

THE SEEDS WE ARE SCATTERING

J.R. Miller:

In one sense, when a baby is born—its life is only a patch of soil in which, as yet, nothing is growing. A mother's hand is the first to plant seeds there—in the looks of tender love which her eyes dart into the child's soul, in her smiles and caresses and croonings, and her thousand efforts to reach the child's heart and wake up its powers; and then in the lessons which she teaches.

All the members of the household soon become sowers also on this field; as the life begins to open, every one is dropping some seed into the mellow soil. In a little while, hands outside the home begin to scatter seeds in the child's mind and heart. The street, the playground, the school; later, books, papers, and pictures contribute their portion. As the years advance, the experiences of life—the joys, temptations, tasks, trials, sorrows—all bring their influences. Somewhat in this way, the character of the mature man—is the growth of seeds sown by a thousand hands in the life from infancy.

All our thoughts, words, and acts—are seeds. They have in them a quality which makes them grow where they fall, reproducing themselves. This is true of the good we do. The mother's teachings enter the mind and heart of her child as mere seeds; but they reappear in the life of the son or daughter, in later years, in strength and beauty, in nobleness of character, and in usefulness of life. Not only is this strange power in the mother's words; her acts, her habits, her tones of voice, the influences that go forth from her life—are also seeds, having in them a vital principle. Where they lodge—they grow.

You never can lose your mother! She may die, and her body may be buried out of your sight, and laid away in God's acre. You will see her face and hear her voice no more; no more will her hand scatter the good seeds of truth and love, upon your life's garden. But you have not lost her! Your mind and heart are full of the seeds which fell from her hand along the years. These you never can lose. No hand of death can root them out of your life. They have grown into the very fibers of your character. They reappear in your habits, your dispositions, your feelings and opinions, your modes of thought, your very phrases and forms of speech! You never can lose your mother; the threads of her life are woven inextricably into your life!

The same is true of the forth-puttings of every life. All the noble things that fall from your hands, as you travel along life's paths, are seeds, and will not die. The good things we do, with the true words we speak, with the faithful example we show, with all the influences of our life that are Christlike, are living seeds which we sow in the lives of others. They will not fall into the ground and perish. They will stay where they drop, and you will find them again after many days. They will germinate and grow, and yield a harvest!

One has said: "When men do anything for God—the very least thing—they never can know where it will end, nor what amount of work it will do for him." Go on doing the little things, no matter how small, only making sure that you breathe love into them. Let them fall where they may, no matter into what heart, no matter how silently, no matter how hopeless may seem the soil into which they drop, no matter how you yourself may appear to be forgotten or overlooked as you do your deeds of kindness, and speak your words of love. These words and deeds and influences of yours are living seeds, and not one of them shall perish!

The same is true, however, of the evil things we do. They, too, have in them the quality of life and reproductiveness. If only our good things were seeds, this truth would have unmingled encouragement for us. But it is startling to remember, that the same law applies to the evil things. The man who writes an wicked book, or paints an unholy picture, or sings an impure song—sets in motion a procession of unholy influences which will live on forever! He, too, will find his evil words again in the hearts of men, long, long afterwards; or see his unclean picture reproduced on men's lives, or hear his unholy song singing itself over again in the depths of men's being!

The evil that men do—lives after them! "Bury my influence in my grave with me!" said a wicked man, dying with bitter remorse in his soul. But that is impossible. Sometimes men who have been sowing evil, wake up to the consciousness of the harm they have been giving to other lives, and go back over their paths, trying to gather up the seeds of sin which they have cast into human hearts. But the effort is unavailing, as no one can take out of men's minds and hearts—the seeds of evil he has dropped there!

We ought to lay this truth seriously to heart, and remember it continually. If we did, it would make us more faithful while we live. We are apt to speak heedless words, whose influence is evil, and to do things which touch other lives and do not leave blessing. There are many people moving these days among the debased—fallen, we call them—fallen from purity, from honesty, from sobriety. We should never forget that all of these, in one

sense, were once innocent, unstained, unfallen; and that there was a first yielding to temptation, and a first tempter.

Somebody offered the boy the first drink. It seemed a little thing—but the act was a seed; and if you would see its harvest, look at the poor, miserable drunkard, who staggers now about the streets, a pitiable ruin of a life which might have been noble and godlike in its strength and beauty.

Somebody whispered into the ears of the innocent girl the first word which solicited her to evil. It was only a word—but it was a seed of wickedness; and if you would see its awful harvest, look at the wretched creature who now walks the streets—a sad wreck of the womanhood which God made to wear the beauty and radiance of pure and holy motherhood, and be a center of blessing in a happy home.

