



# How to Become a Successful Labourer in Christ's Vineyard

An Address delivered at Salem Chapel, Bristol, at a Monday Evening Prayer-meeting, in September, 1870.

In the first prayer this evening there was the following expression:- "Use Thy servants, and let them see fruit, as they are able to bear it." I desire to say a few words on this, especially the latter part. It has in a lively way brought to my remembrance my own experience. It was forty-four years ago, on the 17th of this month, that I began to preach in my own country; but I saw very little fruit from my preaching. I preached in the parish churches - I loved to preach, there was a real earnestness in my preaching, and a real desire to do good - unquestionably so; and yet I never met with a single instance in which I could say I had been used as God's instrument in the conversion of a sinner, though sometimes I preached to a thousand people, or more. I do not say that persons may not have been converted; but I never met with one single instance of conversion. It did, however, please God, in a few instances - when I did not expect it - to use me in the conversion of sinners; but this was quite apart from the preaching. I once visited a poor tailor and expounded the Scriptures at his house, and a person was brought to the knowledge of the truth through this exposition. Two of my fellow-students, my former companions in sin, were converted instantaneously whilst I was speaking to them; so that in a few cases, where I expected nothing, I was made an instrument of blessing; but where I expected great things, there was nothing at all. In course of time I came to this country, and it pleased God then to show to me the doctrines of grace in a way in which I had not seen them before. At first I hated them, and said, "If this were true, I could do nothing at all in the conversion of sinners, as all would then depend upon God and the working of His Spirit." But when it pleased God to reveal these truths to me, and my heart was brought to such a state as that I could say, "I am not only content simply to be a hammer, an axe, or a saw, in God's hands; but I shall count it an honour to be taken up and used by Him in any way; and if sinners are converted through my instrumentality, from my inmost soul I will give Him all the glory; the Lord gave me to see fruit in abundance; sinners were converted by scores; and ever since God has used me in one way or other in His service. I delight to dwell on this, especially for the benefit of my younger fellow-believers. We must be really willing to give God all the glory. We may say, God shall have all the glory; but the point is, do we mean it? We must aim after this, - to be content to be nothing but the instrument, giving God all the glory. We must not say, God shall have ninety-nine parts of the glory, and the one-hundredth part shall be ours. No, we must give Him all, we must not take the one-hundredth part; He is worthy to have it all. Let us aim after this, and assuredly God will take us up; for He can then use us. Our adorable Lord Jesus, during all His life on earth, had one single aim - to seek glory for the Father. Well, as we are enabled to get glory for the Master, not for the servant, so He, whom we seek to honour, will see to it that honour is bestowed on the servant. I affectionately, as an elder brother, lay it upon the hearts of my beloved young brethren, whether engaged as preachers, Sunday-school teachers, tract distributors, district visitors, or in any other way working in the Lord's service, if they desire to see fruit resulting from their labours, that they primarily aim after this, - that not only with the lip, but with the heart, they will give all the honour and glory to God, if He should condescend to use them as instruments in His service.

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