

"The Tillage of the Poor."

By REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D. D.

Much food is in the tillage of the poor."—Proverbs 13: 23.

Palatinate was a land of small peasant proprietors, and the institution of the Jubilee was intended to prevent the acquisition of large estates by any Israelite. The consequences, as intended, was a level of modest prosperity. It was "the tillage of the poor," the careful, diligent husbandry of the man who had only a little patch of land to look after, that filled the storehouses of the Holy Land. Hence the proverb of our text arose. It presents the picture of the economical conditions in which it originated, and it is capable of, and is intended to have, an application to all forms (and fields) of work. In all it is true that the bulk of the harvested results are due, not to the large labors of the few, but to the minute, unnoticed toils of the many. Small service is true service, and the aggregate of such produces large crops. Spade husbandry gets most out of the ground. The laborer's allotment of half an acre is generally more prolific than the average of the squire's estate. Much may be made of slender gifts, small resources, and limited opportunities if carefully cultivated, as they should be, and as their very slenderness should stimulate their being.

One of the psalms accuses "the children of Ephraim" because, "being armed and carrying bows, they turned back in the day of battle." That saying deduces obligation from equipment, and preaches a stringent code of duty to those who are in any direction largely gifted. Power to its last particle is duty, and not small is the crime of those who, with great capacities, have small desire to use them, and leave the brunt of the battle to half-trained soldiers, badly armed.

But the imagery of the fight is not sufficient to include all aspects of Christian effort. The peaceful toil of the "husbandman that labors" stands, in one of Paul's letters, side by side with the heroism of the "man that warreth." Our text gives us the former image, and so supplements that other.

It completes the lesson of the psalm in another respect, as insisting on the importance, not of the well-endowed, but of the slenderly-furnished, who are immensely in the majority. Our text is a message to ordinary, mediocre people, without much ability or influence.

It teaches, first, the responsibility of small gifts.

It is no mere accident that in our Lord's great parable He represents the man with the one talent as the holder of his gift. There is a certain pleasure in doing what we can do, or fancy we can do well. There is a certain pleasure in the exercise of any kind of gift, be it of body or mind; but when we know that we are but very slightly gifted by Him, there is a temptation to say, "Oh, it does not matter much whether I contribute my share to this, that, or the other work or no. I am but a poor man. My half-crown will make but a small difference in the total. I am possessed of very little leisure. The few minutes that I can spare for individual cultivation, or for benevolent work, will not matter at all. I am only an insignificant unit; nobody pays any attention to my opinion. It does not matter at all, signify whether I make my influence felt in regard of social, religious, or political questions, and the like. I can leave all that to the more influential men. My littleness at least has the prerogative of impunity. My finger would produce such a slight impact on the scale that it is indifferent whether I apply it or not. It is a good deal easier for me to wrap up my talent—which, after all, is not a threepenny bit, and not a talent—and put it away and do nothing."

Yes, but then you forget, dear friend, that responsibility does not diminish with the size of the gifts, and that there is as great responsibility for the use of the smallest as there is for the use of the largest, and that although it may not matter very much what you do to any body but yourself, it matters all the world to you.

But then, besides that, my text tells you that it does not matter whether the poor man sets himself to make the most of his little patch of ground or not. "There is much food in the tillage of the poor." The slenderly endowed are the immense majority. There is a genius or two here and there, dotted along the line of the world's and the church's history. The great men and wise men and mighty men and wealthy men may be counted by units, but the men that are not very much of anything are to be counted by millions. And unless we can find some stringent law of responsibility that applies to them, the bulk of the human race will be under no obligation to do anything either for God or for their fellows, or for themselves. If I am absolved from the task of bringing my weight to bear on the side of right because my weight is infinitesimal, and I am only one in a million, suppose all the million were to plead the same excuse: what then? Then there would not be any weight on the side of the right at all. The barns in Palestine were not filled by farming on a great scale like that pursued away out on the western prairies, where one man will own, and his servants will plough, a furrow for miles long, but they were filled by the small industries of the owners of tiny patches.

