

THE HARVEST FIELD.

IT INSPIRES DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON ON GOSPEL FARMING.

Noah the First Farmer—The Honor to Agriculture of the Ages—Deep Fallowing For a Soul—The Straight Furrow With God's Standard as a Guide.

Washington, Oct. 25.—This sermon at this season, after most people have had a good, long breath of the country, if they do not actually live there, will revive many pleasant memories, while it deals with great religious truths. Dr. Talmage's text was John xv, 1, "My Father is the husbandman."

This last summer, having gone 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 on Saturday to the mill, trying the grist in the centre of the sack so that the contents on either side the horse balanced each other, and drove the cattle ahead, our bare feet wet with dew, and rode the horses with the halter to the brook until we fell off, and hunted the now 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 lads on 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. The Bible is full of them. In Christ's sermon on the mount you could see the all blown mill and the glossy black of the crow's wing as it flies over Mount Olivet. David and John, Paul and Isaiah lived 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. Eliza was an agriculturist, not cultivating a tobacco lot, for we find him plowing with 12 yokes 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, if cultivated, ever after to be his own possession, just as in Nebraska the United States Government, on payment of \$16, years ago gave preemption right to 160 acres to any man who would settle there and cultivate the soil.

All classes of people were expected to cultivate ground except ministers of religion. It was supposed that they would have their time entirely occupied with their own profession, although I am told that sometimes ministers do plunge so deeply into worldliness that they remind one of what Thomas Frasier said in regard to a man in his day who preached very well, but lived very ill. "When he is out of the pulpit, it is a pity he should ever go into it, and when he is in the pulpit, it is a pity he should ever come out of it."

They were not small crops raised in those times, for though the arts were rude, the plow turned up very rich soil, and barley and cotton and flax and all kinds of grain came up at the call of the harrow. Pliny tells of one stalk of grain that had on it between three and four hundred ears. The rivers and the brooks, through artificial 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 hook was put into their nose, and then they were led over the field and to that God refers when He says to wicked Sodomites, "I will put a hook in thy nose and I will bring thee back by the way which thou camest." And God has a hook in every man's nose, whether it be Nebuchadnezzar or Ahab or Herod. He can think himself very independent, but sometime 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 a part of the 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 pliable men in association with the stubborn and the unmanageable. The vast majority of troubles in the churches and in reformatory institutions comes from the disregard of this 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 Moabites paid 100,000 sheep as an annual tax. Job had 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yokes of oxen. The time of vintage was ushered in with mirth and music. The clusters of the vine were put into the wine presses, and then five men would get into the press and trample out the juice from the grape until their garments were saturated with the wine and had become the emblems of slaughter. Christ Himself, wounded until covered with the blood of crucifixion, making users. Pliny tells of when the question was asked, "Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel and Thy garments like one who treadeth the wine vat?" He responded, "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. A government 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 28 books on agriculture. Hesiod wrote a poem on the same subject, "The Works and Days." Cato was prouder of his work on husbandry than of all his military conquests. But I must not be tempted into a discussion on agricultural contentions. Standing amid the harvests 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 want to run out 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 fields, there must be a plow. That which the theologians call conviction is only the plowshare turning on

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 found 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 deep in that field. Deep plowing for grace. 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, absorbing, consuming 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 very quickly. Once in a while I passed over some of the seed without turning it, but I did not jerk back the plow with its rattling devices. I thought it made no difference. After awhile my father came along and said: "Why, this will never do. This isn't plowing deep enough. There you've 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 subsol plow of God's truth ought to be put in up to the ears.

My word is to all Sabbath School teachers, to all parents, to all Christian workers: Plow deep; plow deep!

But what means all this crooked plowing, these crooked furrows, the repentance that ends in 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 eye on that. We aimed at that. We plowed up to that. Losing sight of that, we made a crooked furrow. Keeping our eye on that, we made a straight furrow. Now, this matter of conviction, we must have some standard to guide us. It is a red standard that God has set at the other end of the field. It is the cross. Keeping your eye on that, you will make a straight furrow, and you will make a crooked furrow. Plow up to the cross. Aim not at its other end of the horizontal piece of the cross, but at the upright piece, at the center of it, the heart of the Son of God who bore your sins and made satisfaction. Crying and weeping will not bring you through. "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and 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 23 inches, and at every stride he puts his hand into the sack of grain and he sprinkles the seed 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 when we are preaching 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 glorious harvest. Let us not know what we are doing. 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 distinguish between truth and error. Let us move the difference between wheat and hellbore, oats and henbane.

