

## STEADFAST IN THE LORD

(Message from R. H. Barber, 1915 Convention Report, starting on P. 104.)

It is with great pleasure that I write—accepting Bro. Jones’ invitation to communicate once more, with the friends at large, through the medium of the “Convention Report” possibly our last report. My desire and prayer is that this message may be a personal one, and also a helpful one, to each and all of you, many of whom I know personally, and all of whom I love in the Lord.

This being the year 1915—beyond the time when once we expected we would all be in the Kingdom—and the Harvest work going on uninterruptedly—thus making another little test of our love, of our loyalty and of our faith, I can think of no better text than the words of the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 15:58. “Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” How precious is the last statement of this text. “*Ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*” God always rewards faithful service, therefore let us labor on, remembering that the *Door of Service*, is *NOT* shut, until “The night cometh wherein *no man can work.*” *That time* has not arrived yet, for the *opportunities for service* seem to be more abundant than ever before, and never before have our efforts been rewarded with so many hearing ears and responsive hearts. Evidently there is a great gleanings work going on. Oct. 1914 witnessed a disappointment as regards *some* of our expectations, and a consequent test of our faith, but I was surprised and pleased to note no stampede, as it were, in our ranks. The friends took the disappointment quietly, soberly, calmly, but ever since October, I have observed an increasing tendency toward inactivity, faultfinding, and suspicion, to which I wish to draw attention. This condition seems to be creeping in gradually, and Satan seems to be presenting very subtle and illogical reasonings to our minds just now, which are ensnaring many. I am not writing to condemn any of the Lord’s people, but as a beloved brother I warn you, and wish to call attention again, and yet again to the Apostle’s admonition in our text. “*Be ye steadfast, immovable, ALWAYS* abounding in the *WORK* of the Lord.” I desire to call attention to some of these little points, which seem to me to be a *special test* at this time. *One point* which seems to be quite pronounced, is in connection with some of the recent “Bible Students Monthlies.” Many of the friends seem to think that they are written in *too strong* language, or that *their* town is an exception, and that these particular “Monthlies” do not *FIT* *their* town, and so they *temporarily* decline to assist in putting them out. I fear that this is a very seductive snare of the adversary. Satan seems to have convinced them that their judgments are unerring, and so has succeeded in retiring them from active service. But the matter does not end here. They seem to think they *must* oppose others who desire to serve thus, and in the consequent arguments and discussions which arise, little roots of bitterness spring up, and practically division is made in the class, for those who once take their stand thus against

any particular Monthly, never seem willing to cooperate in the distribution of later ones. They seem to be completely alienated from *this* branch of service, and gradually to lose interest in *every* branch. How pertinent the injunction of our text, “*Be ye steadfast, immovable, etc.*”

*A second point*, which is alienating some of the friends, and inducing inactivity, is that they are losing their faith in Bro. Russell. Satan is very active now, in circulating *all* the “booklets” and pamphlets, which have been written against Bro. Russell, defaming his character, and misrepresenting his work. I have found some friends, who have had the precious Truth, and been blessed by it, for many years, some of them much longer than I, who are now withholding their support, because their minds have become so poisoned against the Society and Bro. Russell, that they are convinced that Bro. Russell has knowingly falsified or deliberately deceived. In other words, they are willing to accept the statements of Satan’s minions, respecting these things, even though on the same page of the Booklet are several other things which *they know are untrue*.

I cannot understand such reasoning, and in the light of our Lord’s treatment by the religious leaders of his day, and the treatment of the Saints all down through the age, and of the many texts which assure us of similar treatment, to those in the Harvest time, this conduct is inexplicable to me. It seems to me that those who are ready to believe such things against Bro. Russell, or any of his co-workers now, would have believed all the fabrications against our Lord, had they lived in His day, and thereby indicate that something is wrong with their heart. Besides to believe thus only leads to faultfinding, unjust criticism, disputings with others of the friends, and lays the mind open to suspicion, evil-surmising and evil speaking, and gradually and almost imperceptibly alienates our sympathy from the Truth and from the brethren, and also gradually separates us from its service. How subtle is our great adversary, but the Apostle says “We are not ignorant of his devices.” How we need to watch lest Satan get an advantage over us. I am convinced that the *heart* is the cause of this difficulty, for it is out of the *abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh*.

