

## SEED TIME AND HARVEST.

Order is heaven's first law. And to those who have been brought to a knowledge of God's wondrous plan, its orderly arrangement is in most striking contrast with the disorderly, confused ideas of God and his doings, entertained by the vast majority of Christians. As we now glance at the plan of God as a whole, we see its various appointed times and seasons, and the appointed work of each, and that all that was to be accomplished in the seasons now past, has been done in exact accordance with the prearranged plan.

Confining our observations to the Gospel age, we see that seed time and harvest each has its appointed place. And while it was out of place for any to attempt harvest work before harvest time, it is likewise a mistake to neglect harvest work in harvest time and give attention to seed sowing. Jesus taught the early disciples not to begin harvest work, the separation of wheat and tares, in the beginning of the age, but to wait until the time of harvest, saying, "Let both grow together *until the harvest*; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat together into my barn." – Matt. 13:24-30.

While Jesus thus discouraged harvest work before the time, he thus declared that the time would come when harvest work would be in order; and he also pointed out the special work of that season, saying, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47.) In obedience to this expression of the Lord's will, the Church has gone forth sowing the precious seed of truth, encouraged amid all the discouragements by the promise that "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," and that "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." – Psa. 126:5,6.

This work of seed sowing was to be one of the main features of the Church's work until harvest time; and it was a most important one; for without it there could be no harvest. But when harvest time comes, seed sowing is no longer an important work. The work of harvest time is altogether different. It includes the gathering of the ripened grain and the clearing of the field of the tares, etc., preparatory to the seed sowing of the next season. The wheat of the Gospel age must be gathered into the barn, and the tares bound in bundles and burned in the fiery trouble that shall destroy all civil, social and ecclesiastical systems in this day of the Lord, thus to prepare the earth to receive the rightful King, and make it ready for the full establishment of the kingdom of God. We should not be surprised, therefore, when those who reject the plan of God array themselves in opposition to the harvesters.

Harvest time is the most busy time of all the year, and every member of the Church who is interested in the Lord's work, should be on hand ready to engage in it to the full extent of his ability. The harvest time is a very brief period compared with the time for sowing. The sowing has progressed for nearly nineteen centuries; the seed has now been scattered among all nations, and some fruit should be expected in almost every quarter of the globe, and yet the time appointed for the harvest is only forty years – from 1874 to 1914. The harvesters should expect just what they find, only here a little and there a little wheat in the midst of a great mass of tares with which the whole field is overrun, and that comparatively small number must be sought out with great care; for it is of great value. And those who rightly estimate the real value of even one grain of wheat will find little reason for discouragement, even though their success be comparatively small.

When this harvest work is fully accomplished the seed sowing for another crop will begin, the harvest of which will be reaped in the end of the Millennial age. But as there is a period of a thousand years appointed for that work, there is now no special haste or reason why we should neglect the urgent duties of the harvest time to commence that work. And it is utterly useless to sow seed now with the

expectation of its bearing fruit to be reaped in this harvest. The fruit which is now being gathered is the spiritual class, and none from the world are now invited to be of that class. Those who are of this wheat class however, may be urged to ripen and to make their calling and election sure, but the privileges and blessings now to be offered to the world, are of another order. It is now their privilege to take steps towards human perfection and eternal life, but they are not invited to a *change of nature*.

The duty of the present hour, then, is harvest work, and there is plenty of it in every direction, and the Lord of the harvest is present directing it. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels – messengers or missionaries. (Matt. 13:39.) And again it is written, "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and *they* shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. 24:31.) The great sound of a trumpet here referred to, is the truth now proclaimed by the saints, the messengers ("angels") of God. And as the time advances, the trumpet tones of truth wax louder and louder as one messenger after another receives and proclaims it, and by it the elect are being attracted and gathered. In the eyes of Babylon this is a marvelous work and a wonder; for while the wisdom of their wise men has perished, and the understanding of their prudent men is hid, the Lord's missionaries or angels are gathering his elect, and Babylon looks on with surprise as she sees the separation going on and those whom she recognizes as true wheat, the most earnest and devoted Christians gathered out from her midst. Even thus it was predicted by the Prophet, "Behold I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." – Isa. 29:14. It is the high privilege of every faithful child of God to be engaged in this harvest work with all his talents and powers. This is the great missionary work of the present, and blessed are all those who appreciate the privilege of engaging in it.

Some, failing to comprehend clearly the Lord's plan and methods, which we endeavor to study and follow, seem inclined to think that those who believe this way are lacking both in the missionary spirit and effort. They do not see the mission work carried on in the usual way. They never hear through the TOWER of missionaries prepared in theological seminaries and sent out to India, China, South America, and other foreign fields; nor is there ever a call for money to support missionaries either at home or in foreign fields. There is no money asked for church buildings, nor are any built; none asked for the support of superannuated preachers, for freedmen's aid fund, for church extension, nor for any part of the Lord's work.

