

PARABLE OF THE SOWER 1948

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PARABLE OF THE SOWER W. F. PENDLETON 1948

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"Behold, a sower went forth to sow." (Matthew 13: 3.)

When a sower goes forth to sow, he goes out of his house into a field. Similar words occur in the first verse of the chapter, where we are told that, on the same day that Jesus had declared that He was not the son of Mary, He "went out of the house, and sat by the sea." And then, in the second verse, we are informed that He went on a ship, and, sitting down, He spake to multitudes standing on the shore. But this historical narration now closes, and Jesus speaks to the multitude in parables.

In the first verse it is Jesus who goes forth out of the house to sit by the sea, then upon a ship, to teach the multitudes; but afterwards it is the Son of Man who, as a Sower, goes forth to sow His seed. The name Jesus was given to him-Jehovah the Savior-because He came as Divine Love into the world for the salvation of mankind. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1: 21.) So the angel said to Joseph. He did not come to save His people from the wrath of an angry God, as has been vainly imagined in the old theology, but He came to save His people from their sins, preaching the doctrine of repentance, in order that salvation from sin might be effected. He taught and preached the truth by parable and precept. And

in representing. the truth which He taught,-the doctrine which He preached, that men might be saved, saved by doing it,-He calls Himself the Son of Man, the Sower who goes forth to sow.

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But He does not explain to the multitude in open, direct language what He meant by the words which He spake unto them. He spoke unto them in parables, but did not show them plainly of the Father. "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John 16: 25.) This time when He was to speak no more in proverb and parable, but in the plain and direct language of truth-this time came to the disciples when He spoke unto them alone, and more fully on the day of Pentecost, when they were illuminated of the Holy Spirit, cloven tongues of fire lighting on their heads. And still more plainly does He speak of the Father in His Second coming into the world.

When He spoke unto His disciples alone, and when He enlightened them on the day of Pentecost, He was preparing them to become teachers and leaders in the new dispensation which was then about to dawn upon the world. To His disciples, when He was alone with them, He said, "The Sower soweth the Word." (Mark 4: 14.) "The seed is the Word of God." (Luke 8: 11.) "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man." (Matthew 13: 37.) And the Lord as the Son of Man, now in His Second Coming, appears in the glory of His Word to implant in all nations the seed of truth,-the genuine truth of the Word of God.

He had already indicated these things representatively and prophetically by the act of going upon a ship and, seated upon the ship, teaching the multitude upon the shore. To teach from a ship is representatively to teach from doctrine; for this is what is signified by a ship.

He begins by speaking of Himself as a Sower who sows the truth of the Word. He describes Himself as a Sower going forth into a field to sow, and He tells His disciples later, when He explains to them the parable of the wheat and the tares, that "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." (Matthew 13: 36-39.)

He was on the sea in a ship; and the multitude on the shore represented the field, which is the world into which He had come to teach men the way of salvation and eternal life.

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It is first said in the chapter that He came forth out of the house, signifying that He had conic forth from heaven. Now He tells them what He had conic forth to do. He had come to remain in the world forever, signified by His sitting on the sea in a ship. He came that He might always be with men to teach them true doctrine from His Word, that He might always be present to sow seed in His field, which is the world,-His world, which He had created and had now come to save, to save by teaching the genuine truth of His Word.

And He told them that He had come to sow His seed. "A Sower went out to sow His seed," as He had said to the multitude. This is what He

had come for,-to sow His seed. For other seed had been sown that was not His. The seeds that were not His, and the plants which had sprouted forth from them, were now to be rooted out. Hence He said later to His disciples, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out." (Matt. 15: 13.) He said this of the Pharisees. They were plants which Jehovah the Father had not planted. They were the tares, the children of the wicked one; and the enemy that had sown them was the devil. And when the harvest should come, they were to be rooted out, and gathered and burned in unquenchable fire, when should be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jehovah the Father had not planted them; the Son of Man had not sown them; for the Son of Man is He that soweth the good seed.

Especially now, in our time, do these words apply. For the Son of Man is the Lord in His Second Coming. He has come to sow the good seed as was never possible before. And all other seed that is not His must now be removed to make way for the true seed of the Word, which has been given by revelation from heaven. For the Lord again comes forth out of His house, and again sits upon the sea, speaking to the multitude from a ship.

He had to all appearance gone away. For it was necessary that He should disappear from natural thought and sight, that men might be free, that men while in the world might be in a state of free will, freedom of choice. And that this might be, it was necessary that He should become invisible. For He would have no persuasive faith in His new kingdom, no love established by miraculous manifestations of Divine Power.