Again, I remark, in grace, as in the farm, there must be a reaping. Many Christians speak of religion as though it were a matter of economics or inheritance. They expect to reap in the next world. Oh, oh! Now is the time to reap. Gather up the joy of the Christian religion this morning, this afternoon, this night. If you have not as much grace as you would like to have, thank God for what you have, and pray for more. You are no worse enslaved than Joseph, no worse troubled than was David, no worse scourged than was Paul. Yet, amid the rattling fetters, and amid the gloom of dungeons, and amid the horror of shipwreck, they triumphed in the grace of God. The weakest man in the house to-day has 500 acres of spiritual joy all ripe. Why do you not go and reap it?

Again, I remark, in grace, as in farming, there is a time for threshing. I tell you bluntly that is death. Just as the farmer with a flail beats the wheat out of the straw, so death beats the soul out of the body. Every sickness is a stroke of the flail, and the sickbed is the threshing floor. What say you, is death to a good man only taking the wheat out of the straw? That is all. An aged man has fallen asleep. All yesterday you saw him in his sunny porch playing with his grandchildren, calmly he received the messenger to leave this world. He bade a pleasant goodbye to his old friends, the telegraph carries the tidings, and on swift rail trains the kindred come, wanting once more to look on the face of dear old grandfather. Brush back the gray hairs from his brow; it will never ache again. Put him away in the stumber of the tomb; he will not be afraid of that night. Grandfather was never afraid of anything. He will be never asleep in the morning of the resurrection. Grandfather was already the first to rise. His voice has always mingled in the doxology of heaven, singing Father always did sing in church. Anything ghostly in that? No. The threshing of the wheat out of the straw. That is all.

The Saviour folds a lamb in his bosom. The little child filled all the house with her music, and her toys are scattered all up and down the stairs just as she left them. What if the

hand that plucked four o'clocks out of the meadow is still? It will wave in the eternal triumph. What if the voice that sang music in the home is still? It will sing the eternal hosanna. Put a white rose in one hand, a red rose in the other hand, and a wreath of orange blossoms on the forehead, the white flower for the victory, the last from the Saviour's sacrifice, the orange blossoms for her marriage day. Anything ghostly about that? Oh, no! The sun went down, and the flower shut. The wheat thrashed out of the straw. "Dear Lord, give me sleep," said a dying boy, the son of one of my elders; "dear Lord, give me sleep." And he closed his eyes and awoke in glory. Henry W. Longfellow, writing a letter of condolence to those parents, said: "Those last words were beautifully poetic." And Mr. Longfellow knew what it meant. "Dear Lord, give me sleep."

It was not in cruelty, not in wrath. That the reaper came that day, that an angel that visited earth, and took the flowers of the world. So it may be with us when our work is all done. "Dear Lord, give me sleep."

I have one more thought to present. I have spoken of the plowing, of the sowing, of the harrowing, of the reaping, of the threshing. I must now speak a moment of the garnering. Where is the garner? Need I tell you? Oh, no! So many have gone out from your own circles—yes, from your own family—that you have for a year, what a hard time some of them had! In Gethsemane of suffering they sweat great drops of blood. They took the "cup of trembling," and they put it to their lips, and drank, and said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." With tongues of burning agony they cried, "O, Lord, deliver my soul!" But they got over it. They got over it. Garnered! Their tears wiped away; their battles all ended; their burdens all lifted. Garnered! The Lord of the harvest will not allow those sheaves to perish in the eunox. Garnered! Some of us remember on the farm that the sheaves were put on the top of the rack which surmounted the wagon, and these sheaves were piled higher and higher, and after awhile the horses started for the barn, and these sheaves swayed to and fro in the wind, and the old wagon creaked, and the horses made a struggle, and pulled so hard the harnesses broke in loops of leather on their backs, and when the front wheel struck the elevated door of the barn it seemed as if the load would go no farther until the workmen gave a great shout, and then with one last tremendous strain the horses pulled in the load. Then they were unharnessed, and forlorn after forlorn of grain fell into the mow. Oh, my friends, our getting to heaven may be a hard pull, a very hard pull, but these sheaves are bound to go in. The Lord of the harvest has promised it. I see the load at last coming to the door of the heavenly garner. The sheaves of the Christian soul sway to and fro in the wind of death, and the welcoming voice of God shall send the harvest rolling into the eternal triumph, while all up and down home! Harvest home!

Curved by Lightning. Not many people have cause to rejoice over being struck by lightning, save those who had death as a joyful deliverance. (Reference is not made here to presidential lightning, to receive which lightning rods are always out.) Let us know the exceptions. Col. Charles C. Corbett of New York is the one exception of note. The colonel was paralyzed some years ago. His entire right side was affected, his face distorted, and for years he remained a cripple, but he recovered, and finally taken to Providence, R.I., to die among friends. But he did not die. He was struck by lightning and when picked up was supposed to be dead. When he revived, however, his paralysis had disappeared. He could walk as well as ever. The facial distortion was gone. He was a whole man and a well one. Here is a tip to the electrical healers. If mild doses of the fluid have no effect, give the patient a knock-out blow, and let electric light current on him and if he doesn't die, he will probably get well. That's the best a doctor can do, anyway. That recalls the story of the doctor who promised to kill or cure a patient. She died and he had to sue her husband for his fee.

