

CO-LABORERS WITH GOD

"We are God's fellow workers." I Cor. 3:9

These words teach that:

I. God Is A Laborer

God is ever working. This fact should shame those foolish, worthless persons who deem it derogatory to labor. In the presence of this statement, God is a laborer, labor is forever vindicated.

1. The works of creation declare and illustrate God's labors. It required work on His part to fashion this world and make it a fit dwelling place for man. When man was created and placed here in this world God's labor was responsible for it.
2. The works of providence give emphasis to God's labors
3. The works of redemption give wonderful further proof of His ceaseless activities.

From the birth to the death of each individual God never ceases to exert Himself on his or her behalf. God never ceases His efforts for the welfare of men.

II. We Should Be Laborers

Nothing worthwhile is ever accomplished without work. Spiritual labor is the natural outcome of spiritual life. Our hearts may rest in the Lord, but our hands will work for Him. Every sincere follower of Christ will seek the promotion of the kingdom of righteousness and the glory of the Divine Master. It sometimes seems as if the fact that nothing of value can be accomplished without work is recognized everywhere else except in religion.

The world applauded Webster's famous reply to Hayne as a master-piece of thought and eloquence, but it is not always remembered how much labor it cost. For nearly a year Mr. Webster had expected to debate. He had spent to South Carolina, Mr. Hayne's home, and secured all available copies of Hayne's printed speeches, had studied them carefully, learning the arguments and mental strength of his antagonist. Thus most of Webster's speech was prepared months before its delivery. He sat in the Senate ready for attack. When it came and Webster responded the nation marveled at the resources of a man who could make such a masterful speech on the spur of the moment. It was the result of work.

This principle is just as true in matters of religious enterprise. Nothing of value can be accomplished for God without work. Dependence on God will not take the place of work. It is folly to say that because a cause is God's cause it will prosper whether we do anything or not. Neither will talk take the place of work. It is one thing to talk, and quite another thing to do.

III. We Should Be Co-Laborers With God.

Christians are fellow-workers one with another. There is a difference in their natural powers, spiritual gifts, ecclesiastical position, and length of service. But there should be unity in aim, in hope, and in the relation all sustain to Him by whose authority and for whose glory

they toil. There should also be sympathy, mutual good will, and helpfulness. If there is a defect here, it is discredit to the common profession, a hindrance to the general usefulness, and a grief to the Lord.

Every Christian is invested with the power, and is therefore burdened with the honorable obligation to work for God. Our text says, "We are God's fellow-workers". What a title! That is the highest tribute that can be paid to us. How august the dignity! What distinction it confers upon us! We are fellow-workers under God in His field. We can get nowhere until we come to the point where we are able to work together. God created the earth but He calls us into partnership with Him in tilling it. We are tenants or joint-promoters on His great farm, the earth. He furnished the soil, the seed, and the sunshine. He expects us to do the cultivating. Let us do our part and then look in faith to God to accomplish His.

There are two extreme schools of thought which we must avoid. The first is that school which teaches that man does not need God. It claims that he did need God in the kindergarten stage of the world but not now. It teaches that man can plant crops and do anything and get along alright without God.

The second is that school which teaches that God does not need man. It claims that God can accomplish anything He wants to do without man. That is, God can save a people if He wants to without man doing anything to help bring that about. In other words, what is to be will be whether it comes to pass or not.

As our text points out we are "God's fellow-workers". This implies the truth that God will not do anything for a man that he can do for himself, but God will do everything for a man that he cannot do for himself. Illustrations:

God placed man on farm--corn not self grown--seed nor sower cannot secure yield alone.

God gives the soil, wheat, sunshine, but man will never have a loaf of bread until he harvests that wheat, grinds it, mixes it, and bakes it.

God made the stone, and wood, but unless man puts them together he will never have a house.

God made the air, but it will not preserve life if you refuse to breathe it. God has provided salvation but man must accept it if he is saved. The growth of the church depends upon the law of divine and human interaction. A church never grows without human hands using God's gifts. God does not increase the membership of a church by Himself. One reason why the church does not have more power today is because God does not have the help of His partners. Church work is held up and checked because some members try to do things without God's help, and others sit around with folded arms waiting for God to do it. It is not God's fault if our children and youth turn out bad. The church has a cure for that sort of thing; but we neglect our duties and they grow up to be thieves, drunkards, immoral, and criminals. You cannot blame God if they are evil. The fault lies with us. If God had His way all men would be good and all men would be righteous. We can avoid such undesirable experiences by fulfilling our end of our partnership with God. God wants them all to be saved but they will not be saved unless God can use us to win them. Co-operation works both ways. If I work with God, He will work with me. If God works with me success is sure. If we labor with the Lord then we are not laboring in vain. Let us work with all our might together with Him and after He superintends our work and gives success to it, He will also give us a reward for it. Let us continue to work as co-laborers with God and our labor will not be in vain, neither will our strength be spent for naught.