

## The Pulpit.

## YOU REAP AS YOU SOW.

BY D. L. MOODY.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap.—GAL. VI. 7.

I believed this text twenty years ago, and I believe it about one hundred times more now than I did then. It is one of the many truths of this Book that has been growing on me more and more, and I don't know any one truth that has gone down deeper into my soul than this. I believe it would be easier to blot out the sun from the heavens or dry up the ocean than overturn this truth. There may be some skeptic or some infidel who has come to this hall, and he says, Oh, that is the Bible! Well, you may close the book, and this law meets you on every hand, in your own life and experience, and it is unalterable, never can be changed. For 6,000 years it has been the decree of nature that man must reap the same kind of seed that he sows. Not only does this decree of nature apply to the unsaved, but it applies to every child of God, it applies to every minister on the platform, it applies to preacher and hearer, sinner and saint, old and young, learned and unlearned, rich and poor—all have got to reap the same kind of seed that they sow, and God tells us not to be deceived about it. We can't deceive him. We may attempt to deceive our friends, we may attempt to deceive others, but there is one thing we can't do, and that is, we can't deceive God. He knows all about every one of us. His eyes go to and fro on the earth, and he knows the heart of men, and that man must be totally blind who thinks he can deceive God.

Do you think you will find a man in all this State of Illinois who would sow seed this spring if he didn't look for a harvest? If he didn't expect the ripened grain? All over this country farmers are dropping the seed this spring, and only in expectation of the golden harvest. And young men are working away at the beginning of their trades, not discontented with their narrow earnings, because they look to the yield of the future, and say, "When I get my trade learned I shall get four and five dollars a day." The reaping-time is expected by those who sow. Men will go to school, go through books of learning, and start out laboriously and with scant rewards on their life's work, but the good time coming nerves them, and though they scarcely make ends meet at first, they see that their honest toil will all come back in the sunny harvest home.

Men expect to reap the same kind of seed that they scatter in spring time. If wheat, then you expect to gather wheat; if barley, nothing else but barley, and if potatoes, that's what you'll get. Always you will reap the same kind you sow. A man who is a blacksmith don't expect to be a doctor, nor a musician to graduate a lawyer, nor the lawyer a jeweler, but all expect to pursue the vocation that they were prepared for. There is no more solemn truth than the fact that God as well as man makes a man reap the same kind of seed that he sows, and a vital point it is. In God's kingdom of the spiritual world the great law holds good. For instance, suppose that is my boy down on that seat and I say to him, "If my neighbor Jones comes to my house to-day, I don't want to see him, go and tell him I'm not at home." Oh! it won't be long, perhaps not six months, before that boy will turn around and lie to me. Or, if I teach the boy to curse and swear it won't be long before he will turn around and drag my name and honor in the dust. If I teach him to trample any commandment, the invention will return to plague the inventor. Without exception you reap whatever you sow, and I believe that is the strongest argument you can bring against the saloon business, the selling of liquor. I don't believe a man on the face of the earth can afford to sell liquor. Why? Because if I sell to your son and make him a drunkard some one will soon turn around and sell to my boy and make him a drunkard. That is the horrible retribution, the law of earth and heaven, and nothing is more solemn in this universe of God. I will challenge any man who has been in the hellish business if he has not a skeleton in his own family, either a son, a brother, a near relative who has been made a drunkard. I wish all the whisky was down in the Gulf of Mexico and every rumrunner converted. I am no enemy of the rum-sellers; I am rather their friend, because I wish them out of their hellish business, which brings down nothing but curses on themselves.

What a man sows that shall he reap. Now take up the Bible, and begin with it back in Genesis. Didn't Adam reap what he sowed; and didn't Cain reap what he sowed? And then come sweeping down all through the Scripture history for

4,000 years, and don't you find this law of God writing all along with a pen of iron that man has reaped what he has sown? And so you come down to the time of Christ and down to the present time, and has not man all the time been reaping according as he has sown—reaping the same kind of seed that he has sown at some time or another?

