

DIVINE HELP IN FRUIT BEARING

(The Discourse below by R. H. Barber, recorded in 1912 Convention Report, page 269)

Dear Friends, the Lord is granting us some grand opportunities for “fruit bearing” during the few days of this convention and I wish to bear testimony to the fact that *I can see* that you are growing a *proper* fruitage. While the people of the world are going away to the mountain and lake resorts, seeking to escape the excessive heat, you have come together from long distances, and for about ten days are patiently enduring inconveniences and discomfort, in order that you may enjoy the fellowship of kindred minds and be further edified in our most holy faith. I am indeed glad to say that I have not heard a word of complaint or fault-finding, thus far, from any of you. This, to my mind, is an evidence that you are growing in the “Divine Likeness”—developing a proper “fruitage.” Today is “Fruitage day,” and our subject is “Divine Help in Fruit Bearing.”

Other speakers in this convention have forcefully emphasized the thought, that this entire matter of “Fruit Bearing” depends upon ourselves—upon our own zeal, our own love, our own obedience. I am in full agreement with the thought, dear friends, but I wish today to bring to your attention the fact that we have some wonderful *aids* in fruit bearing—aids, by the use of which, we need never fear of failure. Our text is found in John 15:8, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” We see, from the text, that it is God’s *will* that we should bear *much* fruit. But, we ask, who are addressed in this text? The context, clearly explains that it is not the world in general, but a class who are “Friends” of God, “Friends” of truth, “Friends” of righteousness. A class who are not satisfied with their own attainments, or with their own environment, but who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, for themselves and for their neighbors, and longing to be free from sin and its consequences. The context further shows them to be a class whom God has called *out of the world* and who are His “Friends” to the extent that they have heard His call, and obeyed it, to the extent of offering themselves in sacrifice unto the Lord in harmony with the apostle’s exhortation in Rom. 12:1: “I beseech you therefore brethren, that ye present your bodies, living sacrifices,” etc. As the apostle suggests in 1 Cor. 1:26, these *have seen* their calling. They have “seen” that God is calling, inviting—during the gospel age, a little company—who are willing to sacrifice earthly rights and interests in order that they may inherit a heavenly inheritance, in association with our Lord Jesus; and although it doth not yet appear what they shall be like, they have “seen” much *about* that inheritance. They have “seen” that they are to be “joint heirs” with the Lord Jesus. They have “seen” that they are to be “*like Him*,” and they have “seen” that in calling and perfecting this class, Jehovah is perfecting the masterpiece of all His creations. Just as every painter, sculptor or poet always has *one* particular work to which he points with pride as his “master-piece,” so God is finishing His greatest work, and what a wonderful work it is indeed.

We read that it is a part of His purpose to give this grandest of all His creations the Divine Nature, and all of the powers of the Divine Nature—Jehovah’s own nature and power. We read further that it is to be God’s agent for accomplishing His purposes during the millennium, viz.: the resurrecting, restoring and blessing all mankind, and the Word gives us several hints that this wonderful new creation is to be His agent through eternal ages in accomplishing His future designs and possibly in bringing into existence other created beings on other planets. (See Eph. 2:7 and Eph. 3:21) The Psalmist evidently refers to this when he says, “Glorious things are spoken of thee, Zion, city of our God.” Evidently this wonderful “masterpiece” of Jehovah’s building is to be used throughout all ages, to display God’s great power, as well as to accomplish His future work. It will be an illustration both to angels and men of Jehovah’s love, justice, wisdom and power.

In Isa. 62:3, the prophet quite evidently refers to this masterpiece of Jehovah’s work, saying, “Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” The thought seems to be that of a jeweler who has just completed his greatest work, a royal diadem. The central stone in that diadem would be Jesus and on either side would be all the other “living stones” properly fitted, shaped and polished and “set,” as it pleased the great Jeweler. “In the hand of thy God” would indicate that it represents Jehovah’s great “power” (hand) displayed throughout eternity. It is the class called to this grand position, who are to bear *much* fruit. What kind of fruits, we ask, are they to bear? The apostle (Gal. 5:22, 23) tells us what these fruits are, viz.: “Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.” Again they are called fruits of righteousness and in Rom. 8:29, they are described as “being conformed to the image of God’s dear Son.” The Apostle tells us, (2 Cor. 3:18) that with unveiled face, we “behold the glory of the Lord Jesus, and are changed into the same image, from glory unto glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.”