"Did you not promise to kill or cure?" the widower asked. "Well, I did the best I could," "Did you cure her?" "No, I—"

"Did you kill her?" "And rather than answer the doctor dismissed the case.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

News of the Modes. The popularity of dark red seems to be assured. The correct walking boot is to have a broad sole this winter. Sailor hats, trimmed with plaid taffeta ribbon, are very popular for fall wear.

"Schen-schin" is the newest shade of pink. It is the color of Japanese roses when they first begin to bloom. For evening gowns net is being used in great profusion. It is not treated in its most extravagant fashion, with trimmings of steel or jewels of jet. In jewelry, rubies, diamonds and black pearls are a combination much in vogue. Diamond thistles for the hair are the latest, and among the diamonds are twisted silken threads of many colors.

Preserved Eggs. "Fresh Eggs from China" is a conspicuous sign posted in the windows of many of the Chinese stores and restaurants in New York. Only the Chinamen notice it, for it is posted in queer characters of their language. The eggs are a delicate dish that come among the queer things that are imported from the Celestial Kingdom are the fresh duck eggs. Thousands of them passed through the Custom House during the last month.

Each egg is wrapped in a mass of black mud that retains its putty-like consistency for months, even when exposed to the air. They come in boxes holding twenty-five Chinamen's dozen. Everything that comes from China is purchased by tons. The eggs are as fresh as when they started from China.

NEW ERA IN ARMING

THE WONDERFUL NEW WORLD OPENED UP TO THE STUDENT.

The Learned Professors Will Be a Dull Life to Engaging in the Improved and Educated Culture of the Soil—Science Again Leads the Way.

Discoveries tread close on each other in the realm of microscopic organisms. It is but a few years since the words "microbe" and "bacteria" were made a part of our language. It will not be long before farmers will say my microbes as freely as they say my pigs or my hens or my cows. For it is no longer the injurious bacteria that are studied, but the advantageous; and it is known that no phase of plant life can go on successfully without the intervention of these microscopic aids. So it is to microbes again that we owe the chemical changes that characterize the dairy. The changes from fresh milk to butter are due to the action of useful bacteria. To sterilize milk will keep it fresh for weeks; to expose it to bacteria will hasten its changes of form and quality. Milk is Pasteurized or demicrobized by heating it up to about 140 degrees Fahrenheit. This kills the bacteria, after which they must be excluded by tight bottling. The air is simply an ever full laboratory of these minute organisms; they operate on everything, ourselves included. Health as well as disease is due to invisible neighbors, and especially we are learning that cultivation consists not simply in stirring and in feeding the soil, but in adding to it or removing from it those bacteria that affect plant growth. This will not be long before every farmer will have what he may call his bacteria stable, as much as he now has his horse stable. In fact, we are likely to lose our horses, but not be able to get on without the microbes. Such a stable or room will hold not only apparatus and substances for destroying fungoid attacks that destroy the right vital processes of plants, but it will hold "cultures" of beneficial microbes. These can be preserved in various conditions, as yeast is prepared for the kitchen, or "pure cultures" of bacteria for the dairyman.

The most recent discovery along this line is that of the famous Professor Nobbe of Saxony. He has made it his specialty to prepare what we might call farmers' yeasts, or bacteria, useful for plant growth in such form that a farmer may sow it in his field, or otherwise bring it into contact with the seed that he grows in the grove. It is only a few years since it was found that the leguminous plants, by some means, could directly extract nitrogen from the air. On the roots of the bean plant, and on those of the clover, there are parasitic growths, which later become passive, and then the bacteria permeate the clover or the bean plant, and give a new faculty—that of nitrogen-fixation. But it is not the same bacteria that aids the clover and the bean. It is clear that if this power could be transferred, or inoculated, just as we inoculate flour with yeast, it would be of great value to agriculture. A new field of experiment was opened. Hereafter it would be sought not only to destroy mischievous bacteria, but to multiply and transplant the useful. It was found that where bacteria had worked in co-operation with beans or clover the soil was enriched with nitrogen. The soil was poorer, and that which soil could be sowed upon and worked into other soil brought in nitrogen to give it power to extract nitrogen from the air. This was to cultivate and sow the nitrogen-fixing bacteria. But it took from fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds of such prepared soil to fertilize an acre. This was expensive, and practically nullified the utility of the discovery.

