

Eyes

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Washington Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Gospel Farming."

Text: "My Father is the husbandman."—John xv, 1.

This last summer, having zones in different directions over between five and six thousand miles of harvest fields, I can hardly open my Bible without smelling the breath of new-mown hay and seeing the golden light of the wheat field. And when I open my Bible to take my text, the Scripture leaf rustles like the tassels of the corn.

We were nearly all of us born in the country. We dropped corn in the hill, and went to the mill, tying the mill-grist in the center of the sack so that the contents on either side the horse balanced each other; and drove the cattle afield, our bare feet wet with the dew, and rode the horses with the halter to the brook until we fell off, and hunted the mow for nests until the feathered occupants went cackling away. We were nearly all of us born in the country, and all would have stayed there had not some adventurous lad on his vacation come back with better clothes and softer hands and set the whole village on fire with ambition for city life. So we all understand rustic allusions to the Bible is full of them. In Christ's Sermon on the Mount you could see the mill-blown lilies and the glossy back of the crow's wings as it flew over Mount Olivet. David and John, Paul and Isaiah had in country life a source of frequent illustration, while Christ in the text takes the responsibility of calling God a farmer, declaring: "My Father is the husbandman."

Noah was the first farmer. We say nothing about Cain, the tiller of the soil. Adam was a gardener on a large scale, but to Noah was given all the acres of the earth. Elisha was an agriculturist, not cultivating a ten-acre plot, but we find him plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. In Bible times the land was so plenty and the inhabitants so few that Noah was right when he gave to every inhabitant a certain portion of land, that land cultivated ever after to be his own possession.

They were not small crops raised in those times, for though the arts were rude, the plow was made of very rich soil, and barley and cotton and flax and all kinds of grain came up at the call of the harvesters. Fifty tells of one stalk of grain that had on it between three and four hundred ears. The channels, were brought down to the roots of the corn, and to this habit of turning a river wherever it was wanted, Solomon refers when he says: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and he turneth it as the rivers of water are turned, whithersoever he will."

The wild beasts were caught, and then a horse was put into his nose, and then they were led to the field, and to that God refers when he says to wicked Sennacherib: "I will put a hook in thy nose and I will bring thee back by the way which thou sayest. And God has a hook in every man's nose, whether it be Nebuchadnezzar or Ahab or Herod. He may think himself very independent, but some time in his life, or in the hour of his death, he will find that the Lord Almighty has a hook in his nose."

This was the rule in regard to the culture of the ground: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together," illustrating the folly of ever putting intelligent and useful and reliable men in association with the stubborn and unmanageable. The vast majority of troubles in the churches and in reformatory institutions comes from the disobedient command of the Lord, "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together."

There were large amounts of property invested in cattle. The Mobites paid 100,000 sheep as an annual tax. Job had 7000 sheep, 2000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen. The time of vintage was ushered in with mirth and music. The clusters of the wine were put into the wine press, and then five men would get into the press and tramp out the juice from the grape until their garments were saturated with the wine and had become the emblems of slaughter. Christ Himself, plucking a wild fig tree to the blood of crucifixion, making use of this allusion when the question was asked: "Wherefore art Thou here in this apparel and Thy garments like one who treadeth the wine vat?" He replied: "I have trodden the wine press alone."

In all ages there has been great honor paid to agriculture. Seven-eighths of the people in every country are disciples of the plow. Agriculture is strong in proportion as it is supported by an athletic and industrious yeomanry. So long ago as before the fall of Carthage, Strabo wrote twenty-eight books on agriculture; Hesiod wrote a poem on the same subject; "The Works and Days." Cato was a proponent of his work on husbandry than of all his military conquests. But I must not be tempted into a discussion of agriculture and the plow. Standings mid the harvest and orchards and vineyards of the Bible, and standing amid the harvests and orchards and vineyards of our own country—larger harvests than have ever before been gathered—I think of the analogy between the production of crops and the growth of grace in the soul—all these sacred writers making use of that analogy.

In the first place, I remark, in grace as in the plow, there must be a plow. That which theologians call conviction is only the first share turning up the sins that have been rooted and matted in the soul. A farmer said to his indolent son: "There are a hundred dollars buried deep in that field. The son went to work and plowed the field from fence to fence, and he plowed it very deep, and then complained that he had not been getting the money; but when the crop had been gathered and sold for a hundred dollars more than any previous year, then the young man took the hint as to what his father meant when he said there were a hundred dollars buried down in that field. Deep plowing for a crop. Deep plowing for a soul. He who makes light of sin will never amount to anything in the church or in the world. If a man speaks of sin as though it were an inaccuracy or a mistake, instead of the loathsome, abominable, consistent and damning thing that God hates, that man will never yield a harvest of usefulness.

When I was a boy I plowed a field with a team of spirited horses. I plowed it very quickly. Once in a while I passed over some of the sod without turning it, but I did not jerk back the plow with its rattling device. I thought it made no difference. After awhile my father came along and said, "Why, this will never do; this isn't plowed deep enough; there you have missed this and you have missed that." And he plowed it over again. The difficulty with a great many people is that they are only scratched with conviction when the subsoil plow of God's truth ought to be put in up to the beam.

