless treasure?

Ah, it is all in the picture, it is nowhere else—the thing does not occur. Natives of barbarous isles and heathen kingdoms do not receive the Gospel in that way. Heralds of the cross have to do a deal of rough work and toil on. For the Gospel, which ought to be welcomed, is rejected. And as there was no room for Christ in the inn when He became incarnate, so there is no room for the Gospel in the hearts of mankind. Yes, and this makes us weep, since where there should be so much readiness to accept, there is so much obstinacy and rebellion.

The Christian worker weeps because, when he does see some signs of success, he is often disappointed. Blossoms come not to be fruit, or fruit half-ripe drops from the tree. He has to weep before God oftentimes, because he is afraid that these failures may be the result of his own lack of tact, or want of grace. I marvel not that the minister weeps, or that any worker for Christ bedews the seed with his tears—the wonder is he does not lament far more than he does. Perhaps we should all weep more if we were more Christ-like, more what we should be, and perhaps our working would have about it diviner results if it came more out of our very soul, if we *played* less at soul-saving, and worked more at it. If we cast soul and strength, and every energy of our being into the work, perhaps God would reward us at a far greater rate.

The next point is he “*bears precious seed.*” Here indeed is a special point of all success. There is no soul-winning by untruthful preaching. We must preach the truth as it is in Jesus. Workers for God must tell out the Gospel and keep to the Gospel. You must continually dwell upon the real truth as it is in God’s Word, for nothing but this will win souls.

Now in order to this, my fellow workers for Christ, we must know God’s truth. We must know it by an inward experience of its power as well as in theory. We must know it as precious truth. It must be precious seed to us for which we would be prepared to die if it were necessary. We must understand it as being precious because it comes from God, precious because it tells to man the best of news, precious because sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, precious because Christ values it, and all holy men esteem it beyond all price. We must therefore not deliver it with flippancy, not talk of solemn themes with levity, not tell out the Gospel as though we were retelling a mere tale from the Arabian Nights, a romance

meant for amusement, or to beguile a passing hour. O brethren, we who sow for God must sow solemnly and in right good earnest, because the seed is precious seed, more precious than we can ever estimate.

Work for God, dear brethren, as those who *know* that the truth is a seed. Do not speak of it and forget it. Do not tell the Gospel as though it were a stone, and would lie in the ground and never spring up. Tell out the truth as it is in Jesus, with the firm conviction that there is life in it, and something will come of it. Be on the alert to see that something, and you will be the man who will have results.

Our estimate of the preciousness of the seed will have much to do with the result of the seed. If I do not esteem thoroughly and heartily the Gospel which I teach, if I therefore do not teach it with all my heart, I cannot expect to see the sheaves. But if, valuing the Gospel, I tell it out to my fellow men as being priceless beyond all cost, and tell it out therefore with due vivacity, and with an earnestness that brings me to tears, I am the man who shall come again rejoicing, bringing my sheaves with me.

I do not know whether I have brought out what I meant, but we have I think in our text a full description of the successful worker.

II. You have in the text, THE WORKER'S SUCCESS.

It is said of him, "*He shall come again.*" What does that mean but that he shall come again to his God? And this the worker should do after he has labored. You sought a blessing—go and tell your God of what you have done, and if you have seen a blessing come, give Him thanks. Those men always come back to God with their sheaves who went from God with their seed. Some workers can see souls converted, and take the honor to themselves, but never that man who sowed in tears—he has learned his own weakness in the school of bitterness, and now when he sees results, he comes back again. He comes back to God, for he feels that it is a great wonder that even a single soul should be convinced or converted under such poor words as his.

Oh, I know some of you have had your sheaves. Dear brother, beyond a doubt, if you had those sheaves as the result of a holy vehemence in prayer, you will be sure to come back with a holy ardor of thanksgiving, and lay those sheaves in their honor and their praise at the foot of God who gave them to you.

"He shall doubtless come again." Does not that mean in the longest and largest sense, he shall come again to heaven? He did as it were go forth from heaven. His body had not been there, but his soul had. He had communed with God. Heaven was his portion and his heritage, but it was expedient for Him a little while to tarry here for the sake of others, and so in a certain sense He leaves the heaven of His rest to go into the field of sorrow among the sons of men. But he shall come again.

