

good or anybody's good. He must not be exposed in any way, he must run no risks. If anything should happen that one precious life, the hope of the family would be gone. Their coal would be quenched. And so, as far as possible, he must be kept alone and apart. And yet, over-much care is as bad as too little. The risk is as great. Something must be ventured, if anything is to be won. Save your one life, and you lose it. Lose it, and you save it.

And God the Father's one Son is such a treasure to him, such a joy. Will he therefore keep him yonder in his bosom, keep him in the loneliness and apartness he enjoys there?

O, mother, you want to keep your one son in your own arms: and want to hold him there through all the hard testing years of his experience. You think he is safer there than anywhere else.

And what if the Father in Heaven keep to himself his one Son; and what if the One Son should be only too happy to abide there, enjoying the rapture of his Father's love, and dwelling apart in the awful loneliness of Godhead? Ah! the loss, the loss of being alone, the loss of being alone with God even! It is not Christ-like, God-like; and so the son of God cannot abide alone in the glory eternal. The one wheat-grain must not be boxed up, for then it must ever abide alone; and to be ever alone is to lose itself, to lose the grandeur of its blessing-bringing being! No. Let the one wheat-grain be sown; let it fall into the rich loam prepared for it. And let the one Son of God, the Only-Begotten of the Father come forth from the abiding alone in his glory, to share his life with others, to give it for others. And God gave his one Son. He kept him not to Himself. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

### III. THE WHEAT GRAIN SOWN.

"Verily, verily. I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

There is something touching, almost painful, reckless, in the sowing process. You see the farmer yonder, or you will see him in a few days, going to the bin where the precious wheat is stored. How fondly, tenderly, proudly, he takes the rich amber grains into his hands, and looks at them. He thinks there is no wheat like his, and there is a soreness at his heart when he comes to part with it. He wishes he could keep it where it is. But he knows the proverb: nothing venture, nothing win; so, with a tear stealing down his cheek, he fills his bosom with it, and strong in faith, he strides

across his acres, recklessly sowing his wheat.

You can fancy how hard it must have been, away back at the beginning for the man who had the one first grain of wheat to sow it. He wonders whether he will box it up, and thus keep it, or take it out to his little field and risk it there. Birds may prey upon it. Spring frosts may blight it. Inclement skies may ruin its promise. Tenthredin and evils may happen to it. Still, the hungry ages must have bread, and their bread is stored up in that one wheat grain, and, to get it out, it must be sown. So, weeping, he goes forth bearing his precious seed, and with a tender solicitude he drops it carefully into the receptive earth.

Now, the sower who went forth to sow is the Lord, and the one wheat-grain is himself, his precious word, his precious blood. I see him weeping as he sows. The rains drench him. The cold chills him. The sun scorches him. The weary way blisters his feet. The hungry wilderness preys upon him. The devil tempts him. The cruelty of men hurts him. The unfaithfulness of friends betrays him. The forsaking of his Father gives the last fatal blow to his worn out young life. Ah! the sowing the Christ had to do, that the ages might have the bread of life, was sore sowing.

And were there no risks in this sowing as in other sowings? You do not like the word perhaps. You say there was never any doubt as to whether the Christ would succeed. He never had any doubt himself as to his ultimate success, and yet, so human was the Christ, so conditioned by the world's circumstances, so influenced and affected and environed was he by all that influences and affects and environs dust and ashes, that it is not so out of place perhaps to talk here of risks with regard even to him. I ask, were there no anxieties around his cradle such as there are around other cradles? Were there no fears lest Nazareth's wicked streets might somehow corrupt his boyhood and youth, and blight the promise of early years? Ah! doubtless there were, and more perhaps than there were any need for. I think I see the angels hovering anxiously over that weird struggle in the wilderness, and doubtful as to what the issue is to be. Is it not, I ask, with blanched cheek, and bated breath, He Himself enters the lists with the grim foe? What means those tears of his, the unutterable groanings of his human soul, his prayers in the garden, his waiting on the cross, if there were no risks, or something of the kind, in his sowing? And even yet there are risks of a kind. We know not oftentimes how it is to be with the Lord and his cause, in so far as concerns us, and we are not without our anxieties as to the issue of the struggle that is still being fought