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If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Psalm 137, v. 5.

Sermon.

FOR

Autumn Thanksgiving, 28th Nov. 1867.

"So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how &c."—Mark IV. 26, 27.

The autumn is a season favourable to thought. When men are busy in pursuit of one object they are not inclined to think of any other. Every nerve is then strung to the highest pitch. The soul is absorbed to the exclusion of every matter not bearing upon the point in pursuit. The eye is strained upon a certain prospect and can see nought else. But when once the end is gained one can pause and reflect upon his past course, recall his exertions, recount his dangers, and exult in his success. So in summer, all are busy in improving the season of growth. All nature is active,—a bright sun shines—a warm rain falls,—a genial soil teems with vital powers,—a lovely dew distils, and man, laboring while it is the proper time, postpones thought. But when once nature ceases its activity, contemplation again visits the scene, and sits aloft, asserting her native sway.

Perhaps also the aspect of surrounding nature provokes pensive reflections. Everywhere we behold the spectacle of decay. The beautiful flowers of summer have bloomed and died. Their lovely crowns have disappeared for ever. Their gemmed heads no longer nod to the passing traveller, nor shed

a sweetness on his path. The fields have exchanged their robes of bright green for the sober garments of yellow and grey. The tall tree wildly waving its bare arms in the breeze, proclaims its departed glories and the desolations of the year. The leafy bower that sheltered us in summer and whispered sweet music in our ears, responsive to the wandering winds of heaven, have perished. All these sights remind us of death. They preach of dissolution. All nature becomes a solemn and silent sermon. Every withered leaf bids us think upon our end. Let us then yield without murmur to the invitation, which has brought us together—an invitation which ought to be in unison with our own feelings.

Mark in this lovely little parable (1) a work of God in nature, (2) a work of God in grace.

I.—A work of God in nature. A most wonderful object is a single "seed" of corn. It is a small and insignificant looking thing, and yet in time it might grow to fields and provinces of grain, and feed the people of a continent. It has not the hardness of a particle of granite, nor the whiteness of a piece of marble, nor the gleam of gold, nor the glitter of silver, nor the sparkle of the diamond, but its intrinsic value is greater. It is useful, not ornamental. And it is vastly more curious and wonderful than these. God in His deep wisdom has hidden life there. You cannot see it—you cannot feel it—you cannot smell it; but it is there. The seed is not so beautiful as many other things, but it has what many brighter things have not—it has life. Life lurks in that little shell—that tiny