How is this? Are we really lacking in the missionary spirit? Have we who hold this truth no ambition or zeal to bear the good tidings to others? Have we wrapped the cloak of selfishness around us, and sat down to feast at the Lord's table alone? These are plain questions, which each individually should apply to himself. But for the overcoming Church of Christ we can most emphatically give the above questions a negative answer. The Lord has his missionaries, his angels, at work on every hand, gathering his elect from the four winds (from every direction); from one end of heaven (the present religious heavens or ruling powers which shall pass away – the nominal church) to the other; from every branch of the nominal church. He who said, "If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is mine and the fullness thereof....I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds; for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psa. 50:12,9,10), is able to carry on his great work without begging for funds either from the world or from his children. Neither will he *compel* his children to sacrifice anything in his service, nor will he accept anything from them short of a cheerful, free-will offering. Those who have covenanted to do this are expected to fulfill their promise – not, however, as a favor to God, but as a thank-offering for all his multiplied favors – our "reasonable service." "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy *vows* unto the Most High." (Psa. 50:14.) The Lord's resources are infinite, and he can and will carry on his work,

whether we appreciate our privilege of sharing in it or not. Those who do appreciate their privilege are willing to spend and be spent in the service, without money and without price, trusting in him who promised that the necessities of life should be sure to us until that life itself shall be laid down in his service.

Many may have overlooked the wonderful and varied ways and means which God is employing in this harvest work; in fact, only those who are watchmen upon the Towers of Zion can see it. But come up into the Tower, and look out over the field (the world) and see how grandly the Lord of the harvest is conducting the work. He wants a missionary to do some reaping in India – he does not first form a missionary society in America, and call upon all the congregations of Babylon for funds, and exhort them to be liberal (as the prince of this world hath prospered them), and not try to cheat the Lord, and suggest to them that if they cannot get the money in any other way, to get up a fair, or grab-game – or anything to get the money, for India must have a missionary, as the people are dying in Christless despair at the rate of a hundred thousand a day. And he does not tell the missionary that when he goes he must have a salary of three thousand a year, and his house-rent, servants, and private carriage additional, for his talents [R886 : page 6] in the service are worth at least that much; or if his talents are humbler, a smaller salary will do, if supplemented by some other advantages. He does not erect a church building there, and invite a talented man to come and make a reputation and attract the people. No; that is Babylon's way of doing it, but it is not the Lord's way. The Lord shows his truth to a humble soldier in the British navy, and his heart is filled with a zeal to tell it to others. The Lord then sends him to India at the expense of the British Government, and gives him abundant leisure to herald the good news there, to strengthen and establish some in the faith, and from there to write letters and scatter printed matter in other distant parts. Thus the trumpet tones of present truth – the Seventh Trumpet – are sounded in India, and we may be sure that in due time it will reach, through this or some other means, every saint in India who is worthy to be gathered with the elect. And

so several sailors are bearing the good news to distant parts, and through them saints are being gathered, cheered and comforted. One occasionally finds his way to South America, again to Australia, and again to England, always watching for opportunities for harvest work. Through the efforts of another of the Lord's missionaries the truth reached some of the saints in China, who rejoice in its light. The Lord wanted to gather some saints in Sweden, and he raised up some earnest Swedes in this country, who by private letters and translations communicate the good tidings to other Swedish saints. And so with the Germans. We notice also that where the seed-sowing has been most bountiful, and the largest harvest should naturally be expected, there the greatest efforts are being put forth. The most favored portion of the field seems to be this country, and next to it, Great Britain. Thus through the press, by private correspondence, by traveling brethren, and by the special efforts of those whose sphere is more limited, the Lord is carrying on his great harvest work. He is sending forth these reapers with a great sound of a trumpet, to gather his elect together. [R886 : page 7] Others do not heed the sound, and consequently are not gathered. Every one gathered helps to gather others, and by-and-by so many as endure firm unto the end shall be glorified together; and then we shall see our Lord as he is, for we shall be like him. No special fund is called for to support these missionaries: for the love of the truth they go forth to make it known, without money and without price, laboring with their hands, or in whatever way they can to secure the necessities of life while in the service, and looking for the present reward of persecution, while they keep their eye fixed on the eternal reward of glory, honor and immortality promised.

The Lord has no special use now for a fund for superannuated preachers; for the covenant of the saints admits of no such condition. Our service is to be *unto death*. In fact, some of the preachers who regarded themselves as worn out when in the nominal church, now begin to buckle on the armor and renew their efforts in the service of the truth. The work for the freedmen can safely stand until the harvest is over. The church extension fund called for in Babylon, is no part of

our work, being merely an effort to extend the influence of Babylon by multiplying church buildings and influence. The Bible Society fund is not now a necessary part of our work since millions of Bibles are now printed and published at low rates in every language. Let Babylon go on with this good work if she will, but the special work of the saints now, since the Bible is already in the hands of all classes, is to go to them and inquire, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" and to assist in removing the rubbish of tradition, and the cobwebs of superstition with which the Word of God has been made void and worse than meaningless.

