

Sunday School Advocate.

TORONTO, MAY 26, 1866.

BAD WAGES, AND GOOD GIFTS.

Rom. vi. 23.



WAGES. Do you all know what that word means?—(What masters and mistresses give to servants for their work.)

So then for wages there must be a master to give them, and a servant to work for them. Some of you have older brothers and sisters "out in place," who get wages. And do they like to have a good place, and get good wages? Suppose they were to hear of a master whose only wages were so many kicks or lashes with a whip every week, and the more work they did for him, the more kicks he gave them for wages; would your brother or sister go and be his servant, do you think?

What, not even if he promised them some pleasures in the week; perhaps plenty of clothes and food, and a run in the field now and then? No I think not, indeed. They would say, "We can get plenty of masters to give us food and money for clothes, without kicks; and how could we enjoy our bits of pleasure in the week if we were always dreading the terrible whipping that was to come on the Saturday night?" You would not take such a master, would you?

Then suppose, besides that, you all knew very well that at the end of the "term," or year, he always made it a bargain that he should kill his servants—throw them alive into the fire, and burn them to death! What then? What would you say of one of your brothers, if he were to say, "Oh, well, I'll agree: I should so like all the nice pleasures, the fun, the play, the good things to eat; I'll go—I won't mind the kicks, and the being burned to death at the end?" Ay, you may stare and say oh? You think it is quite impossible. Edward would be quite mad if he did. Yes he would indeed.

But now, dear children, listen; for I am going to tell you a true and very solemn thing. There really is such a master, and he gets lots of servants too; and he does burn them all at the last. Oh, how very, very dreadful! You can scarcely believe me? Well read this text, till you know it well.

Now here, you see, are some wages spoken of; so there must be a master to give them, and servants to earn them. Now what are the wages?—(Death)

Yes: DEATH! death eternal in the fires of hell! And who is the master who gives them?—"Sin."

Yes: that is the Devil, who is beginner of all sin. Then who are the servants? Don't know? What do all servants do?—(Their master's work; what their masters bid them.)

Well, all wickedness, all badness, lies, passion, thefts, disobedience, Sabbath-breaking—all such things are the Devil's work, what he bids his servants do.

Now then, who are the servants?

Yes; all who do the bad things the Devil bids, all such agree to be the Devil's servants, although they know the dreadful wages he gives. Terrible fears, like lashes, here; and oh, everlasting burning at the end of the term; that is, when we die!

Then how mad, how silly for any one to agree to be the Devil's servant and earn his wages. Then will *you* be his servants, the servants of sin? Remember you told me that those who do a man's work for him, do what he commands them, are his

servants. Then if you are willing to do bad things, if you like to be naughty, *you* are the servant of sin, and *you* will get the wages. There is no getting off.

Perhaps Edward might say, "Oh, I'll run away just before the end of the year, and so get off the burning." But is there any getting off the Devil's burning? Oh, no; if you will do his work, you must have his wages. Think then, are you his servants? are you willing to be his servant—to do as he wishes—to do bad things? Oh, don't be foolish any longer. Get another master. Go and tell Jesus you are frightened to be the Devil's servant any longer, and beg of him to get you safe away, and make you His dear little servant, wont you? For the Devil is so strong, you will never get away from him, unless you get Jesus to help you.

And now do you want to know what wages Jesus gives? Oh, such good wages! All manner of heavenly riches at the end, if only you could do all His work. But supposing I were to offer enormous wages to any girl who liked to come and do all my work, you might be very willing to come; but if I found you did not, and could not do my work, what then? Should I give you the wages? No; because I should say, you have not earned them. But if I were to say, "Well, little Fanny, you are not strong enough to do my work, and you are always making mistakes, always forgetting; but I love you very much; if you will come to me you shall be my dear little daughter, and I will give you all that great riches that I promised for wages, all for nothing, and plenty, plenty more besides, just as if you had really earned it. Will not that be better than going to be a servant to that bad master, who will kick you, and lash you, and burn you? I make all my little servants my children too, and I give them riches all for nothing; then they love me, and like to be my little servants, and try to please me, and do all they can for me—not for wages, because they know they have got them all safe, but in order to show me how grateful they are, and because they like to please me, and to see me smile at them." Well this is just what Jesus does, and God for Jesus' sake. If you go to Him, and say, "Oh, do not let me be the Devil's servant any longer, let me be Thy servant," He says, "Yes, you shall be; and because you are not able to earn My wages, I will give you a 'free gift;' you shall be My little daughter, or My son, and My little servant too."

