

THE GOOD NEWS.

A SEMI-MONTHLY PERIODICAL:

DEVOTED to the RELIGIOUS EDUCATION of the OLD AND YOUNG

THE HARVEST.

BY THE REV. THOMAS FENWICK, OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA.

He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.—Jer v. 24.

In compliance with the request of His Excellency the Administrator of the government, the 6th of December was observed throughout the Province as a season of public thanksgiving to the Father of mercies for the plentiful harvest with which He last year blessed us. This was a very becoming act. As it is the duty not only of *individuals*, but also of *families*, to humble themselves before God, and cry for mercy when he visits them with affliction, and to give praise and thanks to him when he bestows blessings upon them, so it is the duty of *nations* to do likewise in similar circumstances. The time thus spent is not misspent. "Them that honour me I will honour," is a promise to *societies* as well as to *individuals*. But let us now turn our thoughts to some of the lessons we may learn from the harvest,

I. The harvest is an illustration of the goodness of God. As our bodies are formed of the earth, so also from the same source we receive the food by which they are nourished. An honourable calling, therefore, is that of the husbandman. On his labours we are all dependent for the "staff of life." Even the hand which always the sceptre is indebted to that which guides the plough. "The profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the field" (Eccles v. 9.) How terrible is Death when he comes in the form of gaunt Famine! What will men not do to allay the pangs of hunger! During the

Famine in Samaria, when that city was besieged by Ben-hadad, two women made an agreement to slay each her son in turn, to save their own lives, one of whom actually performed her part. During the siege of Jerusalem, the Jewish historian Josephus, tells us that the wretched inhabitants were so pressed by hunger that they devoured the most disgusting substances. Often would one pluck the food out of another's mouth. Yea, in one instance a woman slew the child at her breast, and ate a part of it. In this, and in the other referred to, was fulfilled the prophecy of Moses (Deut. xxviii. 53-57.) In the extremity of hunger men have sometimes eaten even their own flesh. How great therefore, the goodness of God to us last year, in giving us a fruitful season, filling our hearts with food and gladness! What reason for gratitude on our part? Even if we had remained in our original state of innocence, it would have been our duty to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father, for nourishing our bodies with the bounties of His Providence. But how much more does it become us who are sinners, to do so! May we not well say that we are less than the least of all his mercies? Might not he justly take from us the stay of bread and give us cleanness of teeth for our portion! But how differently does he deal with us! He feeds us from day to day, and that too, not with the coarsest fare, but "the finest of the wheat." O! let us