

“The Planting of the Lord”

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E. J. Waggoner

When Jesus was upon earth, the people flocked about Him, and large crowds followed Him wherever He went to hear the wonderful words that He spoke. Many of these words have been preserved for us, and we may read them in the Gospels. So we may learn of Him to-day, just as truly as the people who then followed Him, and listened to these fine words as they fell from His lips.

In them we see how Jesus showed the people the precious lessons of Gospel truth that God was teaching them in all the things that they could see around them. Then they could always read the lessons for themselves whenever they should see the things about which He had spoken to them.

One day when Jesus was teaching the people, He saw in the fields a picture something like the one above of a man sowing seed in the ground that he had made ready. Jesus called the attention of the people to this, and told them this little story:

“Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up, and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

This, like all the stories Jesus told the people, was a parable. Jesus put it in this way, so that the people could see in it more clearly, some lesson that He wanted to teach them. But even His own disciples did not at first understand it; so they came and asked Jesus to explain it to them. This we may always do when we do not understand His Word, and He has promised that His Holy Spirit shall “guide us into all truth.”

If you have read this parable and have not understood it, read carefully the explanation that Jesus gave to His disciples:

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. And they by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved.

“And those on the rock are they which, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

“And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasure of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

“And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

From this you can see how much depends upon the kind of ground into which the seed falls. It is not enough to have good seed; there must also be good ground if there is to be any fruit. You may have some very choice seed, but if you sow it in hard, stony, or thorny ground, it will be wasted. There is only one thing that can make your heart good ground, ready for the good made of God's Word. This is His own Holy Spirit, which can make it soft and tender so that the seed of the Word may sink deeply into it.

Besides soft ground where it can take deep root, there is something else that the good seed needs, and that is, room to grow. The weeds of sin, if allowed to remain, will crowd to grow will crowd out the good seed; “the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life,” if we let these fill our minds, will choke the Word so that it cannot grow in us. But if we love the Word of God and get our minds full of it, it will choke and crowd out all evil things that ought not to be there.

Another thing is that we must keep the Word,—let it stay in our hearts, and then it will grow and bring forth fruit of itself. You do not have to make the seed grow that you put in the ground: The power of God's Word is in it, and that makes it spring up and grow and bud and blossom and bear fruit, “thirty, sixty, and an hundredfold,” each seed after its kind.

And so, when the same Word finds a place in your heart, and is kept there, it will fill your life with the fruits of righteousness, and every one will see in you “the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

Think of these words of Jesus about the seed especially just now in the time of seed-sowing, as you see the sower go forth to sow, and perhaps plant some seed yourself in your own garden. Ask the great Husbandman, whose garden your heart is, to send upon you the gentle rain by His Spirit, the bright sunshine of His love, and the dew of His grace that you may be good ground that shall bring forth much fruit to His glory.