

age. I preached a sermon explaining, or rather impressing, the doctrinal and practical points of Christianity. Then followed the magic lantern with views illustrating the chief events recorded in Scripture. After this I was tired, but when I was leaving a child was brought to be baptized and a lad offered himself. I promised to see them in the morning and hold another service, which I did, and in the evening preached at a lumber camp to a large congregation.

LET us turn once more to the modern demand that so many missionaries shall produce in such and such a time so many converts, and to the impatience, if not the indignation, which is felt and expressed if this expectation is not realized, as though something had taken place which was akin to a commercial fraud. What is this modern way of looking at missions but an endeavour to apply to the kingdom of Divine grace those rules of investment and return which are very properly kept in view in a house of commerce? Do you not see that this demand leaves God, the great Missionary of all, out of the calculation? God has His own times for pouring out His Spirit, His own methods of silent preparation, His own measures of speed and of delay, and He does not take missionaries or the promoters of missionary societies into His confidence. He has a larger outlook than they, more comprehensive plans; and whether He gives or withholds His gifts, it is, we may be sure, in view of the truest and broadest interests of His spiritual kingdom. We cannot compel His bounty, we can but do as He bids us, and abide His time. "Even as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until He have mercy upon us;" or, as St. James puts it: "Like as the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain." Not that this reverent patience in waiting for God's blessing is any excuse whatever for relaxing the zealous activity with which missionary efforts should be prosecuted by the Church of God. The husbandman does not the less plough the soil, or the less sow the seed, because he is uncertain whether his labor will be followed by the early and the latter rain. If he does not plough and sow, he knows that the rain will be useless, at least to him. It is quite possible for a secret indifference to the interests of Christ and His kingdom to veil itself under the garb of reverence for the incalculable character of the ways of God. To refuse to help the work of Christian missions because we do not know how far God will permit a particular mission to effect many or striking conversions is only one of the many forms of self-deceit which we Christians too often employ in order to avoid Christian duty. Duties are for us, results are with God. We have no doubt, if we are Christians, about our duty in this matter. Before us lies the greater part of the human race, "sitting

in darkness and in the shadow of death," with no true knowledge of God, or of the real meaning of life and of that which follows it; and above and among us there rises the Cross, that Cross to which we are indebted for peace and hope, that Cross on which He hangs, whose Name is the only Name given among men whereby men may be saved, and in our ears there sound the commands, uttered eighteen centuries ago, but always binding, always new: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me;" "Go in to all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Our part is clear, even though, after a century of labor, we should have to say with the Prophet: "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain," since even then we may add with Him: "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." Activity and patience, these are the two conditions, whether at home or abroad, of good missionary work. We must learn to cultivate long patience for the precious fruit of the spiritual soil without in any degree relaxing our active cultivation of the soil which yields it. When a Christian takes part in these great efforts, he rises, or should rise, above the limits of his own petty individual life; he acts as, what he is, a member of the body of Christ; and the Body of Christ, it lives, not for some thirty or forty or fifty, or at most eighty years, it lives in the centuries. Already eighteen hundred years and more have passed since its birth, and it gathers in one century the harvest whose crop was sown in the century before. To belong to a great family, to a great country, may be of itself an incitement to noble effort; what should it be if we claim fellowship with the general assembly of the Church of the Firstborn in earth and in Heaven from Pentecost till now? Let us endeavor in spirit to associate ourselves with this larger, this nobler, this more hopeful life, and to remember, not only the privileges which it confers, but the duties which it enjoins; and, in laboring according to our measure to extend its frontier, to be content and thankful, if it should please our Divine Master to show to us of this generation His work and to our children His glory.—*Selected.*

AND as in nature so, as St. James implies, it is in grace. Man does his part; he sows the word of life, he prepares the soil of the soul, he plants with St. Paul, he waters with Apollos, but he can do no more; and God who sends the early and the latter rain alone gives the increase. So it is in the history of individuals when that great change takes place which is called conversion, whether from error to truth, or from ungodliness of life to the obedience of Christ. Conversion is not so sudden a process as it may seem to be. It is sudden perhaps at last. There may be a moment when a man is conscious of passing a line from darkness to light, "from the power of Satan to God," just as there is a moment when the fruit is ripened perfectly so that it falls. But that moment has been long prepared for.—*Selected.*