Ah! blessed be God, we are not banished by our service. We are kept outside the pearl gate for a little while—thanks be to God for the honor of being permitted thus to be absent from our joys for a while, but we are not shut out, we are not banished, we shall doubtless come again. Here is your comfort. You go perhaps into the mission field, you journey to the remotest parts of the earth to serve God, but you shall come again. There is a straight road to heaven from the most remote field of service, and in this you may rejoice.

But the text adds, "*He shall come again with rejoicing.*" What will he rejoice in? Take the whole text and wrap it up together, and it seems to me to say that he shall come again rejoicing even in his very tears. I reckon that at the last, when Christian service shall be done, and Christian reward shall be rendered, the toils endured in serving God, the disappointment, and the racking of heart will all make raw material for everlasting song.

Oh, how we shall bless God to think that we were counted worthy to do anything for Christ! Was I enlisted in the host that stood the shock of battle? Did the Master suffer me to have a hand upon the standard that waved so proudly aloft amidst the smoke of the battle? Did He suffer me to leap into the ditch, or scale the rampart of the wall among the forlorn hope? Or did He even suffer me to watch by the baggage while the battle was raging afar off? Then am I thankful that He in any way whatever permitted me to have a share in the glory of that triumphant conflict.

And then, brethren, as old soldiers show their scars, and as the warriors in many conflicts delight to tell of hair-breadth escapes in “the imminent breach,” and of dangers grim and ghastly, so shall we rejoice as we return to God to tell of our going forth, and of our weeping when we carried the precious seed. There is not a single drop of gall which will not turn to honey. There is not this day one drop of sweat upon your aching brow but shall crystallize into a pearl for your everlasting crown. Not one pang of anguish or disappointment but shall be transmuted into celestial glory to increase your joy, world without end.

But the main rejoicing will be doubtless in their success. O you Sabbath school teachers, if you go forth as the text has told you, and as I have explained to you, you shall not be without fruits. I have heard many discussions amongst my brethren, about whether or not every earnest laborer may expect to have fruit. I have always inclined to the belief that such is the rule, and though there may be exceptions, and perhaps some men may be rather a savor of death unto death than of life unto life, yet it seems to me that if I never won souls I would sigh till I did, I would break my heart over them if I could not break their hearts. If they would not be saved, and were not saved, I would almost cry with Moses, “Blot out my name out of the book of life.”

Though I can understand the possibility of an earnest sower never reaping, I cannot understand the possibility of an earnest sower being content not to reap. I cannot comprehend any one of you Christian people trying to win souls and not having results, and being satisfied without results. I can suppose that you may love the Lord, and may have been trying your best unsuccessfully for years, but then I am sure you feel unhappy about it. I can not only suppose that to be the case, but I am thankful that you are unhappy. I hope the unhappiness will increase with you till at last, in the anguish of your spirit, you shall cry like Rachel, “Give me children or I die! Give me fruits or I cannot live!” Then you will be the very person described in the text—you go forth weeping, bearing seed that is precious to you. And you must have results, you must come again rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you.

The last point is coming back rejoicing *with sheaves*. I do not suppose the text means that the reaper is to bring home all his sheaves on his own back, but as an old expositor says, he comes with the wagons behind him, with the wagons at his heels, bringing his sheaves with him. Yes, they are *his* sheaves. “How so? All saved souls belong to Christ. They are God’s.” Yes, but for all that they belong to the worker. There is a kind of sacred property which exists, and which God acknowledges in the case of men and women who bring souls to Christ. I am persuaded there is no love in this world more pure and crystal, more celestial and enduring, than the love of a convert to the person through whose agency he or she may have been brought to Christ.

All earthly love has a tinge of the flesh about it, but this is *spiritual*—this is worthy of immortal spirits—this will therefore endure. While the converts who are brought to Christ are all the Lord’s own, yet they belong also to those who brought them in—so God puts it, “bringing his sheaves with him.” And ah! I like to think of that. If God shall privilege me to bring souls to Him, I shall count them all, and say, “Here am I and the children which you have given me.” Oh! it is blessed to give all the glory to Christ. It is a great honor to give all the honor to Him. But you must have the glory first, or you cannot give it to Him. The sheaves must be yours, or evidently you cannot carry them honestly, and offer them to Him.

