

**THE CAUSE AND CURE OF WEARINESS
IN SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS
NO. 1383**

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1877,
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*“Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”
Galatians 6:9.*

THIS verse occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians, which so plainly sets forth the grand doctrine of justification by faith and teaches us most plainly that salvation is not of works, but of grace. As if to confound forever those who say that the doctrine of free grace is unpractical, the apostle before he closes his epistle exhorts believers to labor, and in the verse before us gives us a sentence worthy to be printed in letters of gold and hung up forever before the eyes of all Christian workers, “Be not weary in well doing.” It is true, my brethren, that you are not to save yourselves by well doing. Your motive is not selfish, but because you are saved already you desire to manifest the power of gratitude and to prove to all the world that those who receive a free salvation are the very men who most cheerfully labor to please God and to bring glory to His name. O you who are debtors to infinite mercy, “Be not weary in well doing.”

The apostle, at the time he wrote our text, had in his mind’s eye the well doing which by its alms does good unto all men and also that kindness which leads hearers of the gospel to communicate in all good things unto him that teaches. Truly it is easy to be weary in these matters. Giving alms certainly is disheartening work. One is so continually being deceived that giving to the poor becomes a weary business. Impostors abound on all sides. This city of London swarms with impostors who would deceive Solomon himself. I do not wonder that men are driven to organize their charity, which frequently means bringing it to an end. The tendency is to excuse themselves because at some time or other they have been victimized. A cruel hardness is abroad which talks philosophy and renounces giving alms for fear of disturbing our delightful social economy. Almsgiving, if we are to believe some men, has become a crime and the truly good man is he who never interferes with the work of the poor law. To these people it seems odd that our Lord should have commended anything so inconsistent with political economy as giving to the poor. According to the modern school, we may expect those to be blessed who see people hungry and give them no meat, thirsty and give them no drink, sick and in prison and never visit them, because hungry people should go to the parish and thirsty people to the pump. I trust, however, that the Christian spirit which is pitiful to the poor will never die out among us and that, notwithstanding all the difficulties under which we may have to labor, we may not be weary in well doing, for despite all deceptions and impositions, in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

I am sure I shall not be wrong in taking the text from its immediate connection and applying it to the work of Sunday schools, for, first of all, I am sure, brethren and sisters, that *your work is well described in the text*—it is well doing. Secondly, I am equally clear that *you are liable to the evils mentioned here*, which are common to all Christian service—weariness and faintness, and it is equally clear that *the consolation and encouragement of the text may truthfully be enjoyed by you*. “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

I. First, then, I know you will all agree with me that **YOUR WORK IS WELL DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT**. It may be set forth in so many words as *well doing*. You entered upon it because you felt it to be so and you continue in it for the same reason. Another description of Christian work is implied in the promise of reaping—your work is sowing. Take the two ideas of well doing and sowing and they will both be found to be exceedingly well-embodied in holy labor among the young.

Sunday school work is well doing. How can it be otherwise, for *it is an act of obedience*. I trust you have entered upon it because you call Jesus your Master and Lord and you wish to fulfill the great command, “Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” You find children to be creatures—fallen creatures—but still lovable little things, full of vigor, and life, and glee. You see them to be a component part of the race and you conclude at once that your Master’s command applies to them. You are not like the disciples who would put them back, for you have learned from their mistake and you remember the words of their Master and yours, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.” You know, too, that “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He has ordained strength because of the adversary,” so that you are sure that He included the little ones in the general commission when He said, “Preach the gospel to every creature.” You are doubly sure that you are obeying His will because you have certain special precepts which relate to the little ones, such as, “Feed My lambs,” and “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he shall not depart from it.” You know that it is our duty to preserve a testimony in the world and therefore you are anxious to teach the Word to your children that they may teach it to their children, that so, from generation to generation, the Word of the Lord may be made known. Be the task pleasant or irksome to you, it is not yours to hesitate, but to obey. The love which has redeemed you also constrains you. You feel the touch of the sacred hand upon your shoulder, the hand which once was pierced, and you hear your Redeemer say, “As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you,” and because of that sending, you go forth to the little ones in obedience to His will. He who obeys is well doing and in this sense your service among the little ones is well doing.