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This will do for children, but not for the rational adult mind; for the rational mind is to be instructed and led in freedom according to reason.

This cannot be done by a God visible to the senses; so He disappears when He is glorified. But He is still sitting, and will forever sit, upon the ship, to teach men about heaven and the way to Himself. He is still there, but unseen except by those who can be gifted with spiritual vision. To all others He is gone, never to be seen by them again.

He had to all appearance gone away, but in reality men had gone away from Him. He was here teaching all the while, but men were not able to receive His teaching. For the dragon was in the world sowing his false seed,-the tares which had a look of genuine wheat, -and all the world was led astray by the appearance. "All the world wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast." (Rev. 13: 3, 4.) This is the world, the world in which we live. This the world which "wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon,"-the world into which the Son of Man has come to sow His seed, and root out the seeds of the dragon-which He will root out, and is able to root out, with all those who are willing to accept the conditions of His Coming.

For the Son of Man, when He comes, finds the dragon's seed sown everywhere,-in the field which is the whole world, especially in that part of it where the church is. For there, more than elsewhere, has the truth of the Word been perverted, has the seed of the dragon been sown, producing thorns and thistles rather than the true fruit of the Word.

Not only must the seed of truth be sown, but it must sprout and grow. And in order that this may take place, the conditions for growth must be favorable to the reception of the seed.

Now it is a fundamental truth that seed cannot be sown, instruction received, where falsities reign. For falsities, implanted in the mind by previous instruction and education, actively oppose the entrance of the truth of the Word. The first step is the removal of falsities. Their removal is the beginning of the preparation of the ground or the soil, even as the

natural ground is prepared by the removal of such things as prevent the sprouting and growth of the seed planted by the husbandman,-trees, bushes, rank undergrowth, stones, and other things which obstruct and stifle the growth of the seed.

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Then the ground must be ploughed and harrowed; the rain must fall from heaven; the sun must shine with the gentle warmth of spring. And the ground must continually be cultivated; the weeds must be removed, and kept from sprouting, that they may not choke the life of the young plant.

There must be a proper environment, surrounding condition, atmosphere-environment in both worlds-before the seed can be received, and sprout, and grow. No heavenly seeds can be implanted and received unless a man, a child, a youth be in the midst of good spirits. Without such environment in the spiritual world, no seed can take root and be nourished to a lasting growth.

And conditions in the natural world must correspond. Man must be surrounded by conditions favorable to his natural and spiritual education. The most favorable conditions are where parents are united in the love of spiritual things, and where those who take the place of parents are as one with them in the same love.

All parents have a love of the natural welfare of their children, that they may stand well with their neighbors and succeed in the world. But not all have a love of their spiritual welfare. These two loves must be united with parents and with teachers, in order to create a proper

environment in both worlds for their children. Children already have a true environment in the spiritual world, but there ought to be, as far as possible, a corresponding and cooperating environment in the natural world, in order that the seeds of truth may take root and spring into permanent growth in adult life.

When the age of maturity is reached, a boy and a girl, a youth, must then be left free to create his own environment, with the Lord alone as the Teacher and Guide, His responsibility is then to the Lord alone. A man in adult life, who, in full freedom according to his reason, places himself in good company in both worlds, is the man who is finally led to heaven.

This is what is meant by the opening words of the first Psalm: "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but whose delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth meditate day and night." The man who shuns evil company in both worlds, by resisting his own evil tendencies, looking to the Lord, is the man who delights in the Word, the law of God; and by that delight the Lord is ever implanting in him the seeds of truth, and leading him ever onward and upward to his eternal abode, to his mansion in the heavens.

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Delight in obedience to the law is the good ground, makes the good ground, in which the seed of truth takes root and flourishes. So is the ground tilled and cultivated. Parents first till the ground by cultivating a love of obedience. Children have this love naturally,-the love of obedience,-and parents must wisely hold the child in this love, until he is

ready to continue in the love of the law of the Lord, until he is ready to take delight in the commandments of the Lord from his own free will and endeavor.

But we must, realize that the devil begins early to sow his seed. And the only protection is in cultivating the love of obedience to the Word of the Lord; for the Word of the Lord is then the command of the parent.

