

THE PLOW AND THE EARTH

(Is the Plow too Harsh?)

The seasonal showers have not only irrigated the thirsty soil of the farmer's field, but it has also caused it to be impacted. The hot summer's sun has baked the earth, hardening it, and causing a resistance to penetration. The field, though fallow, has given place to the wild varieties of plants which grow pell-mell across its face. The winter freeze has forced rocks toward the surface of the soil that will impede the root growth of profitable crop plants. Therefore, across the field, there exists an earth that has slipped slowly but surely back to its old natural state—it seems defensive and a bit forbidding to the farmer's plan of producing a valuable and necessary crop.

On the tool shed's weather-beaten wall sunlight causes a silhouette to be cast of the upright handles which attach themselves to the cold metal of a plow. The farmer has slid it out from under its winter covering of old tattered feed sacks and horse blankets. The blade of the plow has been scraped removing the accumulated dust of disuse and the farmer knows well that with use the metal will gleam once again. He readies the harness which is to be collared to the waiting mule who glances around to view the object of her soon to be labor.

Beyond the wide hinged gate that gives passage through the long boundary fence awaits the resisting earth—a challenge to food on the table and the survival of the farmer's family. Long rows of standing corn are envisioned within the mind of the industrious farmer. Good seed corn is heaped in sacks of burlap stacked in a dry barn awaiting its proper time in the scheme of things. But for now—it is plow and earth time.

The farmer rejoices in his property of soil even though at present it is far from what it needs to be in order to grow the waiting seed corn—he looks down to the sharp point of his plow and knows that with this tool he can transform the field from weed infested and rock-strewn earth into a beautiful and productive field of standing corn. The earth is the farmer's prize and the plow is the farmer's transforming tool. The soil resistive—the plow responding. The plow must, by design, be harder than the soil it must plow, it must be able to break through the impacted surface and dislodge the stones all the while uprooting the growth of the wild.

Is the plow too hard? Is the plow the enemy of the earth? Is there animosity of the metal toward the soil? Has the farmer come as a destroyer of good? Is the farmer's plow harsh? Who is the resister and who is the transformer? The plow is a friend to the earth—a kind restorer. When the plow has finished this day's labor the earth will have been made profitable and the farmer pleased with the action of his plow and the sight of the overturned earth of his field.

God's possession of His church can never accomplish His will without the plow of the ministry. God delights in His tool, the ministry, as He uses it to transform His field from the wild growth of the world into the beautiful church, set for harvest, that He desires.

Is the Plow too hard? too harsh? not to the farmer its not.

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