Well doing it is, again, because it *brings glory to God*. We must always continue to receive from God, who is the great fountain of goodness and blessing, but yet, in infinite condescension, He permits us to make Him some return. As the dewdrop reflects the beam with which the great sun adorns it, so may we, in our measure, make the light of our great Father to sparkle before the eyes of men. Our lives may be as the rivers which run into the sea from where they originally came. Whenever we attempt that which will clearly promote the divine glory, we are well doing. When we make known Jehovah’s grace, when we work in accordance with His purposes of love, when we speak forth the truth which honors His beloved Son, whenever, indeed, the Holy Spirit through us bears witness to the eternal truths of the gospel, there is well doing towards God. We cannot increase His intrinsic glory, but through His Spirit we can make His glory to be more widely seen—and among the choicest ways of doing this we give a high place to the teaching of children the fear of the Lord in order that they may be a seed to serve Him and to rejoice in His salvation.

And who shall doubt that Sunday school work is *well doing towards man*? The highest form of charity is to teach our fellow man the gospel of Jesus Christ. You may give bread to your fellow, but when he has eaten, it is gone. If you give him the bread of life, it abides with him forever. You may give him bread in plenty, but in due time he will die as his fathers have done before him, but if you give him the bread of heaven and he eats thereof, he shall live forever. God has enabled you to hand out to him immortal food, even Jesus, who is “that bread from heaven.” What a blessing it is to a man if you are the instrument of changing his heart and so of emancipating him from vice and making him free unto holiness. To lead a soul to Christ is to lead it to heaven. It is assuredly a noble part of benevolence to deliver the gospel to the sons of men and if possible, this benevolence is of a still higher kind when you deliver the truth of God to children, for as prevention is better than a cure, so is it better to prevent a life of vice than to rescue from it. And as the earlier a soul has light, the shorter is its night of darkness, so the earlier in life salvation comes to the heart, the better and greater is the benediction. To receive the dew of grace while we are yet in the dew of youth is a double blessing.

Brethren, your work is one of well doing of the most thorough and radical kind, for you strike at the very root of sin in the child by seeking his regeneration. You desire, by the grace of God, to win the heart for Christ at the beginning of life and this is the best of blessings. I hope you are not among those who only hope to see your children converted when they are grown up and feel satisfied to let them remain in their sins while they are children. I hope that you pray for the conversion of children as children and are working to that end by the Spirit’s gracious aid. If you are doing so, I know of no service more fit to engage the angels of heaven if they could be permitted to undertake it. Surely, if they could teach the gospel to mankind and had their choice of learners, they might well pass those by who are already hardened in sin and who can only give their tottering age to Christ—and gather for Him the young

whose day is but dawning. We may not set one work against another, but at any rate we may count ourselves happy if our sphere is among the young. Let us gather the rosebuds for Jesus. Let us bring to Him the virgin in her earliest beauty and the young man in his first vigor before sin and age have spoiled them of their charms. Let us find for Him those who can give Him a whole life and honor Him from dawn till its eve. Oh, it is glorious to have such work for Jesus. Go to your youthful charges, rejoicing in your work, for it is well doing.

It is by no means difficult to see that Sunday school work is *sowing*. Upon this I will not speak much, for the emblem is easy to be understood. Your schools are the field, the gospel is the seed, and you are the sowers. Suffer me only to say that yours is a work in which there are great outgoings and apparent losses. Even as the sower casts his seed into the earth, buries it, and it is lost to him, so do you spend your strength, your thought, your love, your talent, your time, and at first see no return. You are sacrificing your leisure and much of the religious privileges of your fellow Christians. You are, as some say, burying yourselves in the school—surrendering ease and repose for unremunerated work. I speak after the manner of men. You engage in these self-denials because you believe that the truth, like a seed, ought to be sown and that it is your duty to sow it. It is frequently said that “Truth is mighty and will prevail,” but this must be qualified by the reflection that truth does nothing by way of conquest till it is spoken out by earnest men. I doubt not that there are hundreds of great truths, in the shape of social reforms, now lying on the shelf and having little or no power because they have not yet found a brave and earnest tongue to proclaim them. When the man shall come who is ordained to be their spokesman, they will ring out like a clarion and hosts will gather to their standard, but meanwhile they lie like sleeping giants whose might sleeps with them. There is power in the truth, as there is life in seed, but it will be hidden till, like seed, it is sown in favorable soil. It needs a sower and feeling that the truth ought to be sown, you consecrate yourselves to that work.

