

tics, have already their citizenship in heaven.

We know, too, there is a spurious growth side by side with the genuine. "Children of the kingdom," at the best, live very imperfect lives. How it warns us of the responsibility of professing! Christ prophesied that the tares should mix themselves everywhere among the wheat, and grow up with it until the harvest.

Let us take more distinctly into view the actual sowing of this seed by the Son of man. The seed was not good till He made it so. These children of the kingdom were by nature what St. Paul calls "*children of wrath, even as others.*" Fallen in the taint and bias of the world-old transgression, sinners many times in the individual appropriation of that far-away and dimly-seen original lapse and ruin, the Son of man has evangelized them with His message of pardon and reconciliation, has prevented them with His blessing of goodness, put them into the Church, which is His household, and educating them there with His twofold offices of instruction and discipline, till at last, by means more or less marked or gradual, He has wrought in them a personal faith and a heart's devotion, grasping His mighty gift of grace, and giving Him in return that poor yet acceptable recompense of a life that would live in Him and for Him henceforth and forever.

Wonderful, magnificent, stupendous thought, when we ponder it: who that is less than divine shall be supposed capable of such an office? Multiply this one office of his by the number of all the rest of his offices; nay, but take it by itself, think of each separate Christian life all over the world and all through the ages as sown by Christ himself in His field, which is the world. See the multitude of lives, see the multiplicity of the faculties and the circumstances of each one, see the manifoldness of the divine dealing with each. See each one of all these "*sons of the kingdom*" placed exactly where he can answer the purpose and correspond to

the character of a grain of the vast heap, dropped into the very spot of the very furrow which is its suitable, its sufficient, its relatively appropriate place; yet not left even then, not left even there to go through this eventful process, or to work its beneficent works of itself, by itself, alone—no, watched over by the incessant solicitude which even in nature makes each leaf, and bud, and germ of as much account as if it were the only one, watched over with the nicest adaptation of means to ends, both as to its own growth in grace, and as to its influential growth for others, made to decay as regards the natural, and to spring and live day by day and little by little as concerns the spiritual; till at last it shall be ready to burst finally the chains and prison-house of the corruptible, and to clothe itself anew with the resurrection body of beauty and strength and glory. "*He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.*"

Brethren, with what dignity does the thought invest these lives! Each one of us feels himself a small unit in the overpowering sum of humanity; calls his life common, and by doing so, too often makes it unclean; cannot realize anything but accident in his circumstances; certainly sees no divine thought and no divine love exercising its management or in his profession. How different would it be if we could read with serious self-application that one line: "*He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man!*"

Each one of these lives is a definite grain contributed to the world's harvest home. While the little separate grain lies isolated amidst the multitude on the corn-heap, it abides alone; it is and it must be solitary as to anything that Christ calls companionship, though there be thousands and tens of thousands of like grains to itself above, beneath, and around it. So is it with human beings till the Son of man sows them. They are units, they are solitaires, they are hermits and recluses as to anything of heart to heart communion or soul to soul influence till they come to Jesus Christ and to God in