The "tillage of the poor," meaning thereby, not the mendicant, but the peasant-owner of a little plot, yielded the bulk of the "food." The wise old proverb, "many little make a mickle" is as true about the influence brought to bear in the world to arrest evil and to sweeten corruption as it is about anything besides. Christ has a great deal more need of the cultivation of the smallest patches that He gives to the most of us than He has even in the cultivation of the large estates that He bestows on a few. Responsibility is not to be measured by amount of gift, but is equally stringent, entire, and absolute, whatsoever be the magnitude of the endowment from which it arises.

Let me remind you, too, how the same virtues and excellencies can be practised in the administering of the smallest as in that of the greatest gifts. I dare say some of you have said—"Oh! if I were eloquent like So-and-so; rich like somebody else; a man of weight and importance like some

other, how I would consecrate my powers to the Master. But I am slow of speech, or nobody minds me, or I have very little that I can give. Yes! "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." If you do not utilize the capacity possessed to increase the estate, would only be to increase the crop of weeds from its uncultivated clove. We never palm off a greater deception on ourselves than when we try to hoodwink conscience by pleading narrow gifts as an excuse for boundless indolence, and to persuade ourselves that if we could do more we should be less inclined to do nothing. The most largely endowed has no more obligation and no fairer field than the most slenderly gifted lies under and possesses.

All service coming from the same motive and tending to the same end is the same with God. Not the magnitude of the act, but the motive thereof, determines the whole character of the life of which it is a part. The same grace of obedience, consecration, quick sympathy, self-denying effort may be manifested and manifested in the dealing out of a half-penny as in the administration of millions. The smallest raindrop in the tiniest drop that hangs from some sooty cave and catches the sunlight has precisely the same lines, in the same order, as the great rain that strikes across the sky. If you go to the Giant's Causeway, or to the other end of it amongst the Scotch Hebrides, you will find the hexagonal basaltic pillars all identically the same pattern and shape, whether their height be measured by feet or by tens of an inch. Big or little, they obey exactly the same law. There is "much food in the tillage of the poor."

But now, note, again, how there must be a diligent cultivation of the small gifts, or of its expenditure, or the exactness of science is impossible. We can compel conclusions in mathematics when once our terms are understood. But as to many of the infinite reaches of truth in the Christian Scriptures, we see through a glass darkly. Concerning the fundamental principles of truth vital to salvation, the Christian world is pretty much agreed. The essential doctrines he that runs may read. God has not left even the lame, the blind, the impotent, the imbecile, in any uncertainty as to what they must do to be saved. But outside these indispensable doctrines are systems of truth, about whose Scripturalness equally good men and equally able men radically differ. You will hear something of these systems, and you will be taught the only way to make up your mind, for this Seminary intently believes in, and teaches as the Word of God, the system of truth commonly known as the Reformed or Calvinistic system. Our church has embodied this in its profession of Faith, and most nearly expressing the mind of God revealed in His Word.

But no human system will probably ever compass the whole of revealed truth. And there are heights and depths of truth that baffles logic, infinities, and mysteries cannot be put in logical finite form with the absolute assurance that that form contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The peril incident to life here, is that in the honest, sincere, and entirely legitimate pretensions of a system, you may come to accept it as if it were all God's truth. Nay, that in the presentation of a particular view of truth within the system, you may come to hold that particular view as if it were the system itself. It is the home of orthodoxy. It is along just this line bigots are born. I warn you against this peril of narrowness. Truth is broad. Be broad indeed in your attitude toward it. Have positive convictions, but hold them with only as much of the Christian year as discussion. Welcome it from any quarter.

"Shame to stand in God's creation, And doubt Truth's sufficiency." Remember, no system devised by man can embrace all the infinities and sovereignties of Scripture; can be anything more than an approximation to the complete thought of God. Remember, also, that a greater proportion of Christendom, endowed with learning and rich with men of keen intellect and sound judgment, hold those views which only is the home of orthodoxy. It is along just this line bigots are born. I warn you against this peril of narrowness. Truth is broad. Be broad indeed in your attitude toward it. Have positive convictions, but hold them with only as much of the Christian year as discussion. Welcome it from any quarter.

