

"and unto dust thou shalt return;" and no change of situation, no wealth, no power, no climate, no bodily constitution, no wisdom, no skill, can reverse that sentence. Do I not see before me the sober garments of age, bespeaking the hey-day of life past? Do I not see the furrowed face, down which many a tear has passed during a troubled life, like the bare mountain side, riven by many a torrent? Do I not see the bloom faded from many a cheek, and flowers withered that shall bloom no more? Do I not see in the countenance unmistakable signs of hopes dashed and joys expired? Do I not see streaks of white on the heads of even the strong and middle-aged, signalling the winter of life, with its hoary head and its feeble step? Shall the ravages of death be suspended or averted in our case alone? Where, then, are well-known faces? They are blighted and consumed by the defacing fingers of decay. I behold in this assembly a harvest for that "Reaper whose name is Death;" and as surely and as terribly as the scythe sweeps down every stalk of corn, shall death mow down every being in this church. "O that we were wise, and would consider our latter end!"

3. These words suggest the idea of the *end of labor*. The harvest ends the work of the husbandman for the year. The crop has been secured, and he now reposes on his success. So, when death and judgment shall have come, thus will be the end of human life and labor. If the farmer has neglected his land—if he has not ploughed or harrowed or sown, he cannot reap, he cannot repair his error: the season is past. And so with this life. When death comes, there is no more of such work. "There is no wisdom, or device, or knowledge, or work in the grave;" by which is taught, not that death is an unconscious sleep, but that none of the work to be performed here can be performed there, and that no ingenious wisdom or skill shall recall the opportunity. Then the Christian's sowing work is done, and his harvest is secure. No storms of rage shall disturb his sublime repose. No violent men, like wild beasts, shall attack his peace in sweet possession. No judgment of heaven, like the lightning's scourge, shall threaten to blast his hopes. No cold breath of worldliness shall pass across his sky and chill the warm affections of his heart. No flood shall sweep away the harvest of his enjoyment, and no breeze of error, heresy or infidelity, shall shake the rock of his trust. He is secure beyond the assaults of time and the privations of sense. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress," &c.? His work is done. The wicked and slothful servant, on the other hand, can no more do the work which he has neglected. He cannot recall an hour. The Sun of Righteousness shall no more shine upon him to brighten and to save. The rain

of the Divine Word, which he has long despised, shall no more descend upon him. The breath of the Spirit will no more breathe upon his heart, for he has too long done despite unto the Spirit of grace. The whirlwind rages, but not to clear; and the hurricane careers, but not to purify. The fire burns, but not to cleanse; and the deluge rises, but not to fertilize. Oh! what would he give for one hour! and he has wasted thousands. Dives offered but one prayer in hell, and it was refused. He might have offered thousands on earth, and they would have been heard. "Now is the accepted time." When once the harvest has come, the cold winter must set in—a winter never to be relieved by the genial voice of spring.

4. There are associated with the harvest the kindred ideas of *gathering, separation, and storing up*. The death of each man is a harvesting of his labors and gains; while the assemblage that shall usher in the end of the world, shall combine the separate events into one, and form "the harvest", the gathering together of all. In the natural harvest, the grains that have grown under every sun, glistened under every shower, and shivered in every breeze, are safely housed at last. In the moral harvest, the human beings who have lived in every age of the world—who may have drawn out a cheerless life amid icy wastes, or sickened with the languor of tropical heat; who have struggled with poverty or luxuriated in profusion; who have worshipped in a Christian temple or danced in a heathen revel; who have carried their graces to some obscure retreat, "content, though mean, and cheerful if not gay," or drawn the eyes of the world on the dangerous heights of Christian fame; who have breathed their last on a peaceful bed, surrounded by weeping friends, or bled on the ensanguined plain, or descended through the deep blue waters of ocean to an untroubled bed, where no sacrilegious hand shall disturb their graves, till the hand of God agitates their rest, shall appear. No barrier of sea or land shall suffice to prevent their rushing into one vast assembly at the sound of that voice that once shook the earth when it cried, "It is finished," and shall shake the earth once more, when it cries, "Time is no more."

But the threshing-floor, with the wind separating the chaff from the wheat, is a kindred thought, often applied by the Word of God to the process of "the day"—"the great and terrible day of the Lord." Who may separate the chaff from the wheat now? What mind, what church, what discipline is adequate to that task? In the well known parable, the uprooting of the tares by human hands—by those whose imperfections unfit them for the task, is said to involve injury to the wheat. For, O, how closely chaff and wheat cohere! We sit at the same table; we worship in the same pew; we bow the knee at the same family altar; we deliberate