You have, moreover, looked at the children and you have felt that the soil of their minds ought to be sown. You hope to find good soil at least in some cases, and it strikes you that to delay to sow will be culpable neglect. You are sure that if *you* do not sow, the devil will and that weeds will spring up if wheat is not sown, and you wish, if you can, to get the start of some, at least, of the devil’s servants and drop in the seeds of divine truth before the grosser vices have come to development. You know that abundance of the seed of noxious plants lies hidden in that plot of ground by nature, as the result of the Fall, but still before they have grown into rank luxuriance, you desire to choke the weeds with the rapid growth of heaven’s own corn. Your present occupation is to sow the children’s minds. You are delighted when you see the seed spring up immediately, but where it tries your patience you still sow. When I had a little garden of my own and put in mustard and cress, I went the next morning to see if it was sprouting and was not satisfied to wait for the due season. I turned over the dirt and I dare say I prevented the growth of the seed by my over haste. It is quite possible for teachers to commit the same folly by an unbelieving hurry—expecting to reap tomorrow what they have sown today. Immediate fruit may come, for God works marvelously, but whether it does or not, your plain duty is to sow. Reap you shall, but meanwhile you must be satisfied to go on sowing, sowing, sowing, even to the end. Reaping is your reward, but sowing is your work. Sowing, sowing, ever sowing till the hand is palsied in death and the seed basket is carried on another arm. Well doing by sowing the seed is your work.

II. Now, secondly, it appears from the text that in your service **YOU WILL MEET WITH EVILS** common to Christian workers of all descriptions. You will especially be liable to weariness and faintness.

Take the first word as it stands in our version—you will be tempted to grow *weary*. Hard work, this teaching children. Some good souls seem born to it—they do it splendidly and enjoy it. To others it is a stern labor. Some are by constitution exceedingly inapt at it, but I do not think that they should excuse themselves by that fact, but should educate themselves into loving the work—many people around us are very inapt at anything which would cause them a perspiration, but we call them lazy and goad them on. It is no new thing for men to attempt to escape the army by pretending to be in bad health, but we must have none of this cowardly malingering in Christ’s army—we must be ready for anything and everything. We must compel ourselves to duty when it goes against the grain. When it is a clear duty, obedience must master our aversion. I have no doubt whatever that teaching is, to some, very toilsome work, but then it has to be done, all the same. I delight to hear you speak, dear brethren, with holy enthu-

siasm for the privilege of teaching children and I fully believe in it. But I know also that it requires no small degree of self-denial on your part, self-denial for which the church does not always give you due credit. To continue from Sunday to Sunday drilling some little Biblical knowledge into those noisy boys and trying to sober down those giddy girls is no light amusement or pretty pastime. It must be a toil and therefore it is not difficult to become weary.

Teachers may the more readily tire because the work lasts on year after year. If you are all Sunday school teachers I am very happy to perceive so many grey and bald heads among you. It looks well. I admire the veterans of your army. There ought to be an "Old Guard" as well as new regiments. Why leave this work to young beginners? Did not David say, "Come, you children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord," when he was in the prime of life? Why, then, do so many cease to teach when they are best qualified to do so? Have not many aged persons a gentleness and an impressiveness which peculiarly qualify them to arrest the attention of the young? As they know more by experience than most of us, should they not be all the readier to impart instruction? It was always my delight to sit at my grandfather's feet when he told of his experience of the grace of God. When he was eighty years old or more, his witness to the faithfulness of God was worth going many miles to hear. There are scores of aged men and women whose life story ought to be often told among children. With their loving ways and cheerful manners, they would be an acquisition to any school for the children's sake—while to the teachers their weight and wisdom would be an incalculable benefit. Die in harness, my brethren, if your mental and physical vigor will permit. Still, the long round of many years' labor must tend to make the worker weary and the more so if the work is allowed to become monotonous, as in some schools it certainly is. You go to the same dingy room and sit on the same chair before the same class of boys. It is true the boys are not the same boys, for though the proverb says, "Boys will be boys," I find that they will not be boys, but that they will be men—but still one boy is so much like another boy that the class is evermore the same. The lessons vary but the truth is the same and the work of teaching is like the sowing of seed—very much the same thing over and over again. Lovers of change will hardly find in regular Sunday school work a field for their fickleness. The text says, "Be not weary." Come, brother, are you tired out? How long have you been teaching? A thousand years? You smile and I smile too, and say—do not be weary with any period of service short of that. Our Lord deserves a whole eternity to be spent in His praise and we hope so to spend it. And therefore let us not be weary with the few years which constitute the ordinary life of man.