Who are they who have done the most in this world for God and for men? The largely endowed men? No. Not many, not many mighty, not many noble are called. The coral insect is microscopic, but it will build up the profoundest depth of the ocean a reef against which the whole Pacific may dash in vain. The small gifts that, after all, are the important ones. So let us cultivate them the more earnestly, the more humbly we think of our own capacity. Play well thy part; there all the honor lies. God, who has builded up some of the towering Alps out of mica flakes, will build up His church of infinitesimally small particles—slenderly endowed men touched by the consecration of His love.

III. Lastly, let me remind you of the harvest reaped from these slender gifts when sedulously tilled. The great results of such conscientious cultivation and use of our resources and opportunities may be suggested as included in that abundant "food" of which the text speaks. The faithfully used faculty increases. To him that "hath shall be given." "Oh, if I had a wider sphere how I would fling my best in your little sphere, and that will bring a wider one some time or other. For, as a rule, and in the general, though with exceptions, opportunities come to the man that can use them; and roughly he will be under no obligation to set in this world where they exist to the most advantage to God. Fill your place; and if you, like Paul, have borne witness for the Master in little Jerusalem, He will not keep you there, but carry you to bear witness for Him in imperial Rome itself.

The old fable of the man who told his children to dig all over the field and they would find treasure, has its true application in regard of Christian effort and faithful stewardship of the gifts bestowed upon us. The word, found no gold, but they improved the field, and secured its bearing golden harvests, and they strengthened their own muscles, which was better than gold. So, if we want larger endowments, let us honestly use what we possess, and we will make growth.

The other issue, about which I need not say more than a word, is that the final reward of all faithful service—"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"—is said, not to the brilliant, but to the "faithful" servant. That great parable, which is the very text-book of the whole subject of gifts and responsibilities and recompense, the men who were entrusted with unequal sums used these unequal sums with equal diligence, as is manifest by the fact that they realized an equal rate of increase. He that of two talents made two more out of them, and he that had five did no more; for he, too, but doubled his capital. So, because the poorer servant with his two, and the richer one with his ten, had equally cultivated their diversely-measured estates, they were identical in reward; and to each of them the same

thing is said: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It matters little whether we copy a big side of a house, or upon a thumb-nail; the main thing is that we copy it. If we truly employ whatsoever gifts God has given to us, then we shall be accepted according to that we have, and not according to that we have not.

Dr. Henrick Johnson on Broadness and Narrowness in Theology.

Dr. Henrick Johnson was the speaker at the recent opening of the McCormick Theological Seminary, in Chicago, and as a matter of course, he had something to say well worth hearing by the students and the more mature portion of his large audience. He took as his theme, "Some Perils Incident to Theological Seminary Life," all which he commented upon in a spirit of mingled sympathy and admonition. Portions of this timely discourse have been published, but not, so far as we have observed, those gathering under, all things considered, the two most timely and important divisions, viz: the peril of "Theological Narrowness" on the one hand, and of "Theological Broadness" on the other. We here quote these portions, sure that they will be widely and eagerly read. Touching Theological Narrowness, Dr. Johnson said:

The field of theology is broad. In the treatment of its branches, and in the exactness of science is impossible. We can compel conclusions in mathematics when once our terms are understood. But as to many of the infinite reaches of truth in the Christian Scriptures, we see through a glass darkly. Concerning the fundamental principles of truth vital to salvation, the Christian world is pretty much agreed. The essential doctrines he that runs may read. God has not left even the lame, the blind, the impotent, the imbecile, in any uncertainty as to what they must do to be saved. But outside these indispensable doctrines are systems of truth, about whose Scripturalness equally good men and equally able men radically differ. You will hear something of these systems, and you will be taught the only way to make up your mind, for this Seminary intently believes in, and teaches as the Word of God, the system of truth commonly known as the Reformed or Calvinistic system. Our church has embodied this in its profession of Faith, and most nearly expressing the mind of God revealed in His Word.

