

“THE LORD’S HARVEST”

(Discourse below by E. W. Brenneisen, 1914 Convention Report, page 234.)

Dear Friends, we shall not burden you with an hour and a half discourse this morning. The matter has been divided between two of us, our dear Bro. Johnson having consented to use half of the time.

The song we have just sung surely should be an inspiration to all laborers in the Lord’s harvest field. This is a mighty harvest, a glorious harvest, and there certainly is plenty for us all to do. I am reminded of the song I used to sing about “You in your small corner, and I in mine.” Wherever that small corner is, whether at home, in the workshop, in the office, down in the coal mine, matters not; for we may all do harvest work. We may not be able to give our entire time and attention to the Lord’s work as colporteurs, as pilgrims or as Photo Drama workers; some of us may be in position to devote only a portion of our time each day specifically to the Master’s service, but I am sure our one sentiment is that we are all “workers together with Him,” as the Apostle expresses it in 2 Cor. 6:1.

If I were to direct your attention to a special text this morning, it would be the words of our Master when He said, “Work ... while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). Thank God, dear friends, we are privileged to live in a time when it is yet called day, compared with the dark time near at hand, when the favorable opportunities which we now enjoy will have passed away forever. Lost opportunities, like wasted time, are beyond hope of recovery. This thought should be an incentive to the most diligent application of our every moment and all of our energy, to make ourselves pleasing acceptable to our Master.

We remind you, dear friends, of the text we had selected for this convention at the opening, namely, the words of the Apostle, “Whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord” (Col. 3:23). There is a great deal in the Bible about doing, about working. We must remember, however, that of our own selves we can do nothing. But the same Apostle declares elsewhere, “I can do *all* things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). Therein lay his power. He was not working in his own strength or according to his own will. He had previously laid aside all that he had, counting it as loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord.

We are living in a time when, apparently, the public are more susceptible of impression by the glorious Message of the Truth which has made our hearts glad, than ever before in the history of the world. There are difficulties on every hand. With discontent, dissatisfaction and depression rife, with men’s hearts failing them for fear of the things coming upon the earth, it would seem that this experience is preparing them for the balm of Gilead, which by God’s grace has been given us. This healing balm we may apply to

the broken-hearted, to those who are ready to hear, ready to know more of the God of infinite love, justice, wisdom and power. Remember, dear friends, that we have not yet completed our course; and while we are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, this can best be accomplished by telling the good news to others. Remember that *expression deepens impression*.

Some may say, "I have heard that before." Yes; and I trust you will hear it again; for every time you hear it you will be the more impressed. The more frequently we have an opportunity to tell these good things, whether to some of like precious faith, as gathered here, or at the more public meetings or privately in conversation with friends or sometimes even with enemies, the more is the impression deepened upon our hearts and minds. We become more firmly established in the faith, and we develop greatly that confidence which has already been begotten in us by the Holy Spirit.

We, the members in particular of the body of Christ, could be properly denominated at the present time Church militant. This is our fighting time; or in other words, it is our working time. Likewise has it been for others who have proclaimed the Message, beginning with our dear Master, eighteen centuries ago. The Gospel writers tell us how He went from city to city, and village to village, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, that glorious kingdom for which you and I more and more ardently and intelligently pray at this time.

O what a glorious prospect, when that kingdom shall come, and God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in Heaven! How is it being done on earth now—absolutely, entirely? No. Is it our commission, our work, to see that this kingdom is established upon earth now? No, dear friends, our commission is similar to that of our Master. Looking to Jesus in this respect, as in others, we have the proper view. He did not try to establish the kingdom then. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight" (John 18:36), in the sense of taking possession of the world. There was fighting going on, but not in that sense.

Yes, dear friends, the Master, as Captain of our salvation, was doing the kind of fighting that you and I are to do. He was fighting the world, the flesh and the adversary. While His flesh was perfect, He nevertheless had inclinations toward things earthly which must be sacrificed, which must be fought down. While this fighting was going on in Himself, He was constantly putting forth the Word of God, God's Message man-ward, constantly preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. Similarly, throughout the Gospel age, the footstep followers of Jesus have been active in proclaiming this kingdom. While at times they have been in great difficulties, in tribulations, in all sorts of discomfitures, these served but to strengthen their purpose of proclaiming this Message.