I find the Greek word contains the idea of being "disheartened." "Let us not lose heart." This is a soul-weariness against which we must resolutely fight. It comes to many good workers and shows itself in different ways. Some think the work less important than they did at first. Others fear that their part of it will prove an utter failure. This is heart-weariness. When a Sunday school is going down, when there are not so many children as in former years, or what is equally bad, when there are not enough teachers, the poor superintendent falls into great anxiety and the teachers at the teachers' meetings are not in the best of spirits. By the way, I am not sure that you teachers always edify one another at those meetings or that you always have the Spirit of God among you. I have heard otherwise sometimes and yet I cannot blame you, for I have heard of church meetings too which have not been "like a little heaven below," nor would I say of them, "I have been there and still would go." When the condition of the school is disorder and decline, the best of teachers become discouraged and weary. At such times, good teachers hardly know how to go to their work at all, for there is not that loving spirit in the school which renders it a happy family, neither is there that power in prayer which secures the great Father's presence and therefore many become distressed and tire of the service. Now comes in my text, "Be not weary in well doing." Pluck up courage. Do not be a coward. Hope on, hope ever. Work on, even though the task becomes more and more trying to you. Do not despise your vocation, nor stay your hand, be not weary in well doing.

Our text next speaks of our *fainting*. The original word has at its base the idea of being loosened. There is a girding up of the loins which means work and there is a loosening, not merely of garments, but of sinews, which means that the man will do no more. Some Sunday school teachers get, as the saying is, upon the loose. They display an utter lack of energy—they are unstrung. They do not teach their classes with all their heart, soul and strength, but they get through in a "slipshod" fashion, like a man trudging along with loosened sandals. They teach, but put no honest work into it—their heart is no long-

er bound to the altar. The school work is performed in routine fashion and it might almost as well have been let alone. I have seen a man at work in such a sleepy style that I have been ready to cry out, "Dear me! Dear me! I cannot endure to see such crawling and creeping! Stand away! Give me your tool and let me have a turn at it." And even so might one feel the same about certain teachers. A chapter is read and remarks made upon it which cost neither thought nor reading. Hymns sung without the slightest sign of life and prayer offered without heart. A living Sunday school teacher standing by has been ready to weep to see how the children become indifferent because the teacher is trifling. There must be life, force, fire, heart, energy, intensity put into your service or it will be valueless. Dear friends, do not fall into a loose state. You shall bind your sheaves soon, if you do not become loose in your own minds. You shall reap if you do not become languid and lethargic.

How is it that we ever fall into that state? What are the excuses that we make for ourselves when we faint? At times we are tempted to give it all up. We feel that there is no good being done and therefore we cannot hold on any longer. What makes us talk so? Is it not the old Adam—our carnal nature? Should we not mortify him and say, "Now, old Adam, you want me to give up the Sunday school and I shall refuse to do so for that very reason"? My idle flesh is saying to me, "Take things a little more leisurely. Do not take extra work upon yourself." Ah, flesh, proud flesh. If I sow to you I shall reap corruption. What a horrible thing it is, that reaping of corruption. The very word seems to swarm with living and moving abominations—its meaning is intensely abhorrent to the pure mind. We must at once reply, "No, flesh, I cannot sow to you and reap corruption and therefore you must be denied. I shall mortify you and continue with my class at the school. I had thought of giving it up, but I will not indulge you so much, but by God's grace I will persevere."

Do you not think that at times our getting lax in Christian work arises from our being very low in grace? As a rule, you cannot get out of a man that which is not in him. You cannot go forth yourself to your class and do your work vigorously if you have lost inward vigor. You cannot minister before the Lord with the unction of the Holy One if that unction is not upon you. If you are not living near to God and in the power of God, then the power of God will not go forth through you to the children in your care. So that I think we should judge, when we become discontented and down-hearted, that we are out of sorts spiritually. Let us say to ourselves, "Come, my soul. What ails you? This faint heart is a sign that you are out of health. Go to the great Physician and obtain from Him a tonic which shall brace you. Come, play the man. Have none of these whims! Away with your idleness! The reaping time will come, therefore thrust in the plow."