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There is now a settled distinction in Italy between the words Vatican and Catholicism, and this distinction exists, less generally, perhaps, between the words Roman Catholic and Catholic. This distinction is constantly prominent in legal enactments, in newspaper discussion, and in the mind of patriotic or ambitious citizens. The Vatican is a political entity. To be a patriot is almost necessarily to break with the papacy. Leo XIII. yet demands a supremacy. After the twentieth of September, 1870, Pope Pius IX. said: "I do not see one ray of light," referring to his restoration to temporal power. The successor, Leo, seems to see light, but from what quarter does not appear. It is currently reported here that he is now endeavoring through secret negotiations with France to drive King Humbert from Rome, and break the unity of Italy. These efforts have been so continuous on the part of the Vatican as to be common talk and belief. Devout Romanists agree to the facts, but plead the right of temporal supremacy. Patriots deplore these conspiracies and the pope. An entire and carefully made class of 22,000,000 Italians, out of a population of 33,000,000, outside of the church of Rome. The entire army must be practically against the Vatican, for the Vatican is the enemy it fights. Chaplains for the army are discontinued because the priests are against the government. Theological chairs in the universities have been abolished. All officials—and there is a great host of them—must be opposed to temporal supremacy.

In parliament there is no Catholic party and votes on matters connected with the papacy are practically unanimous. The citizen of England is not better protected in religious liberty than the citizen of Italy. These things, and a multitude of others like them, show consistently that even priests and monks in Italy can hardly be called Roman Catholics. Count Campello lately was passing near Valnerina, when stones were thrown at him with shouts of "brute Protestants." The next day he addressed the people in the market-place, and showed how the Roman church was departed from early Christianity, how the Pope had now conspired against the government, against education, against liberty of conscience, etc. To these points the people almost unanimously assented, and invited the count to remain among them.

An intelligent Italian has said, "We are opposed to Romanism for three reasons: First, intellectual: the priests are ignorant and the people are worse; second, political: the church is the enemy of civil liberty and Italian unity; third, ethical: it is a conceded fact that secret vice is general among the clergy." "We Italians are not Christian," said another. "We know nothing really about Christ; we are pagans."

ANTY-ROMISH GRASSES. Many grasses are going on in Italy that permanently injure the church and to affect adversely the Romish church.

The broadness that sets down all bars, that belittles the Gospel of a savior, and light only that, thinks sin can be transformed by a lullaby, that calls "love" "the greatest thing in the world," and that is heard crying in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, "Give us less of Calvin and more of Christ," enters widely into the spirit of the times, and takes on every alluring guise to many a student now on his way to the ministry. But a broadness that embraces everything, and leaves us no definiteness of belief and no positiveness of conviction, is infidel to truth. Truth is large, but truth is mainly definite. Christ without truth is a phantom Christ. The Son of God and the Truth of God are one. Shade away the distinctiveness of truth, and you put Christ in shadow. The view outlined is wanting that ever since Paul has given birth to the avowal, "I know whom I have believed." A bold, brave, confident faith, is a definite faith.

This Seminary stands for no breadth that cannot put itself in definite form in the hearing of the people, and that the breadth of Presbyterianism is that it unchurches no Christian, and unrocks no minister. But it has a definite theology to teach, and that theology is Calvinistic. We believe in the Calvinistic theology, because we most nearly express the anything formulated in human language what we believe is the mind of God in the Scriptures. And the belief is known by its fruits. Impalpable and shadowy souls are not born of it. The men it has fashioned are the men of nerve, of high conviction, of distinguished courage, rooted as the oaks. So, while I warn you against the peril of a narrowness that would make you bigots, I warn you also against the peril of a broadness that would empty your souls of conviction and your lives of victory. The heroes of a heavenly commission know what they believe. Only get your knowledge bathed in the spirit of Christ's Cross and passion, so that you will look out of His eyes at men who do not believe as you do, and then the positive assurance of your convictions will be no bar, but a help to a wide effectiveness.—Evan Geist.