It is quite important for us to do things in a proper way, in an orderly manner, “decently and in order,” whether we are reapers in the Lord’s harvest only during a part of our time or whether employed constantly in some department of the work. There should be a definite purpose, definite aim, definite action. In thinking over the matter this morning, fourteen principal points came to my mind, which I think would be a stimulus in the remaining days this side of the veil, moving us to diligence morning, noon and night in the greatest of all favors, as laborers and servants of God. I will read the fourteen points, and then consider them briefly.

Determination

Dignity

Enthusiasm

Moderation

Sobriety

Earnestness

Zealousness

Suffering

Cheerfulness

Courageousness

Endurance

Peacefulness

Loyalty

Prayerfulness

First, let us remember that in order to be successful in anything we must have DETERMINATION. This is what your earthly master, or superintendent, would tell you if you consulted him in regard to some particular work. Unless a person has determination there is not much likelihood of his accomplishing a great deal. There are some who seem to have determination very strong in their mental make-up.

We can see how determined the Master was. To do what? Not to do His own will, but *determined* to do the Father’s will, at any cost and at every cost, at the cost of His own life—all that He had. As the Prophet Isaiah foretold of Him, He “poured out His soul unto death” (Isa. 53:12). What does that mean? It means that He so employed everything pertaining to His soul, His being, that it was for the benefit of others. Had He counted the cost? Yea, verily! When the proper time came at the age of thirty years (as prophesied by the Psalmist and confirmed by the Apostle Paul), He came forward, saying, “Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do **Thy will, Oh God.**” **Psalm 40:7**; Heb. 10:7, 9.

David also prophetically spoke words applicable to the Master when he said, “I *delight* to do Thy will, O My God” (Psalm 40:8). Likewise by our consecration, we have

determined to give up our own will to do the will of the Father. May our determination never waver or lessen, but may each passing day bring an increase. Let us begin each day with the ardent prayer that this determination to do the Father's will might grow stronger than it was the day preceding. Thus we will have more joy in the Lord's service.

While DETERMINATION is exceedingly important, and especially in this harvest time, let us remember also the next point, namely, to conduct ourselves at all times with becoming DIGNITY. If we have the message to convey, whether handing out a tract, whether giving to someone an announcement of a meeting, serving as an evangelist, as a colporteur, or traveling here and there to represent the truth and being entertained by the dear Christian friends, it is important to remember that we are especially delegated by the Heavenly Father to represent Him and His dear Son. This should inspire us with greater carefulness as to our deportment. At all times we should conduct ourselves as becomes ambassadors of Christ, as children of the King. But while conducting ourselves with proper dignity, let us not find ourselves restrained too much (as in the case with some who have the false *dignity* of the world, which is merely a veneer), and thus lose our ENTHUSIASM.

ENTHUSIASM is a particularly important point. Unless we ourselves are enthused with the work we have undertaken to do, how can we inspire anyone else with enthusiasm, with the real spirit of the matter? So let not your ardor be dampened by your dignity, but let both dignity and *enthusiasm* be manifested in proper relationship and proportion.

But, says someone, Does not the Apostle admonish us, "Let your MODERATION be known unto all men" (Phil. 4:5)? Yes. "Do not let your *enthusiasm* run away with you," some one suggests. I do not think that this is a proper interpretation of that expression. I believe the Apostle had special reference to our *moderation* in the matter of eating and drinking, as to how we dress, and our general living. We should neither go to the extreme of over-dressing, nor should we be careless about our personal appearance. In this way we can let our *moderation* be known unto all men.