For the Word first takes the form of command, which carries with it at once the idea of obedience. Revelation always takes at first the form of command. Hence the Ten Commandments, which, in their letter, are for children; and even the rational adult must at times put himself under their command, must at times hold himself under a blind obedience to the literal commands of God as given in the Decalogue. The only difference being that obedience to the commandments is enforced on the child by the parent, but the adult forces or compels himself. The Lord does not compel him. This is when the adult is in the state of his natural,-a state that is ever recurring. But when he is in the state of his rational, the commandments are obeyed from delight of heart, and obedience becomes love.

But, as was said, every Revelation first takes the form of command. The Writings are no exception, and the church will ever bless the memory of those men who first insisted that the Writings were of Divine Authority in the church. For in no other way can the seed given to us from the spiritual sense of the Word be permanently implanted among men. But there is this difference, which we have already intimated,-truth from the Writings, truth from the spiritual sense of the Word, is not to be enforced by external command, but each adult member of the church must be left in full freedom to lead himself and compel himself in obedience to the Lord in His new Revelation to men.

The internal of the adult, the internal of the rational man, is like a sensitive plant that closes itself on the approach of anything like compulsion from without. The natural law may be enforced, even by punishments, upon those who are natural, as it is with children, as it was with the Jews, who were natural men, a nation of children, as it is with every nation in a similar state. But the spiritual law must be enforced solely from within; and all the energies of an internal church will be directed to this end, that the individual member thereof may be free, and may be protected in his freedom to compel himself.

Until this state is reached, the New Church will remain natural, and not reach its appointed station as an internal church, a rational, a spiritual church, before the Lord. For it is ever and eternally true that all spiritual freedom begins when external compulsion ceases and self-compulsion begins.

Now, as a matter of fact, the devil first sows his seed. For man-and the church-is at first natural. He is born into the love of self and the love of the world, and these two loves are what make the natural man. This is the reason it is so easy for the devil to sow his seed in childhood,-in the childhood of man or in the childhood of the church. This is the reason why, in the Parable of the Sower, when the Son of Man begins to sow His seed, He finds the ground already planted with tares,-the seed of the evil one. It is the reason why the seed that has been implanted by the devil in the first three kinds of ground must be rooted out before the barren ground can become productive, before the seed of the Son of Man can take root and grow and bear fruit.

"A sower went forth to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured

it. And some fell upon stony places, and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundredfold."

And again we read that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

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But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also."

But the tares are the children of the wicked one, and must be gathered and burned in the fire, before the seed of the Son of Man can be implanted and grow. Not till then will the truth be seen in its own light, and love descend to be among men. Not till then will peace reign on earth as it reigns in heaven. Amen.

LESSONS: Deuteronomy 6: 1-15. Matthew 13: 1-23. Doctrine of Life 89, 90.

MUSIC: Liturgy, pages 430, 448, 568.

PRAYERS: Nos. 73, 74.

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PARABLE OF THE SOWER Rev. EMIL CRONLUND 1901

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. (Matt. 13: 8.)

THE Divine truth is absolutely necessary for the salvation of man. He has no other light, no other guide, and consequently no other road to Heaven. The truth must therefore find an abiding place in him, and he must will to be led by it. Now in order that man may receive the truth he must prepare himself by removing those things which prevent its insemination. That man may thus prepare himself for the reception of truth the Lord has pointed out in His parable of the sower what things prevent its reception and hinder its growth. This is one of the lessons that this parable teaches. It teaches that certain things must be removed and cast out, because they are diametrically opposite to the truth. Thus the Lord has not only taught us that we must know the truth, if we would enter Heaven, but He has also shown what must be done that the truth may be received, and what state the mind must be in that this may be accomplished.

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Another lesson taught in this parable is that man's part in the work of salvation consists principally in removing the obstructions. The Lord explained to His disciples why certain men did not receive and retain the truth, and from His explanation it is evident that in every case where the truth was not received it was owing to the fact that certain obstructions had not been removed.

With certain men the truth falls by the wayside, and the fowls come and devour it up. This takes place with those who are in no affection of truth, but are in the affection of falsity, and thus love darkness rather than light. With them falsity extinguishes the truth, for on account of not submitting their rational faculty to Divine revelation they see things that

are not, as if they were, and things that are as if they were not. Thus their minds are not turned towards the Divine, but towards their own reason; and human reason not enlightened by the Divine truth cannot but be in darkness, for it perverts the truth. The love of falsity from evil is thus what prevents some from receiving the truth.

