

[R5087 : page 266]

TEACHING BY PARABLES ONLY

– MATT. 13:34,35,55. – SEPT. 29. –

Text: – "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." – John 6:63.

TODAY'S LESSON declares, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables, and without a parable spake He not unto them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept, secret from the foundation of the world."

Bible students and Bible scholars have generally expressed surprise that the Great [R5088 : page 266] Teacher, in harmony with the above Scripture, spoke always to the people in symbolic language, "dark sayings," the meaning of which they rarely understood. Another Scripture informs us that the reason was that the true invitation was not intended for the ordinary multitudes, but merely for the consecrated.

To those who accepted the Lord as the Savior, and who took upon themselves the required vow of faithfulness in walking in His footsteps unto death – these were granted special enlightenment, as it is written, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to outsiders these things are spoken in parables, that they might not see and understand."

The simple explanation of the matter is that an understanding of spiritual things would do harm rather than good to those not spiritually begotten – to those not fully consecrated to the Divine will. But with the views we once entertained, and which are voiced by all the creeds of the Dark Ages, none of the explanations would be tenable; because, according to those creeds, only the Elect are to be saved, all the non-elect are to be lost, and the Elect would be the only ones permitted to understand the things pertaining to the Heavenly calling.

The entire matter is clarified when we recognize the difference between the salvation of the world to the human nature, during Messiah's reign of a thousand years, and the salvation provided for the Elect, called during this Age, and specially instructed and guided with the view of their making their calling and election sure.

THE APOSTLES JESUS' MOUTHPIECES

It has been claimed that the doctrines of Christianity can be better gleaned from the writings of the Apostles than from the sayings of Jesus, as reported in the Gospels. There is considerable truth in this claim, and the reason is manifest; namely, Jesus' words were addressed mainly to the multitudes, and when He addressed the disciples He could not discuss even with them deep, spiritual truths, because they had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and therefore could not understand spiritual things. Jesus Himself declared, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now."

On one occasion our Lord's words were so deep, so highly figurative, that many of His followers left Him, saying, "This is a hard (difficult) saying, who can understand it?" (John 6:60.) The saying was, "Unless ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." God's consecrated and spirit-enlightened people can understand that statement, but none others can even yet understand it. St. Paul explains the reason why, saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." – I Cor. 2:14.

"AFTER YE WERE ILLUMINATED"

St. Paul gives the key to the situation in one of his Epistles, saying, "After that ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." (Heb. 10:42.) The illumination received was the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, the Apostles at Pentecost received an illumination of the mind which enabled them to understand the things of God, yea, the

deep things of God; for He hath given unto us His Spirit, "that we might know the things which are freely given us of God." – I Cor. 2:12.

Jesus had this same thought in mind when He declared that there were certain things His disciples could not understand at that time, but would know afterwards, because He would send the Holy Spirit, which would bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had spoken; and would show them things to come. (John 14:26; 16:13.) This was not only true with the Apostles, but has been true with respect to all the members of the Body of Christ throughout this Age. Each one presenting his Body a living sacrifice has been accepted by the great Advocate, and presented as a part of His own Offering; and then the offerer has been begotten of the Holy Spirit to be a New Creature in Christ.

It is to these New Creatures that the statement is made, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." It is to these the Bible has promised, "He will show you things to come." It is these that are to be guided into all Truth as it shall become due. It is for these that the Word of God is a Storehouse, from which "things both new and old" are to be produced under the Spirit's guidance, as they become "meat in due season"* to the "household of faith."*

BABES IN CHRIST AND MEN

Along the same line we note the fact that even the spirit-begotten New Creatures must make progress in **[R5088 : page 267]** their appreciation of spiritual things. The Apostle urges such that "As new born babes they should desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby." And the growth is necessary if they would attain joint-heirship in the Kingdom; hence the Apostle again urges that each seek not to continue a babe, but to become a man, and to use the "strong meat" of Divine Truth. By becoming a man, he is sanctified, developed as a New Creature and filled with the Spirit, and "thoroughly furnished unto every good work," by knowledge of the Word of God.

It must have been a difficult matter for our Lord, in teaching, to follow the rule which He gave to His disciples, namely, to "be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove." Appreciating the Divine plan fully, completely, He must frequently have had a yearning desire to tell His beloved followers more of the mysteries and deep things of the Divine Plan than they were able to appreciate.

"SPIRIT AND LIFE" WORDS

Now our text: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Here was another endeavor to impress His dear disciples with the thought that they should not take His words too literally, but should look for the deeper meaning. Furthermore, they were to remember that they could not expect to get that deep meaning until after the Master's ascension; as He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come unto you; but if I go away I will send Him unto you"; "for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." – John 16:7; 7:39.

Jesus was not glorified because His glorification would not take place until His resurrection, and in a fuller sense until His ascension to the Most Holy on High, there to appear in the presence of God on our behalf – to make application of the merit of His sacrifice for those who have consecrated to walk in His steps.

It was, therefore, after they had been illuminated that the Apostles and others of the Church understood the meaning of this text, that the words of Jesus were spiritual and could be understood only by those possessing the spiritual key, the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The Master's words were "words of life" in the sense that they conveyed the great Message of the terms upon which we may have everlasting life and become His joint-heirs. Although the Apostles explain the philosophy of the Divine Plan in great detail, and mention more than did Jesus, yet in His sayings we find the very essence or kernel of the Gospel. Nowhere are the terms of discipleship more

carefully laid down than in Jesus' words, because the disciples could understand what would be the meaning of the figures of self-denial, cross-bearing, and walking in His steps, even if they could not understand the philosophy of justification, sanctification, election and Divine foreknowledge.

From Jesus' words more clearly than from any other words we get the thought of the "water of life," and how it is now in His followers a "spring" of truth, grace and everlasting life. Nowhere else do we more clearly get the general statement that the Father hath life in Himself, and hath granted unto the Son life in Himself, and that He might share this life with His disciples – with whomsoever He would. Thus, as St. Paul says, the words of this salvation in which we rejoice began to be spoken by our Lord. It is He also that declared that He brought life and immortality to light, thus distinguishing between the general reward of everlasting life to be given to the world, and the special reward to be granted to the Church.

