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"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET ITS CUNNING."—PS. 137: 5.

SERMON PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF SYNOD, BY REV. ALLAN POLLOK, MODERATOR.

"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Mark iv. 26-27.

In accordance with the analogy which subsists between the material and spiritual worlds, Christianity is often compared to a seed cast into the soil, springing and expanding toward heaven. There must be some great principle underlying an analogy which has been the fruitful source of the profuse imagery of this kind, which is scattered up and down the pages of the sacred Book. Since the seed has now grown into a tree, whose branches have refreshed many nations and ages—into a complete and diversified society, it may be useful for us to return to the original idea as presented here—to analyze, separate and simplify, to tear aside all disguises, decorations and accretions, to strip off conventionalities, accidents and unessential things, and, ignoring mere theories or assumptions or dogmatic teachings on this subject, make a naked line around the object, and view it in its essence and simplicity. Thus may we realize the ideal of the Church of Christ as it is set forth in the sacred Scriptures. I proceed, then, to found upon this prophetic

parable a few lessons, referring to the Church and suitable to our times and this occasion.

I. As to the *nature* of the kingdom of God, this plant admonishes us that it is a *life*. The natural plant is neither the soil nor the seed. The living organism springs up when the soil and the seed combine. So the kingdom of God is neither the *truth* nor the soil of *human nature* in which it has been sown. A man may carry an encyclopædia of religious truth in his head; but if it have not taken root in his heart, the kingdom of God does not grow there. And we have many such cold and dead professors, whose knowledge is as unproductive as a stone in the soil of the earth. Neither is the kingdom of God *human nature* alone, without the seed of divine truth; though that soil is noble, and, as was shown in the history of the accursed race of Cain, has yielded much fruit in the world; yet neither the productions of art, nor the flashes of genius, nor the sweet blossoms of natural affection, nor the majestic columns of intellect, though in some wondrous cases not far from the kingdom of God, have ever, so far as we know, attained without the Word and Spirit to that blessed kingdom. So then, whether a man know little or much, whether a church be conspicuous for rudeness or culture, it must have that *life*, without which nothing can grow.