

part of the Lord's vineyard yields many golden sheaves for the heavenly garner, God's servants rejoice with exceeding joy.

These two pictures presuppose a seed-sowing; and the imagination readily paints the hard soil, dotted here and there with labourers. As the toilers in the Master's vineyard bear the burden and heat of the day, some regard them almost with pity, feeling that though a few sheaves may be garnered, they may never participate in the full glow of harvest. The difficulties and magnitude of the work are comprehended best by him who endeavours to sow the good seed of the kingdom; in other words, by him who carries the tidings of redemption to his lost fellowmen; yet he counts not his work a joyless one. He knows that seedtime must precede harvest, and that upon his faithfulness to his trust, depends in a measure, the joy of the reaper. His heart is thrilled with humble thankfulness, that he has been entrusted with the precious seed which contains the germ of eternal life; and that to him has been given the yearning love for the souls of men, which makes the breaking up of the hard soil, and the dropping of the good seed, a work in which he delights. The thought that another's hand may reap, clouds not the sunshine of his pathway. He feels his own weakness, and it is well, for He who said to him "Go," did not wish him to lean upon so frail a thing as his human strength, but upon the everlasting truths of such promises as "My strength is made perfect in weakness," and "My word shall not return unto me void." He sometimes feels that heaven regards his work with a peculiarly tender interest, for the Saviour of the world was rather a seedsower, than a reaper. He talked face to face with men; He knows the hardness of their hearts, how they cling to the old, how slowly and unwillingly they accept the new. He toiled and suffered, as men can neither toil nor suffer; yet humanly speaking he saw little fruit.

He, who at one time cried out in anguish of spirit, "And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life," surely offers loving sympathy to the patient toiler, who often feels that he is working against walls of solid rock.

Jesus knew that His Kingdom was to be established in the earth. Believes not the seed sower this truth also? Why need he worry himself with the questions when and how? The harvest time is sure, for the purposes of the Allwise must be accomplished; and in this assurance can the servant not be content?

He is to honour his Master by his daily faithfulness, by his constant expectation of blessing, and by his looking hopefully to the future, when the waste places shall blossom as the rose, and when the thorn and briar, which may now wound, shall give place to the fir tree and the myrtle. It is a blessed thing to be a seed-sower; for as surely as greenness and beauty follow the rippling brook, so life and immortality spring up wherever, for the Master's sake, a faithful hand has dropped a faithful seed. With such a motive, one must doubt God's eternal truth before he yields to the discouragements of the way.

Frequently, indeed, do thorns pierce cruelly; hope almost dies in the heart; and the eyes are so dimmed with tears, that they can scarcely see the end of the precious promise. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." Suppose that its fruition never comes till the pearly gates have closed behind the sower, how dare we deem a life sacrificed or fruitless that has been wholly devoted to this heaven-appointed work? God measures by faithfulness and the hidden motives of the heart, rather than by that which men call success.

Again, the sower of the Gospel seed has the happy consciousness that he is a co-worker with the Holy Spirit. This divine Presence abides with him, removing it may be, insurmountable though unseen difficulties, and by His tender, subduing influences the hearts of men are prepared, not only to receive, but to nourish and cherish the truth.

The work of this invisible agent is sometimes so complete and perfect, that as soon as the message of God's servant falls upon the ear, the soul, which has hitherto been like a fountain sealed, bursts forth into life and joy. And to him who has spoken the life-giving word, there seems to have been little or no seed-sowing, and he is almost surprised at the sudden fruitage. More frequently it occurs that the seeds of truth are at first rejected, and the sower turns away with a heavy heart, forgetting that where he has been refused admittance, the Holy Spirit has also been grieved and wounded.

Could the sower always live in the realization of this Presence and His interest in his work, and feel that he knows no joy or sorrow in which He does not participate, trials and discouragements would scarcely have the power to ripple the surface of his peace. The recompense of the faithful sower does not rest upon the hearer's acceptance or rejection of the truth, for "to him that soweth in righteousness there shall be a sure reward."

As to where and when this seed shall be sown, God's word speaks with sufficient clearness. Away down the ages we hear some of the old prophets saying, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand"; while another exclaims, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." A third utters a warning note, "not to sow among thorns"; and Jesus, to whom God's truth was dear, said to his disciples, "Cast not your pearls before swine." He who committeth his way to the Lord will have respect to the observance of these directions, that there be neither a thin sowing nor a waste of the precious seed.

Only wisdom from on high can guide to a safe judgment in this matter—

"'Tis a joy to bear the seed,
To go with the store of grain,
To scatter it here and scatter it there
And sow and sow again."

But it is an awful thing to handle thoughtlessly the seeds of truth, and to scatter them where they will be trampled ruthlessly in the dust, where neither fruitage nor reward can be justly expected. Of such work may it not be said "Ye have sown much, but bring in little." The sower's task is heavy with responsibilities, which arise mainly from the sinfulness of his own heart; but it is surely the most Godlike work that was ever given to man. All the sowers for eternity and for those who seek the honour and glory of the Master, there awaits a welcome in the eternal home above, from which no sheaf will be missing, and where the servant will participate in the harvest joy of his Lord, whom we are told, "shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."—*A Paper read at the Bob-billi Conference.*

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.—I want to say most emphatically, that, the more I see of mission work and missionaries, the more thoroughly do I believe in it and them. No statistics can measure the good which has been done in the past by these means; and yet greater things may be done in the future if the Church at home can be made to feel and respond to the necessities of the case.—*Chaplain G. A. Crawford, U.S.N.*