My word is to all Sabbath-school teachers, to all parents, to all Christian workers—Plow deep! Plow deep! What means all this crooked plowing, these crooked furrows, the repentance that amounts to nothing? Men groan over their sins but get no better. They weep, but their tears are not counted. They get convicted, but not converted. What is the reason? I remember that on the farm we set a standard with a red flag at the other end of the field. We kept our eyes on that. We aimed at that. We plowed up to that. Losing sight of the standard, a crooked furrow. Keeping our eyes on that was a straight furrow. Now in this matter of conviction, we must have some standard to guide us. If we set our standard that God has set at the other end of the field, it is the Cross. Keeping your eyes on that you will make a straight furrow. Losing sight of it you will make a crooked furrow. Plow up to that standard that God has set at the other end of the field, it is the Cross. Aim not at the horizontal piece of the Cross, but at the upright piece, at the centre of it, the heart of the Son of God who bore your sins and made satisfaction. Oying and weeping will not bring you through. "Hinc hinc God

exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance." Oh, plow up to the Cross! Again, I remark, in grace as in the field, there must be a sowing. In the autumnal weather you find the farmer going across the field at a stride of about twenty-three inches, and at every stride he puts his hand into the sack of grain and he sprinkles the seed-corn over the field. It looks silly to a man who does not know what he is doing. He is doing a very important work. He is scattering the winter grain, and though the snow may come, the next year there will be a great crop. Now, that is what we are doing in the harvest of the Gospel—we are scattering the seed. It is the foolishness of preaching, but it is the winter grain, and though the snows of worldliness may come down upon it, it will yield after a while glorious harvest. Let us be sure we sow the right kind of seed. Sow mullen stalk and mullen stalk will come up. Sow Canada thistles and Canada thistles will come up. Sow wheat and wheat will come up. Let us sow the seed of the Gospel. Let us sow the seed of the truth and error. Let us sow the seed of the truth and error. Let us sow the seed of the truth and error.

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until the voices of angels and the voices of our departed kindred and the welcoming voice of God shall send the harvest rolling into the eternal triumph, while all up and down the sky the cry is heard: "Harvest home! harvest home!"

The People of Seville. The people were as gay as the town's too gay, too commercial, too modern. M. Maurice Barres thought Seville. But, fortunately, I was quite prosaic enough to delight at the time in its constant movement and noise and life. The Streets during the day was the center of their gaiety—Seville's Corso or Broadway or Piccadilly. It was here the hottest hours were spent. Under its awnings it was like a pleasant court; for, though peasants might pass with their donkeys, no cart or carriage could ever drive through. In the clubs on each side, their facade nothing but one open window, rows of chairs were always turned toward the street, and always held an audience as entertaining as it was willing to be entertained. The same people who in the evening filled the Plaza Nueva, there to listen to the music, sauntered in and out of the shops, where you could buy the latest French novel or the photograph of the favorite matador. But of this multitude of loungers none seemed to have anything to do except to become violently interested the minute I tried to sketch.—Century.

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SICK NEARLY THIRTY YEARS. BRILLIANT SERVICE IN THE WAR FOLLOWED BY PROLONGED SUFFERING.

High Private Briggs Brings His War-time Valor Into a Life and Death Combat—He Speaks of His Struggles Since the War.

From the Tribune, Honesdale, N. Y. There is no man in Oneida County, New York, who stands higher in the community than Mr. William H. Briggs, a wealthy farmer, and resident of Bridgewater, and a prominent member of the G. A. R. His statement will not be news to his friends, as they all know whereof he writes, but it is commended to the consideration of the public. Mr. Briggs writes as follows:

"It gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to be able to give honor where honor is due, and to that end I make this certificate, hoping it may be the means of others being benefited as I have been.

"I am a farmer residing near Bridgewater, Oneida County, New York; my name is William H. Briggs, and I am 56 years old. I am an old soldier, and member of the G. A. R., having served as high private in Co. A, 1st New York Artillery, during the whole four years of the Rebellion. Though not a pensioner, and never an applicant for pension, I contracted through malarial climate, disease of liver and stomach, from which I suffered continuously, in various forms. In 1893 I had the jaundice, and it continued for years, to a greater or lesser degree. I never was free from dyspepsia, and palpitation of the heart, and suffered from nervous debility to such an extent that I could neither rest by night nor work by day. Night after night I walked the floor tormented by vague fears, which I knew were purely imaginary, and yet I could not shake them off. I came home in June, 1895, and from then until 1898 I was constantly attended by physicians, having employed three at different times during that period. These good doctors gave me occasionally temporary relief, but the good effect of their treatment quickly disappeared, and I grew more despondent and wretched than ever.

"I did not believe in giving up, and was about to send to Utica for another physician, when Mr. H. Siefert, the blacksmith who attends to my horses, recommended to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, as he assured me they had done wonderful things for him. I had read of these pills before and felt greatly tempted to try them, before Siefert spoke of them, but his recommendation settled the matter, and I became Dr. Williams' patient. I took Pink Pills steadily until I have consumed four boxes, growing better and better every day, my liver working freely, my kidneys acting normally. My heart no longer troubled me, and I could sleep at night. All that water brash, heart burn, buzzing in the head, as if there were a great empty space in my cranium, disappeared, and life began to be worth living, which it had not been since my army service. I was cured in less than one year from the time I began to take Pink Pills in 1894, and have been in fair health ever since. Of course, I have to be careful, as I am easily caught cold, and it is apt to settle in my right side, but a dose or two of the Pink Pills will soon set me to rights again, and I shall never be without them, unless something very unforeseen occurs.

"I do not want it understood that I am making any statement as to those who are pensioners. If I were one I should certainly ask for what I am entitled to, but I do not ask for what I am entitled to, but I do not ask for it. My old comrades can testify that I have helped many a one of them to get a pension.

"The above statement is true in every particular. I certify on honor.

Wm. H. Briggs.

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