In the 45th Psalm these fruits are pictured to us as embroidery work upon a garment. The beautiful white linen garment of Christ’s righteousness, upon which the espoused virgin has worked out with great care the beautiful graces and fruits of the spirit. It is only when we see the grand work to which this company are called, that we can properly appreciate why Jehovah should require these wonderful fruits. All who would share with Jesus the glorious honor and privilege *must* be tried, tested and proven faithful. They *must* develop these fruits under trials, persecutions and oppositions. Each *must* be an “overcomer,” in order to be “worthy.” It is when we discuss the grand position and work to which we are called, and the perfection of the fruitage required, that we are prone to be discouraged. The purpose of this talk is, if possible, to “encourage”. Our heavenly Father does not want us to get discouraged, and so He calls our attention to the wonderful helps, which He has provided, so that we need not be discouraged, but may feel assured that success is possible. The only way we can ever hope to win is by using the helps provided. If we fail to use these *helps* we will lose out surely. If we are relying upon *ourselves* we will lose out. If we are looking at our own imperfections and weaknesses

and permitting these to discourage us, it is good evidence that we are trusting in ourselves, and not in the helps which the Lord has provided. We will never be *good enough* to have a place in this glorious class. We can never succeed by doing good works, but, thank God, He has made an arrangement, so that even the weakest may succeed. If we fail to make our calling and election sure, it will not be God's fault. It will be because we have not relied upon *His* arrangements, because we have not had confidence in *His ability*, and *His help*.

Dear friends, let us learn this lesson well, for our success or failure depends upon it. We call your attention to 2 Pet. 1:3, 4. "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things, which pertain unto life and godliness." Notice carefully that "*All things*" which pertain unto life and godliness are given unto us, not a needful thing omitted. This is certainly very encouraging, because we *NEED* much. Notice, again, this text, it declares positively that "*Divine Power*" is operating in our behalf. Think of what this means, the great God, the King of the Universe is aiding us. How is He aiding us? The next verse tells us, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious *promises*, that by these [by believing them, and acting on them] we might be partakers of the Divine Nature." Ah, dear friends, our confidence, our hope, is in these precious promises.

The Apostle Paul, in Rom. 8:31, tells us again that *God is for us*. What a wonderful helper we have. How can we help but win, for if God be for us who can be against us, and how can we doubt or fear? How is God for us, and when did He begin to be for us? God was for us before the world began. He was *for us* when He created Jesus, for was not He the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world? (1 Pet. 1:19, 20) God was *for us* in the creation of the angels, for "are they not all ministering spirits, to minister to the heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14), and the Apostle assures us that we are the heirs of salvation in Rom. 8:14-17. God was *for us*, when He permitted evil to enter the world, for if there had been no sin, there would have been no Saviour or Redeemer, and no bride. If there had been no sin there would have been nothing to overcome, and the promises are made only to the overcomers. God was *for us* also during the 2,000 years and more in which the Bible was being written. Notice how long a time He took to complete this old book—our wedding invitation—for over 2,000 years, holy men wrote and spoke under inspiration of God, and were tortured and suffered and died in numberless ways, and the Apostle (Rom. 15:4) tells us that whatsoever things were written aforetime were written *our* learning—that *we might* have hope. Notice the care which God exercised over this word. First, he wrote it in types and shadows, so that the world could not understand it, then he had "all the prophets," "testify beforehand" these wonderful things, and then knowing beforehand the weakness of our faith, He wrote it again, in stone, in the land of Egypt, that it might be for a sign and for a *witness in that day*.

Then God was for us when He sent an “interpreter” (Job. 33:23) to “break the seals” of this precious invitation, so that *we* might know. So Jesus “uttered the *dark sayings* of old.” He began to break the seals, and all through this age, by His various messengers, He has been “breaking the seals” *for us*, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope, so that we could bear acceptable fruitage. How our hearts go out in gratitude to this great giver of good gifts.

But let us look still further. God was *for us*, when He sent Jesus into the world to *bear our sins*, upon the tree and thus justified us freely from *all things*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He saw that there was none to help, and so He sent a Saviour and a great one. He laid help on one that was mighty, one who is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him. God was for us again, when He raised Jesus to His own right hand and gave Him to be our Advocate. What advantage have *we* anyway, as a result of our justification, and of having an advocate with the Father.” The Apostle says, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect; it is God that justifieth? Here is certainly a great advantage. Since God Himself has justified us, none can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect, none can condemn, as the Apostle says, there is now *no* condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The angels cannot condemn, the devil cannot condemn, evil men cannot condemn, and we ought not even to condemn ourselves.

Do we see weakness in our own flesh, do we see failures again and yet again, to measure up to the perfect standard of God’s law, which our mind recognizes and acknowledges? If so, dear friends, let us not be discouraged, so long as we can assure God that our heart does not consent to these things. Let us remember that He who justified us freely from *all things*, also knew our frame. He knew our weaknesses better than we do ourselves, and His own arrangement is that so long as these failures are not wilful, there is nothing charged up against us, and that *WE* have an advocate with the Father. He is not advocating for any others. He is the only advocate in that court, and He is *our* advocate. Satan, demons, or evil men have no advocate there, and hence no standing in that court. No charge can be brought against God’s elect there, because there is only one advocate there and He is *THEIR* advocate. He has imputed a sufficiency of His merit to us, so that God can be just and pass by the sins of the past, and He continues to impute of His merit *to us* for all our unintentional weaknesses and errors. Indeed, *who* can be against us? This is why the Apostle tells us to come *boldly* to the throne of grace, not boldly in the sense that we can assure God of our perfection, but boldly, in the sense that we recognize our *NEED* and that God has provided our advocate, for these times of need. God does not want us to come either doubtfully or fearfully. He wants us to come boldly, thankfully, and full of faith and confidence. What a wonderful arrangement this is, so that we may not be discouraged, so that we, through *patience* and *comfort* of the *Scriptures* might have hope.

