

kept pure by intercourse with heaven, and the temperature kept warm by the fires of devotion. We must take care that the seeds of truth are neither suffocated nor frozen. A diligent use of the means of grace is our only safe guard. To live in known sin will poison the air all around us. To live in neglect of the the means of grace will freeze the soul. The conditions of the law of growth then under which the seed of truth will increase in the heart and world are—it must be sown in the good soil of the heart, exposed to the real sunlight of the sun of righteousness, enjoy the rains of the Holy Spirit, and be surrounded by the pure warm air of heaven, soil, light, moisture, air.

#### CO OPERATION.

3. It is an increase at once, the result of God's sovereign power and man's personal effort. God and man co-operate in developing the seeds of the field. Man sows, God gives the increase, God gives vitality to the life-germ. He only can make the seed grow. Man cannot make a single living seed. He cannot make a single blade sprout, or a single blossom develop into fruit; but on this account is he to do nothing? No. In nature he co-operates with God. He selects seed, he plows his field, he fences it, he sows it; that is his work, and God secures growth. It is so in grace. We are workers together with God. We endeavour to run the plough-share of truth through men's hearts. We can scatter the seed, we can fence against gross vices, and vile habits, then we wait for God to give the increase, without careful cultivation on our part. We need expect no right increase. It is only in the prepared soil of the heart grace finds a lodgment. Without it we cannot expect the plant to improve. Mere cultivation will never change the nature of the seed, but it will improve its kind, and quality and increase its size. By cultivation the wild sloes become the luscious garden plums, the sour crabs, become the mellow apples, the wild grass becomes the nutritious wheat. It is thus in spiritual husbandry; we may improve our graces, and develop the mustard seed to its greatest possible dimensions. We

can fertilize the soil by increasing our knowledge, we can weed the field or prune the tree by forsaking sins and correcting faults, we can stimulate life by a diligent use of the means of grace.

#### MARVELLOUS.

4. It is a marvellous and gradual increase. The beginning is small, the ending is great. The seed taken as an emblem is not greater than common grass seed. The plant that grows from it is often from twenty to sixty feet high. A great tree is produced from a very small seed. So is it with the Church, it had a small beginning; it has grown till it has become the greatest among religious systems in the world. It is often so with the seed of grace in the heart, it is sometimes only a speck but it afterwards becomes a tree whose roots intertwine themselves with the whole being. Let us fondly cherish the beginnings of good. It may be the sprouting of that seed that will become a gigantic tree. The growth is gradual, the seed takes time to grow, it is not a sudden or instantaneous change from the tiny seed to the great tree. It goes through a gradual process of development. It is so that the seed of divine truth gradually develops in the soul and in the world. Christian life is a growth in time. The Church from a seedling gradually develops to a tree. The christian from a babe gradually grows to the stature of manhood in Christ, God will perfect what he has begun.

#### UNDER TRIALS.

5. It is increase subjected to many vicissitudes. The tree is subjected to injuries from without. Storms and frosts and men and beasts might inflict wounds on it; it might suffer from within, worms and disease might retard its growth. It is just so in the experience of the Church, many storms have been encountered, the winds of opposition have broken off many a branch, the thunderbolts of insurrection and persecution have made many a rent, the frosts of indifference have withered many leaves of profession and nipped many buds of perfection, wild beasts of sin have torn up the roots of good resolutions. There have been the corruptions of