

to law, under well-understood and invariable conditions. The kingdom of grace is just as certainly under the reign of law as the kingdom of nature. If I sow seed under the proper conditions I expect growth. When the seed produces a plant I am not surprised at it. I do not consider that the wonderful change is a direct miracle. It is the result of a law exhibiting the Almighty power of the law-giver, but it is not a special interposition to suspend law. So, when we sow the incorruptible seed of the word in the heart, we may expect it under the proper conditions to grow into a great tree. God however has arranged that spiritual life as well as physical life on earth will develop itself only under certain conditions, both in the heart and the world. We might be surprised if we saw growth where these conditions are ignored, but we may expect it when they are complied with. What then are the conditions of the law of life?

SOIL.

A seed cannot grow into a plant without soil. You may force partial growth without soil, but not full development. The seed in air and moisture may germinate and sprout, but without soil, death and decay are in these circumstances all the more speedy and certain. It is not so with the divine truth. That must find soil in the heart. The seed must find a lodgment in the conscience, the affections, the will. We must *believe* the truth, *love* the truth, *obey* the truth. It is not enough to have it in the store house of memory and understanding. There it can be nothing but dried up mouldy kernels. It must get down into the soil of conscience where it produces conviction. It must lay hold on the affections where it excites our love, and it must control the will and make us obedient. The seed on hardened consciences often lies on the surface, and under the influence of a little excitement sprouts and dies. Self-righteousness like a green sward, unbroken by the plough, keeps the seed from entering many a heart. The ploughshare of penitence requires to lay the conscience bare. Sometimes there is the rubbish of vice. Many men require to give up

and forsake sin in order to be benefited by the truth. Evil habits need to be gathered up and burned in order to let the seed reach the soil. It is only in the soil of men's hearts the seeds of grace grow.

LIGHT.

A seed cannot grow without sunlight. A plant cannot grow in the dark; and artificial light, however brilliant cannot supply the place of sunlight for vegetable life. Deprived altogether of the sun the seed dies. The same condition applies to the seed of divine truth. Away from the light of the sun of righteousness it dies. Keep Jesus as the crucified Redeemer out of view and the truth loses its vitality. It is because His light is obscured that some Churches and hearts are so fruitless. With many of us it is like trying to raise flowers in a cellar. The plants are wilted and blanched, and sickly for want of sunlight. If we would only open the doors and windows of our hearts and admit the full rays of the sun of righteousness, our religion would be more healthy. It is only in the light of Christ that the seed of grace will grow. Men in whose heart the seed is come to light, John iv. 21.

MOISTURE.

A seed cannot grow without moisture. Even in soil and sunlight it will wilt without moisture. The rains and dews of heaven are necessary for growth. The seed of truth can only grow when watered by the Holy Spirit. On that field where He is poured out or on which He distils like dew will the seed grow. That seed is here on many hearts scattered, waiting for the showers of blessing. The Church needs the early and latter rain. Our souls need it. May the rain fall on the dry, parched land.

AIR.

A seed cannot grow without air. The plant needs air as much as man. It cannot live without a congenial atmosphere. The seed of divine truth produces a plant of paradise. It requires to be surrounded by something of the temperature and atmosphere of heaven. It has to be developed in a kind of spiritual hot-house, situated in the frigid zone of the world. The air must be