Then in regard to SOBRIETY. All acknowledge that what we have undertaken is a very important matter. If anything is worth being said or worth being done in this harvest work, I am quite sure that you recognize it is quite a serious matter. For those whom God has predestinated "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29), it is a serious matter to make their calling and election sure. Therefore, not in any frivolous manner, nor in any light vein, should we engage in any part of the harvest work. If we remember that by soberness, *sobriety*, we have greater influence in conveying the message of God's grace to others, it will aid us in exercising this quality.

There is a great lack of soberness in the world. Even many who profess to be Christians, instead of being sober-minded, clear-minded, are confused in their minds; and

consequently they are Scripturally denominated Babylon, confusion. As the Scriptures explain the matter, their intoxication has come about through false doctrine. Do we not have a great deal of pity when we come in contact with an individual who has been overcome by literal strong drink? We feel it would be a great blessing if we could sober him up. But as we look over the great mass of professing Christians in the world who are intoxicated with the wine of false doctrine, it is a hundred fold more gratifying that the Heavenly Father has committed to us the privilege of sobering them up, as we have opportunity. Let us be exercised with the spirit of a sound mind, to as adroitly as possible take out of their path any stumbling stones, that they may be able to progress. How can we better do this than by bringing to their attention that which has been effective in awakening us to an appreciation of our Father's real goodness.

Closely allied to the thought of *sobriety* is that of EARNESTNESS. We believe that *earnestness* signifies a much deeper seated condition than the thought of *enthusiasm*. We should be earnestly devoting our time as outlined through the one way, the one channel—the Scriptures—thereby indicating to others that we are not pretending in any sense of the word, but that we are fully convinced ourselves. Thus our words and conduct may be such as to fan into a larger blaze the flame of fire in another, and engender in them a desire to go forth also and spread the good news.

Then there is the thought of ZEALOUSNESS. Of our Lord it is written, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" (Psalm 69:9; John 2:17). The privilege of being zealous gives us the opportunity of fulfilling our consecration vows. If we have made a vow to the Lord to sacrifice our all, let us rejoice in the fires of affliction as we render service to the extent of our abilities and opportunities. This will mean SUFFERING, which is our next thought.

But remember it is not the thought of *suffering* for wrong-doing. The Apostle tells us that if we are buffeted for our faults and take it patiently, there is no glory in it; but when we do well and *suffer* for it, if we take it patiently, then we have praise with God (1 Peter 2:20). You are employing your time in the Master's vineyard, by inviting the attention of others to Him, whether by handing out the literature, or by colportaging, by preaching, or in the Photo Drama work. Let us be zealous and do all heartily as to the Lord.

If we are zealous we shall be called upon to *suffer*, through weariness of the flesh, and perhaps through the opposition of those who are antagonistic to the truths we are proclaiming. This *suffering* should but fan into a flame of zeal and earnestness and activity. Does not the Lord bring this principle to our attention when He says, "Blessed [happy] are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward [not your reward *here*, not *now*, but] in Heaven" (Matt. 5:11, 12). It is the joy set *before* us that brings encouragement in this life.

The next thought is CHEERFULNESS. On this subject I wish merely to call attention to the statement of the Master, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). As we look to the Master and see how He overcame the world, we can be of good cheer.

This quality of character tends toward COURAGEOUSNESS. We can be *courageous* in the power of His might. Let us remember that the Almighty Jehovah is on our side, and that He is abundantly able to carry us through. "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:31)? Should not that thought inspire *courage* in the heart of even the weakest sister, as she proclaims the message of the Gospel through the colporteur work? We may be sure that He who changes not loves us still, and will use His power to cause all things to work together for our highest good spiritually and for our ultimate attainment of a place in the Church beyond the veil.

Courageousness is a very important factor in the development of ENDURANCE. We need this quality in abundance; for "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). The test of *endurance* is one of the severest trials to which we as the people of God are subjected. We are in the day of battle, the evil day mentioned in the Scriptures; and therefore we must be prepared for any and for every surprise which our great enemy may have planned against us. Unquestionably our best preparations for all sudden attacks is that resulting from constant vigilance and prayer. Let us, then, dear brethren, render obedience to the Divine counsel not to forget to assemble ourselves together and to search the Scriptures. By making use of all the privileges and mercies so bountifully bestowed upon us as the children of God, we may become strong in the power which the Lord provides.