Professor Nobbe set about endeavoring to secure a culture, that is a pure product of bacteria, or what you might call a bacterial yeast, which could be bottled and carried about and stored and planted in any soil where it might be wanted. The news now comes that he has succeeded, and that what he calls "Nitragin" is now for sale. It can be had for a very small sum indeed—enough to nitrogenize an acre for less than \$2. This pure culture is placed in contact with the soil before the latter is sown, or is itself sown and worked into the soil to a depth of three inches. The culture, which we might just as well call yeast, is kept in bottles, and must not be exposed to light or to heat above 58 degrees Fahrenheit.

This opens the door only. Who can imagine the possibilities ahead? Our present system of fertilization is shockingly costly and wasteful. But here is an inexpensive method for making a good soil for leguminous plants, including clovers. The fertility of soil depends on stocking it with certain kinds of bacteria. Pasteur demonstrated that the decomposition of organic matter and its preparation in recombination was due to micro-organisms. Remove these entirely, and chemical action was stopped almost indefinitely. Our fields are literally alive, if fertile, with bacteria—over twelve hundred millions to an ounce of soil. All these are busy preparing food for our plants; reducing it to assimilable forms. Without these any soil is barren. We know very little about these infinitesimal forces, but it is encouraging when we can differentiate one from the crowd and subject it to our will. This is what Professor Nobbe has done with the Nitragin. The field is open for almost infinite experiment and victories. It is not improbable that in the near future the farmer will have a dozen of these cultures, or yeasts, each one well understood, bottled and labelled and in his microbe stable ready for use. All this is in the same line as the housewife's compressed yeast. It is a compromise to the work done by the first-class dairyman, who now brings your milk, not in old tin cans, swarming with bacteria, but in glass bottles, sterilized by heat, and free from putrefaction. Bacteria is entering—has already entered—on a new era. Its depression has been owing to neglect. Learning spent its force for a long while on Greek roots and theological tangles; it is now applying the larger share of its attention to affairs underfoot. The new world of micro-organisms was not discovered until within a half century. It is now rapidly growing and multiplying, that world we have already found, the key to our manifold diseases, and much

of our power and health as well; and there, too, is the key to success in plant and animal culture. It will be impossible to revive farming on the old basis of guesswork and moon cult; everything will be done scientifically. It may be as well to add that bacteriology will drag a dull life beside it. Trading, and even manufacturing, will be comparatively uninteresting. Our boys will see that the real end of life is not to pile up money. A laboratory will be as common as a kitchen. I am in doubt which will most add to the future glory and charm of farm life, the development of electrical power or of chemistry applied to bacteriology. It may be as well to just that bacteriology touches us just as closely in the house as in the field. I have used the sterilization of milk as an illustration. The necessity, however, is just as great for meeting the great army of infinitesimal microbes in other articles of food. As friends or as foes they enter our meats and our fruits, and are even in our eggs, and above all, in our water. Sometimes classified as the harmless and the harmful, it is a fact that the most common bacteria may be at times either injurious or the opposite. The necessity of cleanliness gets a new sort of emphasis when we learn that bacteria of a viciously bad sort breed in dirty dishcloths, in dirty mops, in uncleaned closets, and especially in stop holes and about cesspools. Drainage that fills the soil to a surfeit, or overspurs of manure, develops millions of micro-organisms ready for mischief. They breed in our intestinal tracts, in uncleaned mouths, in spittoons. The laws that forbid spitting in public places are laws against invisible, but intensely fatal foes. Water standing in a tainted atmosphere for only a short time loses its fitness to be incorporated with the human system. The whole subject of bacteriology as affecting animal and plant life and growth and disease and decay should become a part of the common school studies. The abstruseness of the subject is only from its novelty.—E. P. Powell, in N. Y. Independent.

ANECDOTE OF DU MAURIER. Apropos of the late gifted artist-actor of "Trilby" John A. Fraser tells this of the halcyon days of their youth, says the New York Journal. Both were gifted by inheritance with voices far above the average quality, and as songs birds, despite of everything to the contrary, will sing simply because they must, the two youngsters, while drawing from the statuery in the British Museum on students' days, which are understood to be strictly private, were wont, in violation of rules, to make that high-toned and conservative department sacred to the classics of ancient Greece and Rome, ring with their voices attuned to sweet melody. Those were the days when Anker's "Masseletto" was the vogue. From the throats of the two students the strains of the famous barcarole, "Behold! How Brightly Beams the Morning," floated in mellifluous waves of sound; Du Maurier, the more scientific, was wont, in violation of rules, to make that high-toned and conservative department sacred to the classics of ancient Greece and Rome, ring with their voices attuned to sweet melody. Those were the days when Anker's "Masseletto" was the vogue.

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