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MIS-QUOTED TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE. No. III.

BY THE EDITOR.

1 COR. iii. 6—"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

A most encouraging and stimulating record, but often wickedly perverted. It is perhaps not done consciously or wilfully, but the obvious intent of the passage being missed through the commonness of its misapplication. Satan takes advantage of our misconception of it to wrest it to our injury and discouragement. Who has not heard it applied as a flattering unctio to the slothful and careless soul—over and over again—"Paul may plant, and Apollos may water; but God alone can give the increase?" "Well," says one, "but is not that the same thing? Are you not hairsplitting in your interpretation?" By no means. If the Lord had intended to say that *there*, he would have instructed Paul to say it. The common version of the passage just quoted is undoubtedly true. The Lord alone can bless the labours of the pastor or the preacher of His Gospel. Only He can "multiply the seed sown," and cause it to bring forth fruit. But the same thing is just as true of the seed sown by the farmer, or the toils and anxieties of the mechanic or the merchant; and yet neither the one nor the other takes the language as a *solatium* for failure, or an excuse for idly waiting for a future harvest.

Properly understood, the language is a most precious assurance that the faithful labourer never toils in vain. The laws of the material universe which ensure a reward to the husbandman for his toil and outlay, have their counterpart in the spiritual kingdom. Men plough and sow "in hope"—nay in the assurance that unless something unusual occur, they will in due season gather in the harvest. *Success is the rule, failure the exception.* And even where failure occurs, it comes not in consequence of any failure of the law, but as the result of other influences that have interfered with its operation in that particular case. With equal certainty may those who sow the seed of the Kingdom of God rely upon the fulfilment of Divine promises, and the help of spiritual law in the achievement of the end they have in view.

Thus the passage, instead of putting forth man's impotence and helpless dependence in doing the Lord's work, which, while in one sense true, is a somewhat discouraging aspect of the matter, really reminds him of his power, and of the dignity to which he is raised as a co-worker with God. "I have planted, Apollos