Is not another reason why we become down-hearted to be found in the coldness and indifference of our fellow Christians? We see others doing the Lord's work carelessly and when we are all on fire ourselves we find them to be cold as ice. We get among people in the church who do not seem to care whether the souls of the children are saved or not and thus we are apt to be discouraged. The idleness of others should be an argument for our being more diligent ourselves. If our Master's work is suffering at the hands of our fellow servants, should we not try to do twice as much ourselves to make up for their deficiencies? Ought not the laggards to be warnings to us lest we also come into the same lukewarm condition? To argue that I ought to be a sluggard because others loiter is poor logic.

Sometimes, too—I am ashamed to mention it—I have heard of teachers becoming weary from lack of being appreciated. Their work has not been sufficiently noticed by the pastor and praised by the superintendent, and sufficient notice has not been taken of them and their class by their fellow teachers. I will not say much about this cause of faintness, because it is so small an affair that it is quite below a Christian. Appreciation! Do we expect it in this world? The Jewish nation despised and rejected their King and even if we were as holy as the Lord Jesus, we might still fail to be rightly judged and properly esteemed. What does it matter? If God accepts us, we need not be dismayed though all should pass us by.

Perhaps, however, *the work itself* may suggest to us a little more excuse for being weary. It is hard work to sow on the highway and amidst the thorns—hard work to be casting good seed upon the rock year after year. Well, if I had done so for many years and was enabled by the Holy Spirit, I would say to myself, "I shall not give up my work because I have not yet received a recompense in it, for I perceive that in the Lord's parable three sowings did not succeed and yet the one piece of good ground paid for all. Perhaps I have gone through my three unsuccessful sowings and now is my time to enjoy my fourth,

in which the seed will fall upon good ground.” It is a pity, dear brother, when you have had some years of rough work, to give it all up now. Why, now you are going to enjoy the sweets of your former labor. It would be a pity, my dear sister, just when you have mastered your class and prepared the way for a blessing, for you to run away from it. There is so much less difficulty for you to overcome now that you already overcome so much. He who has passed so many miles of a rough voyage will not have to go over those miles again—do not let him think of going back. To go back, indeed, in this pilgrimage would be shameful—and as we have no armor for our backs—it would be dangerous. Putting our hand to this plow and looking back will prove that we were unworthy of the kingdom. If there are a hundred reasons for giving up your work of faith, there are fifty thousand for going on with it. Though there are many arguments for fainting, there are far more arguments for persevering. Though we might be weary and do sometimes feel so, let us wait upon the Lord and renew our strength and we shall mount up with wings as eagles, forget our weariness and be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

III. That observation brings me to the last part of my subject which is that WE HAVE ABUNDANT ENCOURAGEMENT in the prospect of reward which is afforded in the text, “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

The first remark upon that promise shall be that reaping time will come. Our chief business is to glorify God by teaching His truth whether souls are saved or not, but still, I object to the statement that we may go on preaching the gospel for years and years and even all our lifetime and yet no result may follow. They say, “Paul *may* preach and Apollos *may* water, but God gives the increase.” I should like them to find that passage in the Bible. In my English Bible it runs thus, “I, (Paul) have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” There is not the slightest intent to teach us that when Paul planted and Apollos watered God would arbitrarily refuse the increase. All the glory is claimed for the Lord, but honest labor is not despised. I do not say that there is the same relation between teaching the truth and conversion as there is between cause and effect, so that they are invariably connected. But I will maintain that it is the rule of the kingdom that they should be connected through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some causes will not produce effects because certain obstacles intervene to prevent. A person may teach the gospel in a bad spirit—that *must* spoil it. A person may teach only part of the gospel and he may put that the wrong way upwards. God may bless it somewhat, but yet the good man may greatly retard the blessing by the mistaken manner in which he delivers the truth. Take it as a rule that the truth of God prayed over, spoken in the fear of the Lord, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in the man who speaks it, will produce the effect which is natural to it. As the rain climbs not up to the skies and the snow flakes never take to themselves wings to rise to heaven, so neither shall the Word of God return unto Him void, but it shall accomplish that which He pleases. We have not spent our strength in vain. Not a verse taught to a little girl, nor a text dropped into the ear of a careless boy, nor an earnest warning given to an obdurate young sinner, nor a loving farewell to one of the senior girls shall be without some result or other to the glory of God. And taking it all together as a whole, though this handful of seed may be eaten of the birds and that other seed may die on the hard rock, yet as a whole, the seed shall spring up in sufficient abundance to plentifully reward the sower and the giver of the seed. We know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

