

not be like those of whom the prophet speaks in the passage from which our motto is taken, but let all that is within us be stirred up to bless God for the bountiful harvest which he has lately given us; and let us manifest our gratitude by devoting to his service the strength which we receive from the bounties of this life. But, we stand as much in need of daily food for our souls (our nobler part) as for our bodies. Let us rejoice that he is as able to bestow the one as the other. Let us pray that he would give us each day the bread which cometh down from heaven, as well as that which cometh out of the earth.

II. The harvest is *an illustration of the faithfulness of God*. When Noah offered a sacrifice on coming out of the ark, we are told that the Lord smelled a sweet savor, and said in his heart that he would not curse the ground any more for man's sake, and that while the earth remained seed time and harvest, as well as cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, should not cease (Gen. viii. 22). Has he not been always faithful to his promise?—Has there ever been a year in which the earth did not yield her increase! True, in some places there may have been at times, great and long continued dearth, like that in the land of Egypt, which lasted 7 years and that in the land of Israel, which lasted 3½. But the earth brought forth plentifully in other places. The promise of God has, therefore, not failed, for it has reference to the earth at large. He may, in perfect harmony with it, punish a people by smiting their land with barrenness. What he has hitherto done he will continue to do. As long as the earth stands, we know that the sun shall be for a light by day, and the ordnance of the moon and the stars for light by night. As surely while the earth stands, it shall bring forth, and “the joy of harvests,” fill the heart of the husbandman. Here then, we have in the natural world an evidence of the faithfulness of God. By it let us be encouraged to trust in all his promises. What exceeding great and precious promises bestud the pages of Holy Writ. Yet how much are our weak hearts disposed to doubt them. There we are assured of eternal life, if we receive and rest in Christ as our only Saviour.—But we think that something on our part

is essential. We are assured that they that fear the Lord shall not lack any good thing; yet how often are we troubled with fears of the morrow! We are assured that if we ask we shall receive, if we seek we shall find, if we knock it shall be opened to us; yet, if our prayers do not appear to be answered we are ready to faint. We are assured that if we resist the Devil he will flee from us; yet how ready are we to loose sight of this! We are exhorted to be unwearied in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not; yet when we do not see any good result from our labours in his service we are disposed to exclaim, “We have laboured in vain and spent our strength for nought.” We are exhorted to be faithful unto death, with the promise of a crown of life; yet how often do we conform to the world to gain its favor, or avoid its scorn or wrath! We are told that all things work together for good to them that love God; yet how ready are we to despise the chastening of the Lord, or to faint when we are rebuked of him!—Now every sheaf says to us as truly as in words, “O, ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt? Behold in me a proof of your Heavenly Father's faithfulness to his promise.” Let us, therefore, shake off all our doubts and fears, and trusting in his word, go on our way rejoicing. We shall find that none who trusts in him are ever ashamed.

III. The harvest is *an illustration of the connection of man's labour on one hand, and God's blessing on the other*.—The corn does not grow like the weeds. The husbandman must labour before he partakes of the fruits. The earth must first be broken up by the plough. If the soil be poor, manure must be employed to enrich it. Then the seed must be cast into it and covered by the harrow. There man's labour ends. The increase is with God. He must cause the showers to come down in their season and the sun to shed his light and heat, else the seed will rot under the clod. Man however, must do his part, otherwise there will be no harvest. God never does what it is within the power of man to do. This is a truth of great importance which is very often overlooked. God does not prepare the ground, cast in the seed, and cover it. Man is able to do this. But he makes the seed grow, for