### **OUR LIBERTY NOT AN OCCASION FOR THE FLESH.**

It will thus be seen that we are relieved from many of the burdens which we helped to bear when in the nominal church. In fact we are not compelled to bear any burdens; the Lord does not lay the responsibility of any part of his work upon us, but it is our *privilege to assume just as much* of the responsibility as we can bear, and to labor to accomplish it to His glory. But when we are freed from Babylon will God be honored by our giving our influence and support to the enterprises of that abandoned and decaying system – to its missionary work, its church extension, etc., etc.? We should consider in the first place that Babylon's missionaries cannot carry any better tidings than they possess. If their doctrine is that death, the wages of sin is not destruction, but eternal life under the most exquisite torture and torment, physical or mental, or both, then that is what they teach; if they disbelieve the glorious doctrine of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began, and which is secured to all mankind as the result of the ransom, then they will not teach it. And so with all the errors they hold, and the truths they ignore. And to the extent that our eyes have been opened to behold the wondrous things of God's law, and consequently to see the gross ignorance and willful stupidity of Babylon, and her determined opposition to the truth, we see that these enterprises are not what they purport to be. True they teach morality, but that is not the

gospel – the good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. True they declare that Jesus died to secure salvation for a few, and that is good as far as it goes, but from what, and to what, they are saved, and how, and why, and what the death of Christ had to do with it, no information is given, and both the teachers and the taught are alike in ignorance.

This is the great missionary work of the nominal church, in which thousands of dollars are expended annually. The only element of the gospel which is thus carried, is the bare fact of the grand central truth of Christianity, that Christ died for our sins. But this truth is so beclouded and covered by the many errors which go with it, as to render it almost void and meaningless. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Ye do make void the Word of God through your tradition," so it is with the teaching of the nominal church to-day. But we rejoice that this glorious central truth of the Gospel, even though beclouded and covered, has now been testified to all nations. Had this truth been lost, the message carried could in no sense be termed good tidings. But because it has been so befogged and covered, few of those to whom it has been testified have yet been able to recognize it as good tidings. It should not be a matter of surprise then to any, when we say that we have no interest in the so-called missionary work of the nominal church, either home or foreign. Though much is said about the self-sacrificing missionaries who go to foreign lands to proclaim the Gospel to the poor heathen, and a great deal of money is called for to support the enterprise, we see that the whole enterprise and generally those now engaged in it, really lack the true missionary spirit. Ignoring the true gospel, they advocate the traditions of men, and in return receive from the various sects they serve a liberal financial support. (See letter in last TOWER, from Singapore, India.)

The funds above-named, called for annually in the nominal church, it will be observed, are not for the support of the local organizations. In addition to these yearly calls, come the other calls for the minister's salary, for paying off debts and repairing the church

building and furniture, for purchasing and repairing a grand organ, and paying an artistic choir, etc., etc.

Yes, the vast machinery of the nominal church requires money to run it, and, like an extravagant, expensive family, its expenses increase with its efforts to conform to the ideas and please the tastes of the world. But all of its current expenses, however extravagant and unnecessary, must be and are met and shared by the entire membership, even the poorest. The laboring man who, by hard toil and sweat of face, supplies the necessary wants of a young and helpless family, must conscientiously lay by a mite at least to help pay for the grand organ and the upholstered pews, fine carpet, etc., etc., because all this is represented as the Lord's work.

But we recognize none of these things as any part of the Lord's work. Not one of the ministers of the Lord's truth though they are worthy of it, either asks or receives a salary; on the contrary while they preach they labor for support, and give what they can towards the necessities of the work. There are no debts to be paid on church buildings as none are contracted, and the little companies of consecrated ones gathered out here and there can easily gather from house to house or in inexpensive halls, to build themselves up in their most holy faith; and their public efforts are generally at well chosen outdoor places and in public halls and school houses or wherever they can best secure a hearing. The Sunday school with its library, summer excursions, and Christmas treats, etc., is no part of harvest work; and the duties towards the children are best performed by Christian parents in the home circle; and the choir, the grand organ, etc. are entirely superfluous.

Thus relieved from all these expensive superfluities, as well as many personal expenses which we formerly regarded as almost necessary, all the consecrated should carefully consider, what am I doing with the consecrated means in my possession? Once we conscientiously devoted a portion to the enterprises of the nominal

church; what are we doing with it now? Is as much or more now being conscientiously turned into the channels of truth? Are we carefully watching for opportunities to invest the Lord's money for his cause? Some are; but if any use their liberty for an occasion to the flesh, they are not overcoming. Let us see to it that with all our talents we are fully enlisted in the harvest work. Let us not be satisfied with the liberality [R887 : page 7] we used when in Babylon; our present efforts should far exceed our efforts then in every way, both our personal efforts to preach the Gospel and also our financial efforts to extend the work. Are you spending more or less time, money, and effort, now to spread the "glad tidings of great joy" than you did before under fear, in spreading the bad mixture of error so dishonoring to God and confusing to his children. Much effort for the truth is now needed to *offset* if nothing more our previous efforts, which were largely against the truth, though we did it ignorantly. If we spent \$25 a year then we should spend \$50 now to get even, and as much more for a thank offering as we can. If we spent on an average one hour per day of time and effort in the fairs, suppers and socials of Babylon, we should under the stimulus of the truth be able to make it at least two now, for the upbuilding of the true "little flock" the Bride of Christ.

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