I do not come into this pulpit with any fear that I shall preach in vain. It does not occur to me that such a thing can happen. I thought so once, when I thought more of myself than now, but now I am assured that if I speak out God’s message in the best way I can, and with much prayer leave it all with God, He will take care of it. I expect to see people converted, not because there is any good in them, but because the Lord works as He pleases and will call whom He pleases and will give to His own truth victory and honor. Go to your classes with this persuasion, “I shall not labor in vain or spend my strength for nothing.” “According to your faith, so is it unto you.” Take a little measure and you shall have it filled with the manna of success, but take a great omer and in its fullness you shall have abundance. Believe in the power of the truth you preach. Believe in the power of Christ about whom you speak. Believe in the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit whose help you have invoked in earnest prayer. Go to your sowing and reckon upon reaping.

I want to call your particular attention to a word in the text which is very full of encouragement. “Let us not be weary, for we shall reap.” *We* shall reap. Dear brethren and sisters, we shall reap. It is not, “We shall do the work and our successors shall reap after we are gone.” We ought to be very pleased even

with that, and no doubt such is often the case. But we shall reap, too. Yes, I shall have my sheaves and you will have yours. The plot which I have toiled and wept over shall yield me my sheaves of harvest and I shall personally gather them. I shall reap. "I never thought much of myself as a teacher," says one, "I always fear that I am hardly competent and I notice that the superintendent has only trusted me with the little children. But I am so glad to hear that I shall reap. I shall reap. I shall have a dear little one, saved in the Lord, to be my portion." I pray you, dear friends, if you have never reaped yet, begin to hope. You teachers who are always punctual, I mean—of course, if you do not come on time, you do not care whether you reap or not. But I speak to punctual teachers. I speak also to earnest teachers—for if you are not earnest you will never reap. You punctual, earnest, prayerful teachers shall reap. Some teachers do not go in for reaping and they will not enjoy it. But I am speaking now to real, hard-working, earnest Sunday school teachers who give their hearts to it and yet have seen no results. According to the text, you shall reap. Come, my persevering comrades, let us not be discouraged—"In due season we shall reap," even we. You shall have your share with others. Though you feel as though you must give it up, you shall yet reap. After sowing all this while, do not cease from labor when reaping time is so near. If I were a farmer, if I gave up my farm, it should be before I sowed my wheat, but if I had done all the plowing and the sowing, I should not say to my landlord, "There are six weeks and then comes harvest, but I desire to let another tenant come in." No, no. I should want to stop and see the harvest gathered and the wheat taken to market. I should want to have my reward. So, dear brothers, wait for your recompense, specially you that have been discouraged—"In due time we shall reap, if we faint not." We who have thought least of our service and perhaps have exercised least faith and endured most searchings of heart and most groaning and crying before the Lord, we also "in due season, shall reap if we faint not."

This harvest will come "*in due season.*" There is even among men a due season for a reward. They say, "He is a bad paymaster who pays beforehand." So he is. You must always keep a little in hand for Saturday night or you may miss your man before the week is ended. Sometimes our Lord keeps back His people's reward that they may have something cheerful on before them, something also to try their mettle and to bring out all their powers. I like to see a brave man driven into a corner, baffled and defeated—and yet resolved to overcome—then his true heroism comes out. Hear him say, "I have been working that ragged school for months, but I make no impression upon the young roughs. There is a disturbance and disorder almost every night. I do not know what to do. I am at my wit's end—but there is one thing I know—if it is to be done it shall be done. In the name of God, I will continue at work till a change is effected." There you see the man strengthened by the Holy Spirit to labor. That is the man who will find out how to tame the arabs. He the man who will draw teachers round him and build up a noble school. Our true manhood often lies deep and needs to be pursued into its den and stirred into action. When once it is thoroughly awakened, it is grand to see it leap forth in passionate earnestness to achieve its purpose. I love to hear a man say, "This is impossible to men, but God will enable me." This is the triumph of faith and blessed is he that believes, for the due season of reaping is near for him.