How these precious thoughts should encourage us, arousing renewed hope and determination to press with vigor on. Let us never forget that God is for us, for only in *this* confidence will we be able to bear much fruit. *Nor is this all*. We are assured that in trying diligently to bring forth much fruit, that we shall be persecuted for our loyalty to righteousness, that we must suffer for His name's sake, that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom. This would also tend to discourage us, but again the exceeding great and precious promises come to our aid, assuring us that God is *for us*, even in these trials. In amazement, we ask, how is *God for us* in our persecutions and tribulations? Let us notice just a few of these divine helps for such occasions. In 1 Cor. 10:13 we are told that "God will not permit us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." What a precious promise for our encouragement. *He will enable us to bear it*. Do we believe it? Here, we can see how that it all depends upon *us again*. It is a question of faith. We must *ask* for the "grace sufficient" to enable us to bear it, but if we ask with doubt in our heart, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of God. Such will not be given ability to bear it.

Notice again, (Rom. 8:28) "For we know that *all things* work together" for our good. Surely God is *for us*, in this wonderful promise, "*All things*," whether of prosperity or adversity, are *aiding us*—working together for our good. What wonderful encouragement God is giving us. He does not want us discouraged. A very similar promise to this last is found in Psa. 76:10, He maketh the wrath of men to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. What a promise! Any feature of the wrath of men which will accomplish *no good* God will restrain. Thus we see that all the efforts of Satan, demons or men to injure us or hinder us in fruit bearing only works out good for us. How could we grow the fruits of patience, gentleness, humility or meekness without trials and testings and provings along these lines, and His grace is sufficient. He will enable us to endure.

We are here reminded of Joseph's experiences, which we believe picture these experiences of God's consecrated saints. Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt. Their intention was to injure him, but unwittingly they were elevating him to the throne of Egypt. In after years, they came down to Egypt to get corn to avert a famine, and when Joseph was made known to them, he said, "Ye thought evil against me, but *God* meant it for *good*, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:20) So today the world, the flesh and the devil think evil against us. They are trying to injure us, but unconsciously they are helping us into the kingdom. They think evil against us but God is overruling it for good, so that it may come to pass in that great millennial day, to save much people alive. You and I, then, dear friends, as the antitypical Joseph, will furnish the antitypical corn which will give eternal life to our "brethren that hated us, and cast us out." (Isa. 66:5.) The Apostle says *WE KNOW* that all things work together for good. Do we know it? If so, what a wonderful help this knowledge is. The Psalmist

reminds us that “God shall help her [the church] early” in the morning, and so, dear friends, we are now receiving that help, and it is given that we might be able to bring forth much fruit.

Other helps are supplied us in the fellow members of the body of Christ, all of whom are to have the same care one for another. Thus we can see the force of the Apostle’s statement, “All things are for your sakes.” Every agency in heaven and in earth is combining to aid this new creation to bring forth the acceptable fruits, and much fruits.

To get the benefits of this aid, we must have full confidence in the divine arrangement and so the Apostle expresses it in Phil. 1:16, “Being *confident* of this one thing, that he that began a *good* work in us will finish it unto the day of Jesus Christ” and again in Heb. 13:14, “For we are made partakers of Christ, *if* we hold fast the beginning of our *confidence* steadfast unto the end,” and still again in Heb. 10:35, “Cast not away *your confidence* which hath great recompense of reward.” But, dear friends, let us be sure that our confidence is in the Lord, and not in the flesh. Let us be strong in the *Lord* and in the power of *His* might.

While these words are spoken for our encouragement, they are *not* intended to mean that *we have nothing to do* in the matter. On the contrary, Peter tells us, that while *Divine Power has given us all things* that pertain unto life and godliness, yet, *beside this*, add to your faith, fortitude, and to fortitude, knowledge, and to knowledge, self control, and to self control, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love. Here is clearly pointed out God’s part, and what is necessary for *us* to do also, and if ye *do these things*, an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of God. (1 Pet. 1:3-11.) Dear friends, God is showering down blessings upon us, like rain upon the earth, let us not be unfruitful like the barren soil, but let us bring forth fruits meet for Him for whom it is cultivated. (Heb. 6:7-12.)