As we learn to *endure* gladly whatever our Heavenly Father permits to come upon us, we develop patience; for we realize that our experiences are for the purpose of making us copies of His dear Son in character development. It is necessary for each one of the people of God to pass through experiences which separate from us those qualities which render us unfit for the future service to which we are called. In proportion also as we realize our own imperfections, we are enabled to bear patiently and even joyfully, whatever the Father sees best to send us, knowing that all things are working together for our ultimate good, because we love him.

As the Lord's people continue to grow in grace they develop PEACEABLENESS. We are proclaiming the Gospel of peace; and therefore we, above all others, should be peacemakers. But as such we must never endeavor to secure *peace* at the expense of purity, of principle. In all our dealings the thought of purity must be continually borne in mind; for the wisdom that comes from above is *first* pure, *then* peaceable. While the new mind desires *peace*, yet it will earnestly *contend* for the faith once delivered to the saints

—for nothing else. So far as possible, it will yield a non-essential point in controversy rather than be contentious; for it earnestly desires to live *peaceably* with all men, as the Apostle exhorts. (Rom. 12:18).

One of the most important points to be kept in mind by the people of God is that of LOYALTY. In order to receive the greatest blessings ourselves, we must continually show our loyalty to Jehovah and His arrangements, and must work in harmony with His plans and purposes. The test of *loyalty* is, perhaps, the most important one through which the Lord's people must pass; for doubtless it is this quality of character development which will have most to do with our acceptance or rejection as members of the body of Christ in glory. Loyalty to God and to the principles of righteousness must ever be demonstrated in all our thoughts, words and doings. To this end may we ever scrutinize ourselves and thus learn to bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ.

Lastly, but not the least important is PRAYERFULNESS. The Apostle's injunction to the Church is, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). The thought is not that we should always be on our knees, but that we should ever be in this attitude of heart and mind where we can instantly lift our hearts in silent prayer, asking for God's blessing and benediction. More and more the people of God are appreciating their wonderful privilege of approaching, the Throne of the Heavenly Grace. As this appreciation deepens, the more earnest and therefore acceptable become their prayers, and the more abundant their blessings.

Just as prayer was of paramount importance in the harvest of the Jewish age, so is it an exceedingly important factor in the work of the harvest of the Gospel age. Like the disciples of old, we should pray for opportunities of service, and then watch for such, in harmony with our prayers. What we do is God's work, not ours. Therefore we are in constant need of Divine guidance, and this is ours for the asking.

We wish to call attention to our Lord's words in Matt. 9:36-38, with which we will close our remarks. We read, "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous; but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

So it is today, dear friends. The harvest is plenteous; but comparatively speaking, the laborers are few. What shall we do? Just what the Lord told His disciples to do—"Pray ye, therefore." For what? "Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

But while we are praying, can we withhold ourselves? If we have already offered ourselves in the service, can we, while praying thus, permit others to sacrifice time, strength and zeal, and we ourselves not be actively on the lookout for opportunities of spreading the Gospel of peace? Or if we who pray “Send forth laborers,” are already in the service, can we afford to cease to labor with all our might? Surely all whose hearts are burning with the desire to do with their might what their hands find to do will be anxious to be used as the servants of the great Chief Reaper, our present Lord and King. As in the Jewish harvest, “He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal,” so is it now. Those who are the most zealous to serve the Lord, those who are the most willing to sacrifice behalf of His cause, are the ones who receive the greatest spiritual blessings now, who enjoy the greatest amount of spiritual fellowship with the Master, and who will be the best prepared to share with Him in the glories to be revealed as soon as the work on this side the veil shall have been accomplished.

The consecrated people of God have no time for the ordinary affairs of life. The harvest is almost over; the work is great; the laborers few; our time is all consecrated to the Lord’s service. Therefore we must labor while it is *called* day; for the night cometh, in which no man *can* work.