I am going to take up two Bible characters that I have heard men in Chicago and elsewhere stumble over more than over any other two Bible characters. There was a time in Chicago when I studied and read in the morning, and when I visited and went among families in the afternoon, and in the evenings I spoke—in the churches when I could get any one to hear me, and when I could not get them then I operated on the streets among the manufacturers and mechanics and infidels, and I suppose I have had them bring out against me David and Jacob more than any other two Bible characters. These were the two favorite ones. They would say to me: "You think Jacob was a saint; you think David was a saint. A queer saint Jacob was, wasn't he?" And they would talk about Jacob and Esau, and say: "Of the two characters, I like Esau better than Jacob." Now, I am not going to stand here and say which was the better by nature. That book is not telling us how good men go to heaven, but how bad men repent of their sins, and so get to heaven. How many of the bad and corrupt have repented of their bad ways and gone to glory at last! So I want to call your attention to these two facts: God punished Jacob for the bad seed he had sown. That is the key of Jacob's life—the history of how this came about. But you ask, When did God punish Jacob? and that question shows how superficially were read the lives of those Bible characters. A man will take and read but one incident in their lives, and then close up the book, and say that it is a sharp thing that he should do such a thing, and not be punished for it by God. It is strange this rascally treatment of Esau, and that it should go unpunished. Well, that is a strange God!"

Well now, my friends, if you want to find out how God deals with men, you want to accompany his life from the cradle to the grave—you want to take in the full sweep of his life; and before he gets through, you will find that God makes him reap the same kind of seed that he has sown. Every man has to sow what he reaps. God made Eli reap what he sowed. He made Samuel reap what he sowed. He did not bring up his children right, and God punished him for it. You will reap the same kind of seed you sow. They reaped the same kind of seed they sowed. Take Jacob. You remember how Isaac, in his old age wanted venison. Esau is the hunter of the family, and so he is sent out to get it, and he is sent out to get the venison. But Jacob steps out among the flocks and goes and gets and kills a kid, and dresses it in great haste; and his mother was a party to the deception; and he goes in and tells his old blind father that the kid he has brought is venison. And the old man detected the fraud because he thought that the voice that spoke to him sounded like the voice of Jacob; and so Isaac says, "Come here, my son. Let me feel thy hand." Jacob had put on his hands some of the skin of an animal. And Isaac, as he felt it, said: "Well, it does feel like the hand of Esau; but it is not the voice of Esau that I hear." And so, by his lying, Jacob got the birthright blessing that belonged to Esau.

But he paid for it about a thousand times more than it was worth. And you see the same thing right along. If you ever get a thing in life in the wrong way, you always have to pay a thousand times more for it than it is worth. When you get a dollar in the pocket belonging to some one else, you draw bitter experience from it. What God wants is righteousness in his sight, not prayers. What we want at the present day is a revival of downright honesty. We want no mere gush and sentiment, but righteousness. God said to Jacob that he would make his seed as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sands on the seashore; but, although God was going to keep his promise with him, he punished him according to his deeds. He goes down to Ur, and is there twenty years. He works for Rachel, and instead of her was married to another woman. He deceived his old father, and his father-in-law deceives him. Look a little farther on in his life. He has twelve sons, and you see the same sins coming out in his children as came out in his life. There was partiality in the family, and when there is partiality in a family there will be trouble, and so there was trouble there. That started up seditions in his family. The others planned to kill Joseph, and dug a pit for him, but some Ishmaelites

came along and they sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver, and they stained his coat with the blood of a kid, and made his father believe that he had been killed. If God had not been over-ruling, they would have committed murder as well as deception, and have put him to death. We find that Jacob's sin in deceiving his own father is coming back. It is a long time, but it is coming back. And when these ten boys come back every one had a lie for him on his lips. They said they did not know anything about it. They were the most innocent men you ever saw. They said to him, showing the coat, it looked something like as if he had been torn to pieces, and he rent his mantle. Oh! how he wept and moaned. You see the reaping time had come. God repaid him with that very head of seed he had sown himself. That which you sow you shall reap.