What is a free 'gift'?

Which will you have then—the Devil's work and the Devil's wages, or God's gift, which is eternal life, and heavenly riches? Then pray earnestly to God to send His Holy Spirit into your heart, so as to make you hate sin, which is the Devil's work; to get you safe away from that bad master, and make you to be His dear little servant and child.

Now say again the verse I taught you above; and try to persuade all those you love, not to be the Devil's servants.

THE "SENSITIVE PLANT."



Our gardens grows one of the most curious little plants, called the "sensitive plant." Did you ever see one? It has little long stems, with small leaves growing out on both sides like the locust or acacia, and it bears modest pink flowers.

What makes it curious is, that it seems to *feel*. If you touch it the leaves shut up and it lies down, therefore it is called the "sensitive plant." It cannot bear to be handled. It acts as much as to say, "You hurt me, I shrink from your rude touch." It is a delicate plant, and God gave it this shrinking nature to keep it from being injured.

If you keep touching it, however, it loses for a time this power, and does not seem to care.

Now, my children, did you know that in the garden of your heart God has put a little sensitive plant? You do not know it by that name, perhaps, but you will when I tell you it is *conscience*. If properly cultivated it will shrink from the very touch of evil. It will say, and *immediately*, "Be off! quit me! I don't wish to have anything to do with you; you will only injure me." Such a conscience, you see, is a great blessing to anybody. It will keep one pretty effectually out of harm's way. A boy or girl who has that and *minds* it will go straight. Bad companions can never lead them astray.

There is danger, however, of conscience losing its sensitiveness. If you should come in contact with evil too often; that is, if you allow yourself to see or hear what is wrong, or to go at all with bad associates, or put yourself in the way of temptation, conscience will become *insensible*; it will get into the habit of not feeling nor caring, which is very dangerous, because then a child may go very far astray almost without knowing it.

Take good care, then, my children, of this precious plant. God put it in your bosom to warn you of every approach of sin. Let nobody tamper with it. Keep it quick and tender, and you will ever have reason to bless God for its faithful cautions.

THE VALUE OF A LITTLE.

Do thy little, do it well;
Do what right and reason tell;
Do what wrong and sorrow claim;
Conquer sin and cover shame.
Do thy little, though it be
Dreariness and drudgery;
They whom Christ apostles made,
"Gathered fragments" when He bade.
Do thy little; never mind
Though thy brethren be unkind;
Though the men who ought to smile
Mock and taunt thee for a while.
Do thy little; never fear
While Thy Saviour standeth near;
Let the world its javelin's throw,
On thy way undaunted go.
Do thy little; God has made
Million leaves for forest shade;
Smallest stars their glory bring;
God employeth everything.
Do thy little; and when thou
Feelest on thy pallid brow,
Ere has fled thy vital breath,
Cold and damp the sweat of death;
Then the little thou hast done,—
Little battle's thou hast won,
Little masteries achieved,
Little wants with care relieved,
Little words in love expressed,
Little wrongs at once confessed,
Little favours kindly done,
Little toils thou didst not shun,
Little graces meekly worn,
Little slights with patience borne;—
These shall crown the pillowed head,
Holy light upon thee shed;
These are treasures that shall rise,
Far beyond the smiling skies.
These to thee shall all be given
For thy heritage in heaven:
These shall all perfume the air,
When thy spirit enters there.
Yet they still will linger here,
And thy name shall long endure;
For a legacy shall be
In their deathless memory.