

But while we look, the natural energy of earth processes. The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich; the blade displays its wonders for a sufficient time for man to consider and meditate thereon, if he will. But as if the senseless plant which however seems to depend altogether upon heaven, were rewarded for its image of faithful trust, there then appears "the ear." That is, there is an indication of a coming harvest; there is hope and probability, but as yet no substance. All looks like a favourable harvest, but there is nothing in hand. The ear is the pledge—the earnest of what is to come, but not the very thing itself; and yet when that new feature is exhibited, the man would be unreasonable, who witnessing such an instance of natural or divine power could doubt the completion of the process. All-wise Providence, however, chooses that time and interval to visit the rising harvest with all its plagues. Not only the foot of man, or the depredations of animals are then to be feared—but every ray of sunshine—every passing cloud—the dog-day drought—and the nightly dew—the summer deluge, and the dreaded blight. If the blade reminds the farmer of a constant law of duty to God, the ear presents its transient annual reminiscence of that duty. Many hearts are more moved by a particular benefaction than by general mercies. The mind that cannot estimate the vastness of creative or providential blessing, whereby the blade is allowed to shoot from every soil and in every climate, may find interest and emotion from the scrutiny of a single individual field. What escapes that promising field daily and hourly has it and then each escape connects itself with the individual's private history and fortunes. If but that tempest passes harmless, he thinks, how I shall pay this debt, or accomplish that favorite design. Should the day average a few days more fiercely, he thinks, that it will prevent a child's schooling, or deprive a consort of necessary medical attendance, or the whole family of customary food. Senseless man—he blinds himself up in a dark selfishness—he looks at limited causes—does not enlarge his views to take in grand perceptions of Providence, nor seek in humble piety and religious observances to get the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. While all is promise unfulfilled—hope unrealized—while all depends on God—even then he meditates no act of devotion to God, or liberality to the poor—he makes no vow of gratitude—he thinks not of the Lord of the harvest, who can fill the ear, or scatter its contents.

"After that," the Saviour points out, "the earth bringeth forth