Now take David, whose sins were so dazzling as God had lifted him up so high. If a man is raised to lofty position and falls, the fall is very great. You let a worker on this platform fall into sin and he suffers more in one year than many would do in twenty. God had highly exalted David—from the sheep-fold to the throne; and in his prosperity he forgot God, like many a prosperous man in Chicago who twenty years ago walked humbly with his God, but now is purse-proud and no more honors his Maker. But God in his infinite mercy for souls will bring these men back if he has to burn them out like he did Lot out of Sodom, who for twenty years lived there, yet he had no altar. And perhaps these troubles that are coming on us are to bring us back to God. God is going to bring David back. He fell into that dark, damnable sin of adultery, and then to cover that up he committed murder. If a man submits to sin and commits dishonor, it leads him on step by step and sinks him deeper into the mire. If a man or woman has fallen into that accursed sin, give it up to-night. You may say, "No one knows anything about it." You may say you have covered it up. But no man can bury the sin so deep but it shall have resurrection some day. By and by the sin comes stalking, tramp, tramp! with remorse and destruction. It will all come back; like a panorama it will all come before you. You may escape the law of man, but there is a moral law lying back of human law, the law of God put into our hearts and into our being, that is sure to find you out.

I suppose when Cain killed Abel he turned and gave a look all around to see that no one saw him, and then he rose up and smote him, and I suppose took good care to cover up the corpse and thought that the fratricide would never come to light. But the deed was out—the Lord God Almighty is in this universe, and his all-seeing eye is over all his works—and we read of Cain that he said his punishment was greater than he could bear. And avoid the jail and the rope as one may, let him be sure his sin will find him out. If any man had opportunity to cover his sin it was David, the king. Would any jury dare find him guilty, or any judge dare sentence him, the crowned sovereign, with every man's life in his hands! But one day, after conscience had slept six months and his sin seemed covered, Nathan crossed his path—just as, my friends, God will cross your path some day—and he gave him a little parable. David heard and said: "The man who has done this thing shall surely die." "Well," said Nathan, "thou art the man." Thank God for such a messenger that took the message straight to the king. He did not cover it up and conceal it. "Thou art the man." And if a man or a woman is living in sin I hope the arrow of conviction will go down deep to his soul, and may God send home the arrows now! Ask God to have mercy on you and forgive you. And yet David bore the penalty, and in his own family reaped the disgrace, one son committing murder, another adultery, and Absalom rising in rebellion against his law until in anguish of soul he cried out, "O Absalom, my son Absalom, would God that I had died for thee!" Reaping time had come. The father was reaping and reaping the same kind of seed that he had sowed. He did not sow wheat and reap tares; he sowed tares and reaped tares—nothing else; he sowed to the wind and reaped the whirlwind.

Oh, my friends, how we ought to hate sin! Let us take and tear it from our souls to-night. If there is any sin that would bring you down, God help you to stamp it under foot. If it is your right foot, let it come off; if it is your right eye, pluck it out, let it cost you what it will. May God help you now to do it. Promise high heaven, "I will, I will give it up! I will turn from my sin!"

But you will reap more than you sowed. Jacob told one lie, and it multiplied to ten. I can imagine

his misery all through those twenty years Joseph was down in Egypt. It did not take him long to go and kill that kid and lie to his father. It took twenty long years to reap the fruit.

A man may pull down as much character in one night as it will take him twenty years to build up again as good as it was before. It takes many a year to build up again what is destroyed in a moment of sin. How quickly you can ruin a character. How slowly build it up. Even while I am preaching to you here to-night, there may be some one ruining his character. He will do some act in Chicago that will take all of his days to blot out. He will destroy a character that it will take all the rest of his life to build up again.

We are going to reap more than we sow. Look at what kind of seed you are sowing. Its fruit will come; may be in ten, may be in five years. There is a man in Ohio penitentiary. He has been in the prison for over thirty-six years. He is a millionaire. He owned a large farm; and a railroad wanted to pass through the then little town of Cleveland, and the railroad company wanted him to allow its lines to run through his farm. But he refused to sell the right of way to them. The courts, however, decided that the railroad should be given the right of way, and the track was laid through his farm; and one dark night, after the trains got to running, some one put an obstruction on the line, and a great railroad catastrophe occurred, and a good many lives were lost. Suspicion fell upon him, and he was arrested and taken into court and tried and found guilty, and condemned to hard labor for life in the penitentiary. I suppose it did not take him long to plan this crime and execute it. It was all probably planned and done in one hour. But think of the thirty-six long years that he has been reaping the seed sown in this crime. That little farm has grown to be a city of great wealth and enterprise. It is all now valuable ground, and it has all been divided up into lots, but he is behind the bars as a criminal in his narrow cell to-night.

