

The Sower and the Seed

Key Verse: *“He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”*
—Matthew 13:23

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

WHILE THE LORD DOES

not, from day to day, reveal to us what may be accomplished by our self-sacrificing efforts to make known the glad tidings of the kingdom, in the parable of the sower he has given us a broad outline of what to expect. In this parable, we learn that the “seed” of the Gospel message, when sown, falls on various types of ground—by the wayside; on stony ground; among thorns; and on good ground. This indicates that only the seed which falls on good ground produces plants which bring forth fruit.

In Jesus’ explanation of this parable, we have some very interesting facts brought to light. There are many, of course, who pay no attention at all to the Gospel seed which is sown, but these do not seem to be represented in the parable. The first group Jesus mentions are those in which the seed is said to fall “by the way side.” (Matt. 13:19) This class of hearers receives the message for the moment, but by not seeking to understand it, they show no real desire to hold it in order that it might take root.

In the parable, there are others who receive the seed

of Truth into “stony places” and “among the thorns.” These are described by Jesus in this way: “He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”—Matt 13:20-22

The “good ground,” or proper heart condition to receive the Gospel, as Jesus explains in our Key Verse, denotes one who not only hears the message, but seeks to understand it, and then brings forth much fruitage of Christian character. This is in contrast with the hearers who receive the seed by the wayside, in stony places, or among thorns, none of whom come to a sufficient understanding in order that they might bear fruit. Thus it is clear from the parable that an appreciation of the great fundamentals of God’s plan is essential in order that the Christian may maintain his standing before the Lord and bear “fruit unto life eternal.”—John 4:36

We are to know on whom we have believed, and why. (II Tim. 1:12) Furthermore, we must be persuaded “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Rom. 8:38,39

Another lesson from this parable is that we should not become discouraged when so few take a deep interest in the Gospel of the kingdom. Most of the seeds of truth which have been sown throughout the entire age doubtless have fallen by the wayside, yet the Lord wants his people to continue sowing, regardless of visible results. “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper.”—Eccles. 11:6■