

the three Evangelists, and of that which is peculiar to Luke, is given at least in outline by our Lord Himself, but there is great diversity of opinion among expositors with regard to the meaning of that which is peculiar to Mark. This is indicated by the titles which have been given to it, *e.g.*:—The seed growing secretly (Trench). The blade, the ear and the full corn (Bruce). The fruit-bearing earth (Goebell). However, therefore, our freedom might have been hampered by unanimity, such want of agreement forces us to differ from some eminent writers, unless we are contented to form no opinion regarding the interpretation of the parable.

The story divides itself into two parts. Of the first part (vv. 26, 27 and 29) the sower is the subject; of the second (v. 28), the earth. It seems evident that, while either of these parts may be subordinate in importance to the other, neither of them may be held to be comparatively unimportant. The work of the sower and the work of the earth must both be attended to.

PART I.—*A man cast seed upon the earth.* The man is not said to *sow*, but to *cast*. This form of expression seems to imply carelessness upon the part of the sower, but probably it is chosen for the sake of harmony with the following description of his conduct. *He sleeps day.* The care of the sown seed does not fall upon him, and therefore his ordinary hours of rest and labor are not interfered with. *The seed how.* The sower's ignorance of the way in which the seed springs up and grows is mentioned not for its own sake, for it is not wonderful, but to furnish further proof that he does not help on the process. (He knows not, even though the sower.) *But when the harvest is come* (v. 29). But at length his energies are again put forth in connection with the seed. It has reached a point at which his interest, always felt, can show itself, and immediately he interferes to gather in the golden grain.

PART II.—*The earth of itself.* In the meantime the earth works. Of course it is assumed here that there is living seed in the earth, and that the ordinary influences, such as rain and sunshine, lend their aid. The earth, with these elements within it, *spontaneously* brings forth fruit. *First the blade ear.* The fruit of the earth is described. It brings forth the blade, but it has not yet exhausted its power. It brings forth, next, the ear, and,