Another condition which seems to indicate a lack of faith or a loss of faith, is found in the fact that some of the friends are buying farms, or homes in towns where there are no classes, and thus assuming debts, in the shape of mortgages on these farms or homes. The results are two-fold, first, they are engaging all their time and powers in the effort to pay off these debts, and they have separated themselves from *those helps*, which are so necessary in this evil day, viz., the fellowship of the brethren, and class privileges; very soon they are swallowed up in worldliness, and Satan has succeeded in effectually stopping them from further service.

*A third point*, which is very noticeable now, is the *readiness to split or divide*, which exists in the classes. Evidently the friends have lost sight of the fact that such a condition

is condemned by the Scriptures, and forgotten the query of the Apostle, "Is Christ Divided?" many of the classes are *actually* divided, while in others conditions exist which amount to virtual division. It is astonishing to note the slight pretexts which are made excuses for division. Usually it is caused by some heady elder or elders or some single individual who desires to be prominent, and the classes throw aside all devotion to the Lord, and follow their Elders. Usually such leaders have two or three "*hobbies*"—little eccentric thoughts which they openly avow that they "Did not get out of Bro. Russell's writings, etc." Under these conditions there is either actual division or else some of the class oppose such an Elder and others uphold him in his wrong course, and a condition exists, which is not conducive to spiritual growth and usually one of these factions opposes or hinders certain phases of the work, or refuses to cooperate with the other, and Satan has succeeded in side tracking others from the field of actual and successful service.

Another condition amounting almost to division exists, where the Elders, misunderstanding the sisters' place in the church, entirely *ignore them* in the Berean studies, and otherwise, and so shabbily are they treated, that it amounts to virtual disfellowshipping, by one or more. This makes many little nagging experiences in the classes, and gradually separates others from active service.

It is a surprise to notice, that in some classes where there are only sisters, and one sister has been chosen to *ask the questions*, at the Berean lessons, that some of the *Sisters*, oppose such a duly chosen representative of the class, and argue that it is dangerous to thus lead, and an indication of headiness to accept such a service; tactics are adopted which oppose and hinder the service of such a sister, and almost make life unendurable. Usually those who thus set their own will against the Lord's will as expressed by the class vote feel aggrieved, and hold aloof, and do not cooperate in the class work. Thus there is a condition of practical division and our great adversary has accomplished his end again. How we need to watch and pray, lest Satan get an advantage over us. "Therefore my beloved brethren," let us exhort you again, "be ye *steadfast, immovable, always* abounding in the work of the Lord." "That ye may with *one mind* and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us all be on our guard, "for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." May the Lord bless you all.

Faithfully and with much Christian love, Your Brother in Christ.

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Question: The modern hat is certainly anything but a convenience in an audience, and some of the sisters wish to know if anyone can suggest some method by which women can have the head covered during service without wearing the objectionable hat, and yet be something that would not call undue attention to the fact?

Answer: Am I a Solomon, that I should have the wisdom to decide questions like this? I will tell you, dear friends, what I have noticed some sisters do, and thought that if I were a sister it is quite probable I would adopt it, though this is the first time I have ever mentioned it, I believe. I have noticed some of the sisters wearing a little lace covering, and thought, now that looks very neat, and as far as I know, that covers everything the Apostle had in mind. It is merely a sign, and I would not know any reason why that would not be proper. But, mind you, I am not laying down any law.  
(1906 Convention Report, page 87, par. 7.)

“A DOUBLE WORK” So, dear friends, you don’t know where you are putting books and perhaps at the very places you are putting them day by day something will occur to draw attention to the matter, if not in time for them to be of the little flock, perhaps in time for the great time of trouble, for you know there are a great many to be developed there in a very short time, and the means for their development must be on hand, in order that they may use them when the time of trouble comes, because the door will be shut and the opportunity for carrying the message will be present no longer; therefore the seeds of thought must be there where they can get their hands on them. So, I think there is a double work being done. Not only are we finding the wheat already ripe, but we will be furnishing the means of instruction which shall be developed in the great time of trouble.  
(1907 Convention Report, Part 1, page 67, col. 2, par. 1.)