When we think of this quality in all our words, touches, acts, looks, and influences—how serious a thing it is to live and mingle with others! No act is more solemn, than the taking into our life of a new friend or companion—one who is to listen to our words, to see the things we do, to receive instruction, advice, or counsel from us, to be influenced by our life. When God sends to us a friend or a new acquaintance—someone who is brought thus into the range of our influence, he has a purpose in so doing. He wants us to be a blessing to the person. He wants us to speak wholesome words, to give wise counsel, and to exert an uplifting influence, leaving impressions upon the life which shall add to its beauty and blessing.

But suppose that we fail in this, and that, instead, we give wrong touches to the life, drop the evil seeds, exert an unwholesome influence, leave corrupt impressions; what must our accounting be—when we stand before God? The new life that comes into the circle of your friendship, companionship, or acquaintanceship, comes as a sacred trust, with a holy charge from Christ, whose the life is. You become in a very sacred sense, its guardian. Your mission is to do it good, to be a blessing to it, to drop into it only seeds of purity, truth, holiness, and love. Woe be to you—if the seeds your hand lets fall are seeds of evil, which shall grow into wickedness or marring!

We are not done with life—when we die! We shall meet our acts and words and influences again. "Do not be deceived! God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows—he will also reap!" Galatians 6:7. He shall reap the same that he sows—and he himself shall be the reaper!

We go on carelessly, never dreaming that we shall see our seeds again, or have anything more to do with them. Then some day we come upon an ugly plant growing somewhere; and when we ask, "What is this vile plant?" The answer comes, "I am one of your plants. You dropped the seed which grew into me!" We must beware what we do. We shall have to eat the fruit—that grows from our sowing and planting!

There are many phases of this truth. Jesus said, "With what measure you mete—it shall be measured to you again." A man who is cruel—reaps cruelty. A man who is merciful—finds mercy. David unsheathed the sword in wrong against a subject—and the sword departed not from his house forever. He dishonored the happy home of another—and his own home was dishonored. Paul was a persecutor—and persecution followed him until it smote him to death.

The seed that we sow in others, sooner or later comes back again to our own bosom. What we sow—that we reap!

We cannot sin against others, hurting them only—and receiving no hurt to ourselves. We are not merely sowers of seed in other lives; but while we are scattering the seed in the field of our neighbor, we are sowing also in our own field. There are two harvests. He who corrupts another life—makes his own life more corrupt than before. The tempter may cause the fall and ruin of another soul—but the evil in himself has become more evil in his doing so. Every good thing we do, strengthens the good that is in us; and every wrong thing makes the wrong in us more dominant.

Nor is this all. There is a law of divine justice in this world, in which God requites to every man according to his deeds. We are not living under a reign of chance. It is not merely accidental that certain people who do wrong receive punishment; and that certain people who do good receive reward. Sometimes it seems as if the law of justice did not work universally—that some who do wrong are not requited, and that some who do good receive no reward. But this inequality of justice is only apparent. Life does not end at the grave! If it did, we might say that the Lord's ways are not always equal. God's dealings with men, are not closed in this earthly life! The story is continued through eternity!

If the Bible narrative of Joseph ended with the boy being carried into Egypt as a slave, or with the slave-lad cast into prison on false chargesâ€”we would grieve over the terrible wrongs done to an innocent person and left unrequited. But when we read the story through to the end, all such feelings vanish!

It is likewise in this present lifeâ€”wrong often seems to go unpunished, and virtue unrewarded. But our present lives, are simply unfinished life-stories. There are other chapters which will be written in eternity. When all has been completed, there will be no inequality, no injustice. All virtue will have its full rewardâ€”and all sin will receive its due punishment.

There is one other phase of this teaching. The final harvest that comes from our sowingâ€”is in our own character. It is not only a reward to be put into our hand in heaven, which is promisedâ€”something which is to be given to us. The reward will be in us! It will consist in likeness to Christ.

Just so, the requital for wrong-doing, will not only be punishment inflicted upon the wrong-doer, but the evil itself wrought into permanence in his life! The punishment for finally unforgiven sinâ€”will be eternal sinning! Very solemn are the words, "Let him who does wrongâ€”continue to do wrong; let him who is vileâ€”continue to be vile; let him who does rightâ€”continue to do right; and let him who is holyâ€”continue to be holy!" Revelation 22:11.

The truest reward for a godly lifeâ€”is godliness wrought into the character! The truest retribution for a wicked lifeâ€”is to be left to sin foreverâ€”in the ways the sinner has chosen and learned in this world!

Familiar but solemnly true, are these sentiments:

"Sow a thoughtâ€”and you will reap an act;
Sow an actâ€”and you will reap a habit;
Sow a habitâ€”and you will reap a character;
Sow a characterâ€”and you will reap a destiny!"

"It is appointed unto men once to dieâ€”and after that to face judgment!" Hebrews 9:27