

The Deeper Life

The Divinely Ordained Occupation of Farming

By Rev. S. G. Bland, D.D.

THE Christian ministry, it is alleged, and with good reason, is a calling ordained of God. But according to the scriptures it is not more clearly ordained of God than farming. In the ancient Hebrew narrative we are told that the Lord God took the first man "and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

An occupation so distinctly appointed to man by God must be a natural and wholesome and altogether legitimate occupation, a sample of what all kinds of work should be.

It would seem, accordingly, worth while to try to discover what are the characteristics that make the tilling of the soil a sort of model occupation.

One thing we see at once, the life of the farmer is in close contact with nature. He spends much time in "God's open air" and "God's open air" is the best guarantee of sanity. No life remains healthy if long withdrawn from it. It has been found that families that persist in living in the city die out in three generations. Man was made to live out-of-doors, to know and love the creatures of the out-of-doors, beasts and birds and trees and flowers. By a natural instinct little children love to play in the dirt. It is one of the blessings that are so strangely interwoven with the unspeakable evils of this war that multitudes of people who had never known, or had forgotten, how good is the smell of newly-turned earth, and how wonderful is the unfolding life of leaf and bud, have gone back to nature, even if only in a back yard or a vacant lot. War gardens are going to give us a saner world and will not disappear with the war.

One of the most pressing tasks that lies before us is by the elimination of the land speculator and by cheap and rapid transportation and by the moving of factories into the country, to make it possible for everybody to have something of what farming gives—contact with nature.

I have no doubt myself that the ideal environment for children up to 15 or 16 years of age at least is country life. The health is likely to be better, the faculties of observation will be more fully developed, habits of industry are much more probable.

If the perfecting of human life is henceforth to be the chief concern and not the mere production of wealth, and many signs point that way, city and country must somehow get mixed together. Cities must be ruralized, broken up as it were, and scattered more widely with more land about the homes of the common people, more parks and open spaces. The country, by means of better roads, better returns for labor than are usual now except in war time, telephones, motor cars, social centres, smaller farms, fewer tenants and more owners, must give better opportunities for social life and stimulus.

Another reason why farming is fitted to be the model occupation is that it is a productive occupation. The farmer adds to the wealth of the world. No doubt it is a possibility that there might be some time too many farmers, though with proper organization and especially with the workers in all lands receiving a juster share of the products of their labor, that time seems far distant and probably will never be reached. But now and for a definite time to come, the more farmers the richer, the more comfortable the world. His activity is a productive activity. It is necessary to distinguish between activity and productivity. Many men rise early, work late, scheme, plan, are most untiringly busy, but with little or no productivity. I have seen or heard a

saying somewhere about the tides of life that go surging down the streets of a great city every morning, that the men who go to work before eight go down town to make things, while those who go down after nine go down to take

things, or try to. It is rather a bitter saying and with a large element of exaggeration in it, but also some element of truth. Indeed, during the "land boom" times there was a very large element of truth in it.

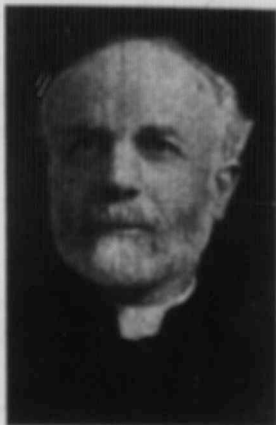
But some men curiously seem to think that mere activity, even of a piratical kind, entitles them to a reward, just as others have the equally curious idea that a man's confidence in the future of the west, if shown only in the purchase of much land, proves him to be a most estimable and patriotic citizen entitled to a rich recompense.

There has been a wonderful amount of activity in Canada during the last 15 or 16 years, and there is a great deal still going on, which is not entitled to any reward at all, but to something quite different. The whole object was the plundering of the people. That sort of activity must be stopped. We have developed a conscience now at last in regard to men who make mischievous things—liquor, injurious drugs, immoral and poisonous books and pictures. Public opinion and the law forbid that sort of activity, profitable though it has been. The time has come for another step forward in moral development. We need a conscience in regard to men whose activities are not productive, who just take things, who make a living without earning it. Unnecessary middle men, land speculators, stock gamblers, unscrupulous promoters, men who through political pull secure valuable franchises from governments, men who form combines, men who water stock.

The time is near when no man will dare to look his fellow men in the face unless he is earning his living, contributing by his activity to the well-being of the world. There is only one true aristocracy of service and in that the farmer stands high.

Another distinctive excellence in the farmer's work is that it is non-competitive. It is one of the few occupations where a man is not more or less at war with his neighbors. He has no hateful trade secrets. Any discoveries, improvements, inventions he shares with his fellow-farmers. The specially competent and successful farmer does not beggar farmers around him and put them out of business. He enriches the neighborhood, the province it may be. The farmer can be thoroughly human. Under the barbaric law of competition which prevails so largely in other occupations the most honorable and kindly of men cannot always be human. He is under the law of the jungle, which is, kill or be killed, eat or be eaten. A business man of the United States has said the secret of success is to so conduct your business that your competitor will have to shut up shop. Surely Christian men will not always be willing to live under such hateful conditions.

There is perhaps no other occupation which is so ready for the new age as farming. That new age is the age of co-operation. Farmers have always co-operated. Under frequent conditions they could not manage at all without co-operation. No class already co-operates so extensively. There is a divine call to farmers to extend the sphere of co-operation, to lead the way into the new world of brotherhood and co-operation. At the next election, which now promises not to be very distant, every farming constituency should send to Ottawa as its repre-



Dr. BLAND.

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13	1	14	25	9	19	
4	5	6	5	1	20	5
-	1	14	4	-	14	15
-	1	-	13	9	14	21
5	-	2	5	6	15	18

WHEN WILL THE WAR BE OVER?

CAN you answer this question—When will the war be over? Every boy and girl wants to know. You can, if you are able to read this puzzle. The answer is contained within the 48 squares above. What is this answer? Solve it, and valuable prizes await you.

HOW TO SOLVE IT

The above squares hold the answer. It is in one sentence of nine words, containing forty letters. Each letter is represented by a number, and that number is the position of the letter in the alphabet. For instance, A is represented by the figure 1, as it is first in the alphabet, and so on. Now, to help you get started, we will tell you that the first letter in the puzzle is "W," because W is the 23rd letter in the alphabet. Get to work and figure out the words in the sentence, and try to find the answer to the great question, "When will the war be over?" It is not easy, but it is worth while trying for.



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Copy your answer upon a plain white sheet of paper as neatly as you can, because neatness, spelling, hand writing, and punctuation count if more than one answer is correct. Put your name and address in the top right hand corner of the puzzle. If you have to write a letter, or show anything else, put it upon a separate sheet of paper. We will write as soon as your answer is received, and tell you if your solution is correct, and also send you a complete illustrated list of the grand prizes that you can win.

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Here are the names of only a few of the boys and girls to whom we have recently awarded big prizes -
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Shelton Perry, Beatrice Hughes, Beaumont, Sask.
\$100.00 Cash, Eric Benson, Hamilton, Ont.
\$50.00 Cash, Helen Bennett, Juchess, Alta.
\$50.00 Cash, Florence Smith, Arnprior, Ont.

We will send you names of many others, too. Only boys and girls under 17 years of age may send answers, and each boy or girl will be required to perform a small service for us for which an additional valuable reward or special cash prize will be given. The contest will close on March 31st at 5.00 p.m.
Send your answer this very evening. Address: TORONTO, ONT.

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TEXT:—"We are laborers together with God."—1 Cor. III. 9.