Across the Great Sea.

At the northeast of the city of Rome is a gate called Porta del Popolo. In this gate on the twentieth day of September, 1870, the troops under Victor Emmanuel made a break, and through it entered the city. "We are here," said the king, "and here will remain."

Twenty-one years have passed since that memorable entrance, and the Italian city is now solidly united, and the eternal city is her capital. The name of the avenue that passes through Porta Pia going north, in the opposite direction, leads to the Quirinal Hill, and the royal palace thereon. It is called the Via Settembre (20th September).

The organized forces within the walls of Rome that withstood the victorious king was the army of the Vatican. After twenty years it is still true that the only considerable power that opposes Italian unity is the Vatican.

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Among these are to be noted the "night hawks" of the working men's guild. Throughout Italy these schools are educating the youth, and indeed, many who are long past youth, in books and in useful art. The very existence of these schools beyond clerical control speaks volumes of a change in the right direction, and the education of the working classes means liberation from that superstition which is now the right hand influence of papacy. Another change is in the circulation of the whole Bible in the language of the people, and its circulation. An Italian publisher lately ventured to print a very cheap edition of the Scriptures. It was a remarkable success. The people bought it to such an extent that the street paper-stalls kept it on sale. On such a stand in Florence I saw them waiting for a few cents. The Vatican is greatly troubled about this popular reception of the Scriptures, and it is said, contemplates sending out a Bible of its own. It is a grave dilemma to the papacy. Shall the church give the Bible to the people and thereby the record of centuries, or shall others give them the Bible and thus win them from the church? Another change is commercial. It is as yet not general but particular. In Venice the German influence is growing steadily in trade. Russia, Austria, especially Jews, are buying the best property in Venice, are getting control of the business of the city, are repairing old buildings, and are starting new enterprises. "They are making the city," say the case-loving Venetians. The cleaning up spirit is catching. St. Mark's is undergoing extensive repairs, and the dirt of centuries is being cleaned from the palace of the Doges. Other parts of Italy are similarly affected by commercial advances. Rooms are no longer to be had in the city, and the capital are on a grand scale, and give no cheer to the Vatican. On the northern spur of the Capitoline hill extensive excavations for a piazza, and extensive constructions of foundations, arches, platforms, etc., are in progress. These are to grow into a worthy monument for King Victor Emmanuel. Throughout the city streets are being widened, straightened and extended by the removal of buildings. The names of avenues are being changed from those of Romulus to those of patriots, e. g. to the Victor Emmanuel, via Garibaldi, via King Humbert, etc.

This changing of names, indeed, is true of every city in Italy. Monuments are being erected by popular subscription to men who have been buried at the stake by the Romish church, to Savonarola at Florence; to Arnaldo da Brescia; to Fra Paolo Scarpi in Venice. Yesterday, while riding in a "bus" through the square, where the monument of Giordano Bruno stands over the spot upon which was burned for heresy, an Italian woman sitting behind me, brightened up with animation and action, pointed to the monument and said excitedly, "See! Bruno! Bruno! Ah, Bruno!" That these burnings of good men, so multitudinous in the past, were wicked murders, is settling to conviction in the Italian heart.

THE LOTTERY.

It is not generally known in the United States that the Italian government carries on an extensive business in lotteries. It is a department of the government which brings in annually a revenue of about 75,000,000 lire. The system is so thorough, so familiar to town and in every ward of larger cities there are from one or more lottery offices. Outside these offices, on a white ground, are printed the lucky numbers of the last draw; within is a book looking like a large directory, in which can be found nearly every word familiar to common life and to each word a number attached. The usual method in selecting a number is to take some event or thing and stake the money on its number. If a poor beggar gave a frank he is held to half of it in the lottery on the number of such words as "charity," "kindness," "luck." If he dreams some unusual dream he takes a chance on "dream" or some prominent particular in his dream. If a great fire occurs, the next day hundreds of people take such words as "fire," "disaster," "burned," etc. A family in Naples had a son killed in a street fight. A few days after they selected four words suggested by the circumstances of the murderous affair and put up all the money they could gather. They won and were comforted.

