

in deeper meanings than the most obvious one. The analogies between natural objects and spiritual truths are often very striking, and we do well to ponder them carefully.

“There is a sound of abundance of rain!” How many beautiful Scripture metaphors these words bring to mind! Thus the word of God is compared to rain: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth.” Sound doctrine is compared to rain: “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” Christ’s coming is compared to rain: “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth.” And again: “His going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Spiritual influences are also compared to rain: “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” And again: “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.”

There are times in the history of the Church—too frequent, alas!—when the influences of the Divine Spirit are withheld, and there is a sore famine in the word of the Lord. We sow in hope, but no golden harvest rewards our toil; and the sower and the reaper look out sadly upon fields that spiritually are withered and dead, and, turning their eyes to the heavens, that seem as brass, they cry, “O Lord, how long?” In such times of discouragement, how precious are God’s promises of blessing, how cheering any indication that the “set time” to favour Zion is come!

We live in a day when showers of blessing are urgently needed. The world needs them. Two-thirds of it is yet spiritually barren, or only overgrown with rank weeds and tares, while the portion cultivated shows but a feeble growth and yields a scanty harvest. The Church needs them; for without them her spiritual husbandry is but wasted labour. She needs them to give vitality to her evangelistic methods, to refresh the soil parched by the desert breath of worldliness, to infuse new life into her ordinances, and to