

istry to be maintained, the worship of God upheld, and the poor relieved, in the years that are to come. It is not that only, but how are we to hand down not alone the Gospel, but civilisation, arts, husbandry and harvest, to after generations. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

The principle established by the Christians of past generations was this, that a portion should be paid for such things only as do yield a yearly increase, by the act of God. The Banker who, however, comes in under another principle, is supposed to be asked for nothing; the Merchant seems exempted; the professions are excluded, or, at that early time of dawning civilisation came in for a share of the offering. All seems to fall upon the farmer. What he receives seems to be the principal thing received by the community. The farmer's blessing seems to be a blessing bound up with all. If there be a blessing any where, it must be that contained in the farmer's blessing. If there be a duty any where it must be contained in the book of the farmer's task. If religion, law, order, happiness in this world, or hope of hereafter; concern any one, it is first of all the farmer. The farmer is the representative of all the duty, all the labours, and also, of all the blessings of society. And accordingly the increase of the year that appertaineth to the farmer, was also noticed by our forefathers, as more especially than any thing else "by the act of God."

The harvest then being always in each year, from generation to generation, our forefathers always spoke and acted with respect to it, as if it were "by the act of God"; and still more, our blessed Saviour having pointed out such remarkable particulars in it; let us dwell a moment on these particulars, and consider whether they do not, in a most especial manner, require us, at each return of the harvest, to seek for the blessing of God, which maketh rich without alloy, in acts of piety and charity.

First saith the Saviour, the earth bringeth forth "the blade." Would you believe it—a blade of corn has sprung out of the inert earth. Cain thought it such a miracle, that he brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. It was in that primeval age—in that integrity and clearness of the human intellect, never then weakened and depraved by bad habits, esteemed so splendid an effort of nature, that Cain thought it of the worthiest and best. Cain at that time was no sinner; he was a murderer; he meant service to God, and the best service; and