There is also a certain class of men with whom the truth falls upon stony places, where it has not much earth. These accept the truth for external reasons, and apparently have an affection for it as long as it promotes their own interests. But when they find that it condemns their selfish loves and their evil and dishonest lives, and that it requires them to deal honestly with the neighbor, to love him as themselves and to consider his welfare, then the love of self rises within them like a scorching and destructive sun, which destroys the truth with them. Thus self interest in the obstruction that prevents this class of men from receiving the truth.

Again, with another class of men the seed falls among thorns, and the thorns spring up and choke it. These are they who are in the lusts of evil, and who think nothing of defrauding the neighbor if they can thereby obtain the wealth of this world. The love of this world carries them completely away, and it occupies their minds to such an extent that there is room for nothing else. If any truth from the Word should enter, it is choked, and becomes unfruitful. With this class of men, therefore, the love of the world and the deceitfulness of riches are the obstructions that prevent the reception of truth.

When these various evils and obstructions have been removed by man as of himself, then the seed which the Lord as the Heavenly Sower sows, falls into good ground, and brings forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

The perpetual endeavor of the Divine Providence is to make man into a good and fruitful ground. Man of himself longs to make himself into a bad ground where nothing but weeds grow, and this to make himself unproductive of good. The unfruitfulness of the different lands was not owing to bad seed or an unskillful sower: the same Sower sows the same seed in all, and with the same gracious design; but it is unfruitful in many because they are careless, inattentive, selfish and worldly minded.

Another lesson taught in this parable is that with a great number of people, and indeed with the majority at this day, the seed of truth does become unfruitful. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Evils and falsities are readily received by men, but the Divine truth cannot find an abiding place with them. In the hearts of most the Lord is denied, rejected and crucified; and if this is not done in words it is done in deeds. When the Lord is thus denied the mind cannot but be in darkness, even as there was darkness over the whole land when the Lord, after having been rejected and crucified by the Jews, died on the cross. This darkness was but a reflection of the still grosser darkness in the minds of men who had falsified and rejected the truth.

The heart of man is not by nature a fit ground for the implantation of the Divine truth, nor can it be made so in a moment it becomes so gradually, as little by little evil and falsity are rejected, and as, one by one, every plant that the Heavenly Father hath not planted is rooted up and cast into the fire. Man cannot become a new creature in a moment; for if his evils and falsities, which before regeneration make his life, were removed suddenly, man would be destroyed. Neither can the life of

Heaven be implanted in a moment, but gradually, day by day and year by year.

For this reason it is that in the beginning of regeneration man does not love truth and good from a genuine affection of them, but in the beginning he does the commandments from simple obedience, partly from fear of punishment in hell and partly from the thought of reward in Heaven.

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Afterwards, however, as he advances, he abstains from evils because he is averse to them and detests them, and because he loves to do good, without entertaining any idea of reward. Thus the tares and the wheat grow together for a time until the harvest comes. The Lord said that the tares should not be rooted up until the proper time came, for He said: "Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn."

Because in the beginning of regeneration man is influenced somewhat by selfish and worldly considerations, and because these move him somewhat to do what is right and honorable, therefore the Lord allows these tares to grow together with the wheat; for if the evils were removed and destroyed suddenly, the newly inseminated truth would be destroyed also. When the truth becomes firmly implanted with him who is regenerating, so that the love of good predominates over the love of evil, and man begins to be averse to evil, then the judgment comes,-the tares are rooted up, which can then be easily done, since man has then acquired a new life. It may thus be evident that man's old life and his old loves cannot be entirely cast out, until he has acquired a new

life and new loves. When this has been done, then the seed falls into good ground and brings forth fruit.

The good of life, or charity, is the ground in which truth is implanted, and it is indeed the only ground. It is said in the Heavenly Doctrines that the seed in good ground is with those who from the Lord love the truths which are in the Word, and from Him do them, and thus bear fruit. He who is conjoined with heaven by a life of charity is led by the Lord to see his evils, both evils of thought and evils of will; but he who is not in the life of charity takes no notice of evils, nor does he care to know what evil is; and thus the ground with him is unfruitful. But the ground is good and fruitful with him who abstains from all the evils forbidden in the commandments; for to shun evil is to do good: not to do evil to the neighbor or to think evil of him, is to do and will well towards him.

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Whenever charity and good will are absent then the Church cannot grow, for hatred and ill will destroy the Church more quickly and more thoroughly than any heresy ever did. Because good will is necessary in order that the Church may be established, therefore when the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of the Lord, they sang: "Peace on earth, good will toward men;" meaning not only that the Lord loved the human race, but also that men must love each other in order that they may worthily receive the Lord.