Souls are saved through God’s Word, yes, but Christ prays for those who shall believe, “through *their* word,” that is, through the preachers’ word. The apostle gives much honor to workers, for in one place he speaks of himself as though he were the mother of souls, “Little children for whom I have travailed in birth.” In another place he speaks of himself as though he were a father of souls, as though both relations were centered in the true laborer. Thus does God put high honor upon Christian workers by making the souls, as it were, completely theirs—the sheaves their sheaves.

They threw themselves into the work, they made the work their very life, they wept, they cried, and pleaded as they sowed. And now God does not come in to take away all property in the sheaves, but as they come back, the workers have an interest and a share in all the results of the blessed Gospel, and

God makes those sheaves their sheaves, He gives them honor in the sight of men and angels through Jesus Christ His Son.

III. And now I have not time, as I ought to have, for the conclusion, which is upon THE GOLDEN LINK OF “DOUBTLESS.” Therefore, I must just launch rapidly these laconic hints.

The true worker will be a reaper. I am afraid I have put this in the shape as though I were speaking to ministers, but I am not. I am trying to talk to every Christian here. If you are a true worker, you will be a reaper doubtless. Why? First, because the promise of God says so. “My word shall not return to me void: it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Secondly, God’s honor in the Gospel requires it. If there be a failure, and you have preached the true Gospel rightly, it will be the Gospel that will fail, and then God’s attributes are all wrapped up in the Gospel—it is His wisdom and His power, and shall God’s wisdom be nonplussed, and God’s power be put back?

Again, you must reap because the analogy of nature assures you of it. The poor peasant whose little stock of corn is all but spent, takes a little wheat, which is very precious to him, and with many tears he drops it into the soil in the wintry months. But God gives him a harvest. In due time, in the mellow autumn days, he gathers in the sheaves which reward him for his self-denial. It shall be so with you. God mocks not the husbandman. He appoints the seedtime, and He brings round the harvest. As He does not change the ordinances of nature, so will He not change the ordinances of grace. Be satisfied with this.

Moreover, Christ, the model of the Christian life, assures you of this. He went forth weeping, sowing drops of bloody sweat, sowing with pierced hands and feet that dropped with blood. He went forth sowing living seeds of love, and they are springing up today already in the glory and in the multitudes that are gathered into it. And soon, in the coming and the superior splendor that shall envelop it, the Christ who sowed in tears will reap in joy. Even thus it must be with you.

And if this is not enough to comfort you, remember those who have gone before you in this service, who have proved this fact. Think of those you have known, who have not been unsuccessful. When, with hearts broken and bruised, they have spent their life-power in their Lord’s work. Remember Judson and the thousands of Karens that this day sing of the Savior whom he first taught to them. Think of Moffat, in his old age still in the villages of the Bechuanas, not without glorious seals to his ministry.

Think of our own missions in Jamaica, of the wonders and trophies of grace in the South Sea Islands, the multitudes that were turned to Christ during revival seasons in our own land, and in the United States, and you have proof that those that know how to weep and sow, and who go forth from God to the sowing, shall, beyond a doubt, come again rejoicing with their sheaves. Up, you laborers, you sow in hope. Sow broadcast, and enlarge your spheres! Up, you desponding ones who are wrapping your cloaks about you, and seeking consolation in indolence, because you think your toil too desperate! Up, I beseech you, for the harvest comes on.

O miss not your share in the shouting and the rejoicings—but you will so miss if you miss your part in the weeping and in the sorrowing. Would God I could put zeal into your hearts, but that I cannot. May the Holy Ghost do it, and as a band of Christian men, may we be resolved that henceforth, while we live, and until we die, we will with passionate longing, with all the forces of our manhood worked up and strained to the utmost pitch, seek to tell the good news of Jesus crucified to the sons of men, knowing that our work of faith cannot be in vain in the Lord.

O you who are not saved at all, I ask not you to work. I ask not you to sow. But come you to Christ Jesus. Look you to His cross. One look at Christ will save you. Trust in Him and you shall live. The Lord bless these words for His name’s sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALMS 126, 127, 129.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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.