The Italian lottery is one of the curses of Italy's degraded people. It is astonishing what a fascination this lottery business has for the poor. I stood over-to-day in front of a lottery office and saw what can be seen every day in the year and every hour in the day, in every city in Italy, a poor bare-headed woman standing before the desk searching her pocket for the copper she needed for bread that she might pay for the number she had selected. Here in Naples poverty has reached nakedness and has embraced half the population of this largest city of the nation, and the national lottery helps it on. As in the United States the government feeds vice for revenue from the liquor traffic, so in Italy poverty and crime are fostered for the sake of revenue. The papers to-day announce an increase of 55,000 lire in the lottery revenue for the month of August.—Gilbert Frederick, in the Standard.

Dr. Lyman Beecher, one stormy, snowy night, preached to a lone hearer, who went away after the sermon before the Doctor could speak to him. Twenty years afterwards, in a pleasant village in central Ohio, a stranger accosted Dr. Beecher, saying: "Do you remember preaching twenty years ago, in such a place, to a single person?" "Yes, sir," said the Doctor, grasping his hand, "I do, indeed; and if you are the man, I have been wishing to see you ever since." "I am the man, sir; and that sermon saved my soul, made a minister of me, and yonder is my church. The converts that sermon are all over Ohio."—Selected.

Dr. McGilvary, of Sydney, C. B., says: "Unbelievably offer my testimony in favor of Putnam's Emulsion. I have used it extensively for a number of years with the most satisfactory results. In wasting diseases of children it has no equal."

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Nov 11. I. THE WALKER MOUNT OF OLIVES, Thursday, April 11th. "These words," "The previous chapter," "From the upper Jerusalem, toward brook Cedron," "now, except for the garden," "from the neighborhood (or Kidron) in Jerusalem, between Mount of Olives," "called Gethsemane," "the garden was not a park, than our Lord tells us that the abounded with paradises."

Gethsemane was the Kedron from the foot of the wall, probably not far from the same Gethsemane is a mile from the walled city, contains eight acres. The name means of trial, distress, to this garden was, or had been, manufacture of oil. "And Judas," "This how Judas found night," "For Jesus thither with Him," "along with other disciples," "the great festival of pilgrims who it was a quiet resting, prayer, trying place also," "twelve, but other usual resorts of take Him into 26: 47; compare III. AGONY AND ARE—From the day, April 9 (3: 32); Luke 22: of the disciples Jesus takes Peter farther into the then He goes almost pressed Him to admit, as blood. Three times He says, "Not My will, but thine be done." Three times He disciples sleeping weakness. FOR SALE BY J. R. CAMERON, 64 Prince Wm. St. What was the (1) He was weary (2) He, the death in its this one hour were the combined cruelty, its sharp its spiritual tortures, voluntarily, founded by a crime no doubt as dark. (3) He fears lest He which the salvation. (5) He scattered of Him, ment for their crucifying Him. Near Gethsemane Friday morning, received a band, i. e., consisted of from quarters, but he guarded the garden. The band was officers." The band were police, but other Sanhedrin. "Why Although the Paschal full moon selves also against the excitement on the south. 4. "Jesus the consciousness of He was not taken tardily delivered forth." From the garden and from the fact of earth in the night, and he asked them, "The JUDAS FA gain? Thirty plus and shame again, but the fact of earth in the night, and he asked them, "Why Although the Paschal full moon selves also against the excitement on the south. 4. "Jesus the consciousness of He was not taken tardily delivered forth." From the garden and from the fact of earth in the night, and he asked them, "The JUDAS FA gain? 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