As there was nothing of charity or good will among men when the Lord came into the world, He said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." It was entirely new to the Jews to hear that they should love their neighbor as themselves. And to the Christian

world the Lord's new commandment is just as new. It's the Lord's new commandment to His New Church, and without that commandment the Church could not be established.

Because the Church is with those who are in good works. John, by whom was represented the Church in respect to good works, reclined at the Lord's breast. That the Church is in those who are in good works, is also signified by the Lord's words from the cross to John: "Jesus saw His mother, and spoke to the disciple whom He loved, who was standing by; and He said to His mother, Woman, behold thy son: and He said to that disciple, Behold thy mother, and from that hour that disciple took her unto himself." This signifies that where good works are, there the Church will be; for in the word "woman," the same as mother, signifies the Church. The Lord's saying of John to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son," signifies that he is the son of the Church and is of the Church who is in good works.

Because the good of life is what receives the Lord He commanded His disciples to teach charity. And after His resurrection the Lord appeared to His disciples while they were on the sea fishing, and because they had caught nothing He said unto them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." The right side of the ship signifies the good of life. This makes clear the signification of the Lord's commanding them to cast the net there, namely, that they should teach the good of life.

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That they would thus convert the nations to the Church is signified by their finding in such abundance that they were not able to draw the net for the multitude of fishes.

This same doctrine the Lord also taught when he said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? and he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep."

The Lord asked Peter three times whether he loved Him in order that He might impress upon the minds of men the necessity of love to Him and of charity toward the neighbor. Inasmuch as lambs denote those who are in innocence, therefore the Lord said to Peter, first, Feed My lambs, and afterwards, Feed My sheep, and again, Feed My sheep. Lambs here denote those who are in the good of love to the Lord; for these are in the good of innocence more than others; but sheep denote those who are in the good of charity toward the neighbor. Peter was commanded to feed, that is, to instruct these, inasmuch as with these only the seed will fall into good ground. With the rest it will either fall by the wayside or upon stony places or among thorns.

Thus it may appear that charity and good works are altogether inseparable from faith. He who is confirmed in the doctrine of faith-alone, and "who has no affection of good and believes that charity is not an essential of salvation,--he never acts from an affection of good, but from an affection of delight, that he may live in the indulgence of his lust; and whosoever confirms himself strongly in this principle, does not act from an affection of thought but from a desire of self- pre-eminence, that he may be thought greater, more learned, and more refined than others, and thus may be exalted amongst the rich and honorable."

There is no doctrine that is more frequently taught and insisted upon in the Writings of the New Church than this, that charity and faith must co-exist in acts, in order that they may become living.

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Charity and faith are perishable things while they are in the mind only. Charity and faith are not charity and faith before they are in works; and if they are only in the expanse above works, or in the mind, they are like images of a tabernacle or of a temple in the air, which are nothing but a mirage, and vanish of themselves. If therefore man were only to will well or were to think well from charity, and were not to do well and perform uses from it, would he not be as a head only, and as a mind only, which cannot subsist without a body? The Word of the Lord is nothing but the doctrine of love and charity, and it teaches that charity and faith must be joined together in works and "what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

It is said in the Writings of the Church that "those who know many things from the Word and do not live according to them, may be likened to those who scrape up wealth and lay it up in chests and coffers, making no further use of it than to look at it and count it; also to those who gather into their treasuries jewels of gold and silver and shut them up in vaults, solely for the sake of being opulent." Such are like the trader that hid his pound in a napkin, who said to his lord on the day of reckoning: "Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at My coming I might have

required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."

Those who retain the truth in the memory only, keep their pound laid up in a napkin, and therefore in the other life they are deprived of it.

The Lord, in explaining this text to His disciples, said: "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 a hundredfold, some sixty and some thirty.

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This shows that it is necessary first to hear the Word, then to understand it, and lastly to do it. In other words, the truth first enters into the memory, then into the understanding, and lastly into the will. It also shows that some advance further in regeneration than others. Some do not advance very far, and produce comparatively little fruit, signified by thirty. Others advance further and produce more, signified by sixty; while some reach a full state of conjunction of good and truth, signified by a hundred.

Because the shunning of evils as sins against God is the Christian religion itself, it is said in the Doctrines of the Church, that in the other life it is not asked, what has your faith been, but what has your life been. When this is known, then the faith is known also.--Amen.

SOWING AND REAPING 1949

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SOWING AND REAPING W. F. PENDLETON 1949

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." (Matthew 13: 3-8.)

