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## A HARVEST LESSON.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF DERBY.

"Thou visitest the earth, and blessest it."—Psalm lxxv. 9. (*Prayer-Book Version.*)

**T**HE Visitation of God! How different a meaning do we generally apply to these words from that in which it is used in this Psalm! Some man drops down dead suddenly; a coroner's inquest is summoned, and the verdict of the jury is, "Died by the visitation of God." Or our thoughts go naturally, this year, to our great Indian Empire, visited by the double scourge of famine and pestilence; hundreds dying of a fearful plague, and hundreds of starvation—and that in many cases not because there was no relief to be had, but because the poor souls had not the strength to crawl where it might be got, but preferred to lie still and die. We speak of it all as the Visitation of God; and surely this year the Harvest Thanksgiving services in England should come home to us with a meaning doubly real, as we compare the general condition of our own land with that of India, and we should more than ever open our hearts to every cry of suffering.

To us the Visitation of God means a terror, scourge, calamity. But the Jew had a truer view—to his eye God was always visiting, quite as often in blessing as in punishment. True, He visited to punish—the Jew was not likely to forget how, in the very centre of the Moral Law, God describes Himself as visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children; or again, how Jeremiah, after describing the wickedness of the nobles, and indeed, of all the people in Jerusalem, represents God as saying, "Shall not I visit for these things, and shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" But this, after all, is only one side of the picture: God is more often spoken of as visiting to bless; the Psalmist's prayer of hope is, "O visit me with Thy salvation," or, at another time, he expresses his wonder at God's goodness, so far above what man has any right to expect—"What is man, that Thou visitest him, or the Son of man that Thou so regardest