Answer this question. Do you believe the reason of this question? Does it take lawyer experience to bring the truth of it to you? Do you believe that you will reap from the ground that you sow. Do you believe it, mother, father, son, daughter? Do you believe that it is going to take a longer time to reap than it does to sow? Do you doubt it? Ask any criminal. Ask any drunkard. Ask them this question. Talk about pestilence and disease. Put all the diseases together in this world—I don't care how fatal they are—I don't fear them as I do sin. Oh, what a curse sin has brought upon the human family. Oh, how dark and wretched it has made many a life. Young man! Young man! Will you give it up to-night? Come, now. Ignorance of the kind of seed you are sowing will make no difference.

You are going to reap the same kind of seed that you sow. Suppose I saw a man planting some seed in the fields. I ask him, What kind of seed are you sowing? He answers: "Oh, I don't know." "Don't you know what kind of seed you are sowing?" I answer. "No," he says. "A neighbor said he had got good seed, so I thought I would get some and sow it; but I don't know what it is. I don't care what it is." You would say he was a madman, would you not? Young man, what are you sowing? Mother, what are you sowing? You young man in the gallery, what kind of seed are you sowing? I will tell you what kind of a harvest you are going to reap if you will tell me what kind of seed you are sowing.

It there is one thing more than another that needs a special unfolding in this age it is the divine truth concerning confession. God accepts no poor substitute, though, in our self-complacency, we may fancy he does. He asks for—demands indeed—"truth in the inward parts." Any thing less is offensive, but, less, in His sight. It may be that we bring an offering—costly, meritorious, in our own esteem. The observing world may ever applaud us for our showy uprightness, But God detects the absence of the one essential quality that makes confession genuine, namely, the sense of sin—sin against Himself.—Adv.

A man may be a miser of his wealth; he may tie up his talent in his napkin; he may hug himself in his reputation; but he is always generous in his love. Love cannot stay at home; a man cannot keep it to himself. Like light it is constantly travelling. A man must spend it, must give it away.—MacLeod.

## CONFESSION.

It avails nothing to confess our wrong-doing only that we may escape present trouble. This was precisely Pharaoh's case. When sorely afflicted throughout his realm, he acknowledged his sin against God in order that the dreadful scourge might be taken away. There is no genuine confession at all when it is extorted from us. More than this, that would not be a merciful provision which would sanction it; because the guilty soul would thus misapprehend both the divine clemency and its own depraved nature.

Human society accepts this as true and acts accordingly. There would be no protection any where in society if the culprit were released from prison upon the ground of his confession. To enjoy his guilty freedom once more he would hasten to pay such an insignificant price. He would have no just sense of the motives which prompted forgiveness on such grounds; neither would his release under these circumstances do anything to favor heart reformation. The whole process would be hardening, and would prove most disastrous, both to himself and the entire commonwealth.

Are not the same principles to be observed in the higher realm? Rightly viewed, the sinner himself could not ask for forgiveness on mere confession. He would see how such a deliverance must leave him in bondage still; how old propensities would soon lift again their voice of command; how moral disease would still enervate and destroy. The power given through Christ's cleansing blood would be wholly denied him, because his desire to avoid the consequences of sin is selfish—is destitute of the semblance of godly contrition.

It is important to inculcate these principles, not only in the formative period of childhood and youth, but among all classes, and at every stage of religious advancement. Confession is nothing if it is not the voluntary outbursting of the deepest fountains of the heart. Have we broken our religious vows? Have we gone away from God's holy shrines to speak an uncharitable word, or by a significant gesture to despise a weak brother whom Christ has sought along the rugged mountain steep only to save? Have we ever listened in silence, without interposing in behalf of the injured innocence, when piety has been condemned before the ungodly world? Ah! right it is that questions of such serious import should claim our thought. Who is there that does not need to ask, What has been my confession? Has it, in view of my grievous sin against God, brought me down in the valley of self-abasement and self-renunciation?

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