The Parable of the Sower is related in three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, essentially the same in each, but with language slightly varying in character. The significance of this variation will be noted when we come to consider the different kinds of ground. This sermon may be regarded as a study of the parable as a whole.

The words were spoken to the multitude-simple, ignorant, uneducated; having neither natural nor spiritual education. Their minds were undeveloped, like the minds of children who have not yet learned to read or write, and who have not had the advantage or opportunity of religious instruction, except that of the most simple and rudimentary character. There are many children of this kind, and also adults.

But the Lord explained the parable to His disciples when they were with Him alone; and the explanation follows the parable in each of the three Gospels-also with slight variation in language.

It is a fact of great significance that the Lord, in His explanation, gave the disciples the spiritual sense of the parable. To the multitude He merely told the story of the sowing of the seed, and of its reception in various kinds of ground, some evil and unproductive, some good, receptive of and cherishing the seed and bearing fruit in various degrees of productiveness.

But He told the story in such a manner as to inspire affection and love for Him, and the desire to be obedient to His words-with a simple faith of heart. It is so with children, and with many among the multitude, who hear the spoken words of proverb and parable from the letter of His Word.

But to the disciples and others like them, who are capable of comprehending the interior things of the Word,-the "mysteries of the kingdom,"-the Lord speaks in a different manner-when they are alone, withdrawn, separated, set apart from the mass of men, and who are to be prepared to be their teachers and leaders,-disciples who are to become apostles, the evangelists of truth. To these He lays open the interior sense, the hidden meaning, of His words.

It will be readily seen on examination that, in the case of the disciples, the spiritual sense of the parable, given them by the Lord, is general,-adapted to the state in which the disciples then were. Like the multitudes, they were at first uneducated, even in a natural sense, but were chosen from among the multitude because they were capable of a higher mental development, both naturally and spiritually.

The Lord, however, did not give the disciples the spiritual sense itself. This was reserved for His Second Coming. Nor does He give to children now, nor even to adults now, the spiritual sense at once, but reveals it to them through intermediate stages. What the Lord did for the disciples is a type or representative of what He does for all men in all time, but more fully now in His Second coming-leading men gradually or by successive stages from the sensual to the natural, from the natural to the spiritual, and so on. The sense given to the disciples was spiritual

natural-a sense intermediate between the spiritual sense itself and the literal sense.

There are four distinct senses of the Word-senses, planes, degrees. The first or lowest plane or degree is the sensual, and is represented in the historical part of the Old Testament, and of the New, especially in its history and in the parables. Part of the Gospels is thus like the Old Testament, and there is a part in which the spiritual natural sense is given. This sensual degree of the Word, of the Divine Wisdom, is adapted to the lowest states of human intelligence or human mental development, such as with little children, and with many of all nations who are like the multitudes, all in undeveloped mental states; also with the evil, who are in like- manner in the lowest natural degree, and who receive the truth, but only to reject it.

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The second degree in the ascent is the spiritual natural, the spiritual moral, the internal or spiritual historical, the proximate sense, also called the natural sense as distinguished from the literal sense or sensual degree of the Word. It is called spiritual natural because it treats of the Lord and the life after death, of preparation for that life, and of men in natural states in their relation to the Lord. This sense, as we are told, is for the natural heaven; that is, the natural heaven is in that sense, that heaven being constituted of children and the young who have died, and of others like them in their mental states. Their spiritual progress has been arrested, stopped, on the way to the highest human development.

This spiritual natural sense is also given in a general form in the literal sense of the Word, especially in the Gospels, in order that children

and adults in the world may be taught that sense, and be associated with that heaven, after having imbibed the substance of the literal sense or sensual degree of the Word, and being prepared while in the world, through the intermediate stages spoken of, for the internal sense, or for the higher heavens.

This is the sense of the Parable of the Sower that was insinuated by the Lord in speaking to the multitudes, and openly presented by Him in His talk with His disciples when they were gathered together with Him alone: "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone heareth the Word of the kingdom, and attendeth not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he no 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 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. But he that received seed into good ground is he that heareth the Word, and attendeth; which also beareth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matthew 13: 18-23.)

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The parable treats of four kinds of ground in which seed is sown, -the hard way, the stony ground, ground producing thorns, and good ground. In the spiritual sense, the Sower is the Lord, the seed is His Word and truth from His Word in the form of doctrine or teaching-truth formulated for teaching.

