

## **“What a Man Soweth, He Also Shall Reap”**

Galatians 6:7-8 ~ Henry Ward Beecher, 1813-1887

from *Life Thoughts* (1858), 289-292.

THE whole force of life and experience goes to prove that right or wrongdoing, whether in relation to the physical or the spiritual nature, is sure, in the end, to meet its appropriate reward or punish.

Penalties are often so long delayed, that men think they shall escape them; but some time they are certain to follow. When the whirlwind sweeps through the forest, at its first breath, or almost as if the fearful stillness that precedes had crushed it, the giant tree with all its boughs falls, crashing, to the ground. But it had been preparing to fall for twenty years. Twenty years before it had received a gash. Twenty years before the water commenced to settle in at some crotch, and from then decay began to reach in with its silent fingers towards the heart of the tree.

Every year the work of death progressed, till at length it stood, all rottenness, only clasped about by the bark with a semblance of life, and the first gale felled it to the ground.

Now, there are men who for twenty years have shamed the day and wearied the night with their debaucheries, but who yet seem strong and vigorous, and exclaim, “You need not talk of penalties. Look at me! I have reveled in pleasure for twenty years, and I am as hale and hearty to-day as ever.” But in reality, they are full of weakness and decay. They have been preparing to fall for twenty years, and the first disease strikes them down in a moment.

Ascending from the physical nature of man to the mind and character, we find the same laws prevail. People sometimes say, “Dishonesty is as good as honesty, for aught I see. There are such and such men who have pursued for years the most corrupt courses in their business, and yet they prosper, and are getting rich every day.” Wait till you see their end. Every year how many such men are overtaken with sudden destruction and swept forever out of sight and remembrance!

Many a man has gone on in sin, practicing secret frauds and villainies, yet trusted and honored, till at length, in some unsuspected hour, he is detected, and, denounced by the world, he falls from his high estate as if a cannon ball had struck him — for there is no cannon that can strike more fatally than outraged public sentiment — and flies over the mountains, or across the sea, to escape the odium of his life. He believed that his evil course was building him up in fame and fortune, but financiering is the devil's forge, and his every act was a blow upon the anvil shaping the dagger that should one day strike home to his heart, kill his honor and noble life.

The pea contains the vine, and the flower, and the pod, in embryo, and I am sure, when I plant it, that it will produce them and nothing else. Now, every action of our lives is embryonic, and according as it is right or wrong, it will surely bring forth the sweet flowers of joy, or the poison fruits of sorrow. Such is the constitution of this world, and the Bible assures us that the next world only carries it forward.

Here and hereafter, “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

The young sometimes say, “By and by we mean to separate the evil from the good, and to become religious; but first we wish a little liberty for enjoyment.” At the mouth of the Mississippi, where it pours its immense flood into the Gulf of Mexico, how impossible would it be to stay the flow of its waters, and to separate from each other the drops of the various streams that have poured into it on either side of the Red River, the Arkansas, the Ohio, and the Missouri; or to sift grain by grain from the detritus, the particles of sand that have wasted from the Ozark, or the Alleghany, or the far Rocky Mountains; yet how much more impossible would it be, when character is the river, and habits, formed one after another, are the side streams, to throw a little dam of conversion across, and separate the bad from the good!

Let the stream run pure from its source. What if the farmer should mix cockles and other vile weeds with the wheat, and say, “When the grain is ripe, I will go in with sickle, and cradle, and winnowing machine, and separate them.”

Would it not be easier to sow clean wheat than to cleanse dirty wheat? You who are young are now at the sowing end of the harvest field. Scatter only pure seed, that when you reach the reaping end you may find no tares, but only the golden grain.

# A Chronology of Paul's Writings

## 1st Missionary Journey (45 - 47 A.D.)

No books were written

## 2nd Missionary Journey (51 - 54 A.D.)

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|----|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. | 1 Thessalonians | (52 - 53 A.D.) | Written from Corinth |
| 2. | 2 Thessalonians | (52 - 53 A.D.) | Written from Corinth |

## 3rd Missionary Journey (54 - 58 A.D.)

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|----|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 3. | 1 Corinthians | (Spring, 57 A.D.) | Written from Ephesus   |
| 4. | 2 Corinthians | (Autumn, 57 A.D.) | Written from Macedonia |
| 5. | Galatians     | (Winter, 57 A.D.) | Written from Greece    |
| 6. | Romans        | (Spring 58, A.D.) | Written from Corinth   |

## First Roman Imprisonment (61 - 63 A.D.)

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|-----|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 7.  | Philemon    | (61 or 62 A.D.) | Written from Rome |
| 8.  | Colossians  | (61 or 62 A.D.) | Written from Rome |
| 9.  | Ephesians   | (61 or 62 A.D.) | Written from Rome |
| 10. | Philippians | (61 or 62 A.D.) | Written from Rome |

## Between First & Second Imprisonments (63 - 67 A.D.)

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|-----|-----------|-----------|------------------------|
| 11. | 1 Timothy | (67 A.D.) | Written from Macedonia |
| 12. | Titus     | (67 A.D.) | Written from Ephesus   |

## Second Roman Imprisonment (68 A.D.)

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|-----|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| 13. | 2 Timothy | (68 A.D.) | Written from Rome |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-------------------|

*"I Paul have written it  
with mine own hand"*

Philemon 19



NOTE: It is believed by many that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. If in fact he did, that would bring to 14 the total number of books of the New Testament written by this great soldier of the cross.