



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Food from the earth a harvest sermon



“He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth,” Psalm 104:14.

This psalm has been called the poet’s version of the Genesis account of creation. The author is believed most likely to be David. One can well imagine the observa-

tions of nature set down in this psalm being noted by the shepherd boy on the hills of Bethlehem as he tended the flocks of his father. To the spiritually enlightened mind nature provides much instruction. The seasons of the year are nature’s evangelists.

Nature is limited in its curriculum and cannot enlighten the mind in the knowledge of God however. This requires an act of regeneration by the Holy Ghost. What nature may do is to reveal the wonderful power and wisdom of God to a mind enlightened by the Holy Ghost. The Creator manages His Creation for the benefit of His creatures. A sight of this will bring forth songs of praise.

Our text is found in the verse 14. The verse commences with a very humbling truth. God causes the grass to grow. Such a common thing as grass is formed and brought forth by God. It is not the work of man. He may plant and water and fertilize but he cannot make it to grow. Happy is the man that learns the lesson of the grass. spared Men would have been spared much misery and suffering of late, had they noted that cattle are to be fed on grass and not the foodstuffs which scientists, motivated by greed, sought to feed to them of late and which resulted in the BSE plague and its ongoing consequences for many! Man, instructed of God and seeing his own weakness and God’s greatness is brought to a place where he may learn an even greater lesson — the way of salvation. My text is the final phrase of the verse. “. . . . that he may bring forth food out of the earth.”

I. EVERY HARVEST REMINDS MAN OF HIS ORIGINS

1. He that is fed from the earth must have come from the earth. “Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field,” Ecclesiastes 5:9. That is what the Bible teaches us regarding man. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,” Genesis 2:7. Man in his pride would seek to deny his origins.

2. Here is a truth that is fundamentally important. The origin of all things is set before us in the very first words of Holy Writ. How vital must be this truth if it is so presented to us. Man can never know himself or the purpose of his existence if he does not learn from whence he came.

3. Here is a truth man still rejects. Man refuses to accept the Genesis account of his origins and continues to seek to concoct a theory as to how he originated. There is an ongoing and sustained attack upon the Genesis account of man’s origins. Darwin’s theory of evolution did not begin with him but was conceived in the mind of fallen man, since early



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times, as he rejected God's account of man coming forth from the Creator's hand. 6000 years of searching have failed to produce an answer that can stand examination. Evolutionists claim to propound the truth, but their view is so terribly flawed that they must constantly revise it in order to accommodate the contradictions and absurdities within their theory.

4. In rejecting this truth man rebels against his Creator. The rebellion we witness in society is a parallel, an offshoot, of that in which man is engaged against the Lord. Children refuse the authority of their parents; citizens refuse the authority of rulers; all men refuse the authority of God. These are but links in a chain.

II. EVERY HARVEST REMINDS MAN OF HIS DEPENDENCE UPON GOD.

While man may refuse to acknowledge God he is nevertheless dependent upon Him. Man may have harnessed, in a very limited way, some of the powers of nature but he cannot control those powers. The hurricane, the flood, the drought and, above all, the growing of food testify to this fact. The manipulators with their genetically modified crops may boast of enhancing and bettering nature but history tells us just how this will end. Despite the supposedly "exhaustive" tests, time will indicate that man's tampering with God's creation will bring about dire consequences.

Men claim that their modern ways will rid the world of famine and food shortages. Christ taught differently. When describing to His disciples the character of the age between his ascension and His second advent He said: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows," Matthew 24: 7-8. According to the Saviour famines will not be eradicated before the end of this age. It is further stated in Revelation 18:8 that famine will still be a plague at the very close of this age. Modern man cannot, will not stop famine.

1. God controls the harvest. "He causeth the earth to bring forth." The earth will obey only the Creator. His voice alone can cause the earth to respond and put in motion all the chemical and biological changes that are required to bring forth growth. Man may fertilise but few ever wonder how that produces the effect that it does. But more than the earth is at work in the harvest. What of the sun and the rain? What of the creatures such as worms whose actions aerate the soil? There are even guardians set over the harvest in the form of tiny insects which feed upon others that would damage crops. poison Some time ago, farmers in California learned that their poison sprays were doing more harm than good in that they killed far more beneficial insects than harmful ones.

2. The earth produces all man requires. Even the synthetic materials so prevalent today are the product of the harvest of the earth. Nylon and other synthetics are by-products of the forests and the living creatures, including man, that perished in the great flood in the days of Noah. There is nothing that man uses that does not come from the earth.

III. EVERY HARVEST REMINDS MAN OF HIS DESTINY

He that lives off the earth must go the way of the earth. Behold, this day I am going the



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way of all the earth, Joshua 23:14. David used similar words when speaking of his death. "I go the way of all the earth," 1 Kings 2:2. The "way of all the earth" is for man to return to the dust whence he came. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," Genesis 3:19. The psalm before us bears witness to the same truth. "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust," Psalm 104:29.

How solemn are those words spoken in the ears of the living at numerous funerals. "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes." Amidst all the falsehoods that so often are heard at gravesides, these words sound out a great truth if only men would listen.

1. Note the cycle of life. Spring, summer, harvest, winter. While all these seasons will come to us we do not know how long they will last. Some summers are long and some are short. We can swiftly move from summer to winter. It seems but yesterday that spring was heralded in the hedges and trees of the land and now the falling leaves tell us the death of winter draws on.

Time like an ever rolling stream, Bears all its sons away; They fly forgotten as a dream, Dies at the opening day.

"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more," Psalm 103:14-16. The harvest cries out of the swift passage of time and says to one and all: "Be in time!"

2. All the earth has a harvest. There is a harvest of the beneficial crops and of the weeds. Good men and evil men will face a reaping. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor 5:10. "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn," Matthew 13:30.

IV. EVERY HARVEST REMINDS MAN OF THE CROSS.

1. Christ is the seed. Christ calls Himself the corn of wheat. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," John 12:24. He was here speaking of the cross as the verses 31-32 show. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He was the divine seed that was planted for the food of the soul. He was sown by His Father's hand for the feeding of the souls of men. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst . . . I am that bread of life . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," John 6:35, 48, 51.

2. He was planted in death. As the seed is embraced by the earth and dies and brings forth a harvest so Christ at the cross was embraced by the wrath of God, died and by His death brought forth eternal life for His people. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who



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knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Corinthians 5:21. Out of the dying of Christ came forth eternal life for His flock.

3. Christ was raised as a harvest. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Romans 4:25. "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities," Acts 3:26. Food for the soul is to be found upon the cross. As the trees of the Garden of Eden provided for Adam and Eve, so the cross provides for us food that imparts eternal life.

4. The harvest of the cross is free to all who will partake. An incident took place one day while Christ was walking with His disciples. It illustrates the opportunity that is yours today. "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat," Matt 12:1. You walk amidst a gospel cornfield and have but to reach out and pluck the corn of life. Each time you attend a gospel meeting, sit in your Sabbath school class or in your Bible class or are taught at home the truth of the gospel, you are in a cornfield, a gospel cornfield. You have but to reach out and pluck Christ and make Him yours.

May the Lord give you a hunger for Christ the Bread of Life and enable you to come to Him in faith.