The seed sown upon a way or road that has become hard and packed by being continuously trampled under foot represents that class of persons who have no care or concern about spiritual things. And so the Lord, in His explanation to the disciples of the hard way in which the seed does not take root, but which is devoured by the fowls of the air, said: "When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom, and attendeth not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." That is, he has no interest in what he hears of spiritual truth from the Word, thinks no more about it, and soon loses or forgets even the truth he had learned in childhood. Such persons are indifferent to the truth because they do not love it, and therefore the truth of the Word cannot be rooted in them. It perhaps remains in their memory for a time, and they are able to speak from it, but sooner or later it is forgotten,-a process going on rapidly in this world at the present time.

The seed sown upon stony ground, where there is not much earth, represents a second class of persons who have some concern about the truth, but whose interest in it is not for the sake of the truth itself, not from any internal or spiritual affection, but merely for the outward appearance before the world or for the eyes of others. Hence it is said that "forthwith the seeds sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away."

The Lord, in His explanation of these words to His disciples, said: "But he that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and immediately with joy receiveth it; yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended." So it is with those who love the truth outwardly, and not inwardly-for the sake of appearance in the world, and not for the sake of heaven and the Lord. They are unable. to stand when the truth is assailed, that is, when spiritual temptations arise.

A third class of persons is represented by the seed sown in the midst of thorns. By thorns are signified the concupiscences of evil,-evil desires, evil affections, lusts arising from love of the world. Where these are present and active in the mind, in the will, and from the will in the understanding, the truth-even though it be received-perishes, is suffocated. For it is said: "And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them." In His explanation of these words to His disciples, our Lord said: "He also that received seed in the midst of thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful."

A fourth class of persons now follows. When indifference and unconcern are removed; when the truth is no longer received merely for the sake of the appearance, but for the sake of the truth itself; when evil affections are not actively present to choke the Word; then the seed falls into good ground, and brings forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. For we read that "he that receiveth seed into good ground is he that heareth the Word, and attendeth, who also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

There are thus described in the parable four different kinds of ground which received the seed planted by the sower, or four general states that receive the truth of revelation, represented by the hard way, the stony places, the ground overgrown with thorns, and the good ground or soil. Those who receive, but are indifferent. Those who receive with delight, but a delight that is from the love of the world. Those who receive among thorns, who are in the love of gain, avarice, and the conceit of

their own intelligence. Those who receive the seed into good ground are those who also receive the truth with delight, but which is for the sake of the truth itself. This delight arises from the fact that they have been living a life of charity and obedience, which is that which makes the good ground in them.

Let us also take note of the fact that there are three kinds of evil ground and three kinds of good ground. The evil ground is represented by the hard way, the stony places, and the place where thorns flourish. That there are three kinds of good ground is shown in the fact that when the seed is received into good ground, it bears fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

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By the three kinds of evil ground are represented three kinds or classes of evil men,-three kinds in both worlds, thus the three hells,- which includes also men in the world who are in an active state of preparation for hell. On the other hand, by the three kinds of good ground, represented by the numbers 100, 60, and 30, three kinds of good men are signified,-three kinds in both worlds, thus the angels, and the men in the world who are preparing to become angels. And so the Parable, in its spiritual sense, describes the process and progress of regeneration whereby the man of the church is prepared for eternal life in heaven. Amen.

LESSONS: Psalm 78: 1-25. Matthew 13: 1-23. T. C. R. 234, 235.

MUSIC: Revised Liturgy, pages 430, 464, 466.

PRAYERS: Nos. 99, 100.

[Editorial Note: This sermon was one of a series on the Parable of the Sower preached by the Bishop Emeritus at Bryn Athyn in the year 1916, and found among his papers. It has not hitherto appeared in print, but two others of the series were published in NEW CHURCH LIFE in the issues for May, 1947, and March, 1948, and properly follow the one printed above.]

SEVEN PARABLES OF W. F. PENDLETON 1918 MATTHEW XIII A SUMMARY VIEW

In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew there are seven parables which the Lord spake to the multitudes and to His disciples. They are as follows:

- 1.the Parable of the Sower,
- 2.the Parable of the Tares,
- 3.the Parable of the Mustard Seed,
- 4.the Parable of the Leaven,
- 5.the Parable of the Treasures hid in the Field,
6. the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price
- 7.the Parable of the Net cast into the Sea.

At the close of the preceding chapter we are told of His announcement to the people
that He was no longer the son of Mary.

