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CHRIST TEACHING BY PARABLES.

IV. QUAR., LESSON X., DEC. 9, LUKE 8:4-15.

Golden Text – "The seed is the Word of God." – Luke 8:11.

This parable needs no further explanation than that which the great Teacher gave. But his words should be carefully pondered and should lead to self-examination, as not the hearers only, but the doers of the Word, are acceptable with God.

It is worthy of special notice, however, that the Lord expected his disciples to see the drift of this parable without inquiring [R1742 : page 380] for an explanation. "And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? *Unto you* it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing, they may see and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." – Mark 4:10-13. See also Isa. 6:9,10; Matt. 13:12-17; John 12:39,40; Acts 28:25-28; Rom. 11:7.

While our Lord thus indicated that his disciples should have been able to interpret this parable, because of their knowledge of the truth it was designed to illustrate, it is not to be inferred that all his parables were so simple as to be promptly understood at the time they were spoken. Many of them illustrated truths not revealed at that time, and hence they could not be understood then. The expression, "To you it is given," etc., applies, not only to the disciples of that day, but to the disciples all through the age. While the truth is made manifest gradually, more and more, as meat in due season, the parables which illustrated those truths can only be seen as illustrations as [R1742 : page 381] the truths they illustrate become manifest.

To "them that are without" – outside the pale of the believing disciples – which included the whole nation of Israel except a small "remnant," these illustrations of the truth were, of course, as dark as were the truths themselves to which they allowed their prejudices to blind their eyes, greatly to their own detriment. And it was for this very reason – because their hearts were not right, and they were therefore unworthy of the truth and its blessings – that the Lord opened his mouth in parables and dark sayings, so that they might fail to perceive the blessings of which they were proving themselves unworthy. It was because of this unworthiness that blindness came upon Israel, and that it will continue until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come into possession of those blessings which were first offered to Israel and rejected by them.