The due season is often when you yourself are in a right state—when your faith has been tried, when your resolve has become fixed, when you are down on your face before God in prayer—when you are emptied out and have no strength of your own but go to God and cry to Him alone for help, then your due season will come. The due season for harvest is not the day after sowing the seed, but we must wait awhile and not be weary. The harvest will come as the Lord appoints. As all fruits are the sweeter for being in season, so is the reward of Christian service when it comes in God's time.

Now, lastly, when this reward comes, it will abundantly repay us. What is the reward of Sunday school teachers? Taking you, beloved brethren, on a broad scale, I would say that your reward lies chiefly in seeing the conversion of your children. There are a great many very excellent manuals upon the management of Sunday schools and I hope you will read them all and dwell with special attention upon the prize essays until your school is order itself. Still I have heard of beautifully managed schools from which there are very few conversions. Order may be heaven's first law, but it is not heaven's first object. Order is very desirable in a garden, but fruit is the main purpose. I know a school which is generally in a muddle, but yet children are saved in it continually. I wish it were more orderly, but yet I do not fret much about it so long as the grand result is gained. You may form so many rules and orders that you may rule your hearts out of your work—mind you, do not fall into that error. Your great business is to

have those children saved—systematically if you can, but saved anyhow. You must have those children convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit and led to Christ. You must not be satisfied to trim off your Sunday school in the neatest style unless there is real fruit unto the Lord. And what shall I say? What reward can equal the conversion of these young immortals? Is it not the highest happiness that we can enjoy on earth, next to communion with our Lord, to see these little ones saved?

Taking the Sunday school, however, on a broad scale, I think your reward partly lies in rearing up a generation of worship-loving people. We cannot get at the great masses of London, do what we may. We shall open this house next Sunday night to all comers, but who will come? The great mass of them will be persons who have always gone to the house of prayer, but only a few of the outsiders will enter. Go into what evangelistic assembly you may, you will soon detect from the manner of the singing that the bulk of the people have been accustomed to sacred song. We do not know how to get at the great tens of thousands—but you do. You reach them while they are little and you send them home to sing their hymns to their fathers who will not come and sing them here. They go and tell their mothers all about Jesus so that the children of London are the missionaries of our city. They are Christ's heralds to the families where ministers would be totally shut out. You are training them up and if you do this work well (and I charge you to look well to the connecting link between your senior classes and the church), if you do this work well we shall require more places of worship and more earnest ministers, for the people of London will take to coming to the house of prayer. When that day arrives there will be a grand time for the preachers of the Word. In some villages of England and especially in Scotland, you will scarcely find a single person absent when the house of God is open! They all go to the kirk or to the meeting house. Alas, it is not so in London. We have hundreds of thousands who forget the Sabbath. We have, I fear, more than a million of our fellow citizens who go so seldom to a place of worship that they may be said to be habitually absent. It will be a grand thing if you can change all this and give us church-going millions.

And then, I believe, brethren and sisters, that to you there will be another reward, namely, that of saturating the whole population with religious truth. All children are now to be taught to read. Shall they read so as to grow up highwaymen and thieves, or shall they read so as to become servants of the living God? Very much of that must depend upon you. You will, in due subordination to all other objects, take care to introduce your children to interesting but sound literature. Your boys must read and if you are the teacher of a boy who reads "Jack Sheppard," you will be sadly to blame if he continues to delight in such an abomination. I trust that your leaven will leaven the whole lump of our country—that you will be the means of improving the moral tone of society—and as generation follows generation, I trust we shall see a nation bright with religious knowledge, devout with religious thought, and in all things exalted by justice and the truth. What an army you are here tonight! May your Captain come into the midst of you and as He reviews you, may He cast a look of love into the heart of every one of you and cheer you and send you away invigorated.

I am delighted to have had the opportunity of speaking this word to you, feeble though it is, for God may make it powerful by His Spirit. Go, beloved, and train the children well. You have undertaken the work—be faithful in the discharge of it. It is worth doing well, for so much depends upon it. If you do it badly, the results will accuse you throughout eternity. Go and teach with all your heart, and soul, and might. Be not weary. Be not slack. Your reaping time is coming. The next generation will, even more than the present, show what you have been doing, and the next, and the next will each more fully declare it till this blessed island, first gem of the sea, shall shine as a very priceless jewel in the diadem of Christ.

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