

nothing but noxious weeds and poisonous plants that will blight, and wither, and desolate the scene.

See then, ye friends of Sabbath Schools, the importance of such institutions; and see, ye Christian Teachers, your privilege and duty. In the Scriptures you possess the requisite knowledge,—knowledge, for lack of which the people are perishing,—knowledge adapted to every capacity and condition; in some of its truths so sublime, that it instructs the principalities and powers in heavenly places; and in others so simple, that they may be understood by children, as was the case with TIMOTHY, who “from a child knew the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.” Then, by every consideration of patriotism, and philanthropy, and piety; by your duty to God and man, you are bound to disseminate these truths. Lay your hands to the plough, and as you break up the fallow ground, scatter in every furrow the precious, the incorruptible seed. Set in every soil these heavenly germs,—that “instead of the thorn there may come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree,” that “the wilderness and the solitary place may be glad for you, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.” And remember that “according to whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap,” in *quantity* as well as *quality*. “He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”

But there is one more most important point of comparison which deserves a brief advertence. You well know that even the most fertile soil, and the most skilful husbandry, and the very best seed, are not of themselves sufficient to secure a crop. All these together, in their highest perfection, can no more produce a single blade of grass, or raise one grain of corn, than they can quicken the dead or create a soul. An agency distinct from, and superior to, all these, is necessary to make the seed germinate and fructify. There is the genial influence of the atmosphere, the dew, the alternate shower and sunshine, and successive seasons, which influence, however occult and inexplicable it may be, every farmer knows is indispensable to vegetation. And accordingly, after all the toils of tillage, after he has ploughed, and sowed, and harrowed, and hoed, and exhausted all his art, he patiently waits for this heavenly influence. And hence the sweet singer of the seasons, after describing these operations, thus invokes the expected blessing:—

Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious man  
Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow,  
Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!

Yes—you perceive the analogy,—you anticipate the application. “Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth until he receive the early and the latter rain.”

See that you act in a similar manner. After all your exertions, recollect your entire dependence on that heavenly influence—that Divine Spirit, without whose fertilizing energy all your labours will be fruitless. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God gives the increase. “From me,” says he, “is thy fruit found.” Oh, then, be importunate in your invocations to him; “for it is time to seek the Lord until he rain righteousness upon you.” Cease not, until he shall command the clouds to distil their dews, and the sun to shine, and the heavens to shed their fructifying influences, “until the Spirit be poured out from on high, and the wilderness be counted for a fruitful field, and the fruitful field for a forest.”

That we may be encouraged in the discharge of these duties, let us, in conclusion, advert to the success which will eventually crown such efforts. The most zealous and persevering sometimes need incentives to animate their exertions. For (if we may be allowed to pursue the metaphor) the parallel between the Teacher and Agriculturist also holds good in their respective difficulties and discouragements. When the malediction was denounced against the ground and its tiller, this was his doom: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat of it, and in sorrow all the days of thy life.” And equally arduous and painful is the work of the religious instructor. It is not always such “a delightful task to rear the tender thought and teach the young idea how to shoot.” Sometimes such is the indolence of the scholar, and surrounding circumstances are so unfavourable, that it is a most irksome and almost hopeless task. Many a Minister, and Parent, and Teacher has thus to sow in tears;—he goeth forth and *recepteth*, bearing precious seed. But still, however inauspicious appearances may be, we must not remit or relax our efforts. Having laid our hand to the plough we must not look back. Let us bear in mind, that this “labour of love” is “a work of faith,” and requires the “patience of hope.” Like the cultivator of the fields, we must “walk by faith and not by sight.” We must not be governed by the aspect of the skies, and deterred from our work by every unpropitious change of the fickle elements. “He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.” Like the farmer, we must brave all weathers. We must be “instant in season and out of season.” “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not