

IS MY HEART "GOOD GROUND"?

"That on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." – Luke 8:15.

WE RECOGNIZE these words as a portion of our Lord's parable of The Sower. A man went out to sow his field. As he scattered his seed, some fell on one kind of soil and some on another – some on thorny ground, some on stony ground, some on the hard, beaten pathway, and some on good ground. The good ground brought forth – some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold and some one hundred-fold.

According to the Master's interpretation of this parable, the good seed represents the Message of the Kingdom, which as it falls here and there appeals to some hearts differently from what it does to others. That seed falling upon the beaten pathway represented the Message as heard by persons into whose hearts it did not enter at all. They simply heard with the outer ear and forgot. It made no impression. The Lord said that the reason for this was that the Adversary came and caught the seed away. It had not penetrated even the surface of the hard ground. The conditions were not favorable for its entrance into the heart and the hearers soon forgot all that they had heard. The wiles of the Adversary would always, if possible, prevent the seed from entering the heart and taking root.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SHALLOW HEART

Amongst those who do receive the Truth are the stony-ground class. These are at first very much enthused, but they lack depth of character. They are not the kind the Lord is now seeking. They will not bring forth the fruitage, for they have not sufficient depth for rooting. They are shallow. They desire to trim their sails in harmony with the favorable winds of this life. As soon as they find out that

the Truth is not popular, [R5736 : page 229] they foresee persecution or social ostracism; then their ardor cools and their interest in the Harvest Message wanes and gradually dies out. Thus they are like wheat planted in shallow soil, which comes up and flourishes a little while; but when the hot sun comes out it withers away, not having much root.

The heart that is like the thorny ground is favorable as to soil. It is good ground, with fine prospects for developing the fruits of the Holy Spirit. But it is infested with thorns, which are not removed, but are permitted to remain and so choke the wheat. These thorns are not the frivolous pleasures of life – theaters, cards, dancing, etc.; but, as the Lord explains in the parable, they are the cares of life, the ambitions of life, the deceitfulness of riches – perhaps the feeling that if they can accumulate wealth they can serve the Lord's Cause the better. This tendency to go out after other things allows a condition to obtain that is unfavorable to the wheat class. These may be good business men, fine politicians, or they may be immersed in some kind of study. Others of them may be fine housekeepers and have a pride as to how well things are kept, or they may be leaders in society or in works of reform, etc. All these are the thorns of the parable. A heart of this kind does not bring forth fruit, because the ground, while good, is otherwise occupied, and the Message of the Kingdom and its work are crowded out to a large degree, so that no fruit is brought to perfection.

HONESTY A BASIC QUALITY

Then we come to the "good ground" class of this parable, ground where the soil is not only good, but cleared of all noxious weeds which would prevent the proper growth of the wheat seed. This condition represents entire consecration to God. Everything which would hinder has been cast out. The cares of this life are not permitted to enter this heart and choke the Word. Such a one has made a bona-fide contract with the Lord and knows when he is

keeping it; and he will keep it. He has the proper quality or depth of character and more or less of ability. And there is the special trait of thorough honesty, loyalty.

Amongst those of the class who are styled the "good ground," we find different conditions in life – not many noble, but *some* noble; not many great, but *some* great; not many learned, but *some* learned; not many wise, but *some* wise. But they must all be good of heart, and they must be honest, else they could not bring forth the necessary fruitage – honesty being the most important feature of all, with a degree of intelligence and appreciation of the Truth. We see, then, how this class might bring forth varying amounts of fruitage, according to circumstances, conditions and ability. But they are in the right heart condition to bring forth their very best – some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold and some a hundred-fold.

In the picture we see that the Truth is represented by the seed, and we see that the individuals are also represented by the seed. The thought is that a grain of Truth is planted, and that in an honest heart it produces a character which is in harmony with the Truth. That seed of Truth is the Message of the Kingdom, the Word of the Kingdom – not a truth about the philosophies of men or some scientific truth, but a particular truth – not something that ignores God's Plan and purports to be a better plan than that which God has arranged, but the one particular thing – the Word of the Kingdom.

FOUR HUNDRED MILLION TARES

It seems remarkable that with so many that are called Christian people – numbering now four hundred millions – they know so little about the Kingdom! The vast majority have learned but very little of it, if anything. This is manifest when we look over in Europe and see millions fighting to the death, when we realize that other millions are ready to fight here in the United States also. This is because they have not become New Creatures. As the natural seed

enters the ground, sprouts and brings forth something that is fostered and developed by the soil, so the good seed of the Truth in the proper heart brings forth good fruit. The Message of the Kingdom brings forth results in harmony with its nature. It reaches the proper class and brings them to an attitude where God accepts them as New Creatures. These New Creatures are the children of the Kingdom; and these children of the Kingdom are the wheat that will be garnered. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom."

Our Lord in another parable shows us a different kind of seed – tare seed. This tare-seed looks a little like wheat. It is not the true seed – not the seed of the Kingdom. It may be a seed, or message, of morality or purity of life or total abstinence from intoxicating liquors, etc. No matter; it will not produce the Kingdom class. The only seed which will produce this class is the good seed, the true Kingdom Message.

As we look about in the world we see that the great Enemy oversowed this wheat-field of the Kingdom with false seed, the darnel, the tare-seed, as represented by these various messages that have gone forth throughout the world. This seed does not necessarily bring forth bad people. They are people who are workers for various things, some of them more or less good, but they are not children of the Kingdom. At the present time these tares are, many of them, influential. And the whole four hundred millions of them represent, not the true wheat-field, but merely an imitation, usurping the place really belonging to the true wheat class.

TIME REQUIRED TO DEVELOP FRUIT

In this Harvest time, now about ended, a separation has been taking place between the true wheat and the tares. The true wheat are being gathered into the garner, while the tares are being bound in bundles to be **[R5737 : page 229]** burned – not literally burned, but destroyed as tares, as imitation wheat. They will soon cease to

call themselves Christians. They will recognize themselves as what they have always been – parts of the world. Many of these are Church members, but are purely of the world and its spirit. They discount the true wheat, and consider them a little queer, fanatics.

Many of these tares do not know what they are. But those who have received the Message of the Kingdom into good and honest hearts will bring forth fruitage in harmony therewith. It requires time to develop the right fruit. This class grow daily in knowledge, in love, and are building one another up in the most holy faith. They also do good unto all as they have opportunity. This is the whole work which God is expecting of them. These are the ones who will ere long be gathered into the Heavenly Kingdom beyond the veil.

After the fire of this "Day of Wrath" shall have burned up this "present evil world," and burned out all the roots of pride, then will come the great time of blessing for the world of mankind. The great plowshare of trouble will prepare humanity for the great seed-sowing of the near future. It will take a thousand years to bring forth the glorious crop of the Millennium. Those gathered then will not be wheat, but the Restitution class; wheat being used in the parables of our Lord to represent the spiritual class, the saints of the Gospel Age.

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