While He was speaking "one said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. And He answered and said, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," (Matt. xii:47-50)

The Lord was born of Mary as to the flesh, but without a human father; and from now onward to the end, even to the Passion of the Cross, He does not acknowledge Mary as His mother; for He put away from His Human all that He had from the mother, and put on only that which was from the Divine;

and in His character as the Divine Teacher and Savior of men, He goes forth out of the house where these things occurred, and sits by the sea;

then on account of the press of the multitude, He enters upon a ship and teaches the multitude which stand upon the shore.

But He speaks to them in parables, which have a two-fold use;

1. first, they accommodate truth to simple minds;
2. second, they conceal interior truth from the intelligent and the learned who would pervert and profane.

Simple, external, or general truths are contained in the parables on their surface, so that even the mind of a child may understand. But the Parables in their bosom contain the mysteries of the kingdom, the arcana of heaven; these the simple cannot understand, and the learned would falsify, pervert, and destroy.

Hence the use of parables made by the Lord in His teaching, while He was in the world as to the flesh.

In a broad sense the entire literal sense of the Word is a parable; for what has been said of the parable applies to the letter of the Word throughout.

But now in the day of the Lord's Second Coming, and to some extent to His disciples also, especially now to the spiritual disciples, the parable is unfolded, its mystery is explained, the arcana lying in its bosom is brought forth to view; far now the learned can no longer profane, because they will not believe; and some of the simple may become spiritually learned, and a New Church be established by means of them.

This in general is what is meant by the Lord's words in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, wherein we read that His disciples came and said unto Him, "**Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?** He answered and said unto them,

Because unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . . . Therefore, speak I to them in parables, because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, **By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, acid their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.**" (xii:10, 11, 13-16.)

The first parable in this chapter is the

1.Parable of the Sower.

The Sower goes forth to sow his seed, and some

1. fall upon the way or **road**, that has been trampled hard by the feet of men and beasts, and the seeds do not sprout; the birds come down and devour them.
2. Some seeds fall upon **stony places** where there is scarcely any soil, and although the seeds sprout, the tender shoots perish under the withering rays of the sun.
3. Some seeds fall among **thorns** and sprout, but the thorns also spring up and choke the young plant.
4. But some seeds fall in **good ground** where the soil is rich and fertile; here they bring forth the fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty.

The general sense of this parable the Lord explained to His disciples when they had gathered around Him; and the fulness of its meaning is now given in the Writings.

1. **The Sower** is the Son of Man, or the Lord in His Word;
2. **the seed** is the truth of His Word.
 - a. But the seed of truth is variously received.
 - i. There are in general **four kinds of ground**, or states of reception; but only one receives the seed in the heart and bears fruit in the life. With the other three classes of persons the seed perishes because it is received only in the memory and external mind, where evil loves or evil lusts and their falsities flourish and destroy the seed of the Word.

The second parable is the 2. Parable of the Tares.

A man sows **good seed in his field, but while men are asleep** an enemy comes and sows tares, and the tares spring forth and grow in the midst of the wheat. This being observed by the servants of the householder, they ask permission to root out the tares. But the master of the house tells them that in so doing they would root out the wheat also; both must grow together until the harvest and then the reapers may easily distinguish the two and separate the one from the other.

This parable the Lord also explains to His disciples in a general manner, and now in full in the Writings.

The subject is the Last Judgment.

In the beginning of the Church the truth is implanted; but heresies arise, which are the tares. Since the fruit of heresy is similar in the outward appearance to the fruit of genuine doctrine from the Word, they cannot at first be distinguished by the simple. Heresy and its fruit is, therefore, allowed to remain until the time of the harvest, or the judgment, when there is no longer any difficulty in distinguishing the good from the evil fruit.

The third parable is that of 3. the Grain of Mustard Seed.

This also is sown in a field, and at first it is the least of all seeds; but afterwards it grows into a great tree, and the birds of the air lodge in its branches.

It is not recorded that the Lord explained to His disciples this parable and the remaining parables in this chapter, but they are now fully unfolded in the Writings.

The mustard seed is the truth of the Word, but it is said to be the least of all seeds, because when sown or revealed it is unknown and unrecognized by the mass of men in the world.

Their thought is altogether occupied with natural things, hence the seed of truth is so perverted on account of natural loves, that the presence of the spiritual truth of the Word is unseen and unknown save by a few minds which are open and receptive;

but with these few the seed sprouts and grows, and the Church gradually increases until the little plant becomes the greatest among the herbs, and finally a tree, in the branches of which the birds of heaven sing and rejoice.

A genuine rational is formed in the Church, and when this takes place the Church increases from a few to many, and becomes a great institution in the world.

4. Three Measures of meal

In the fourth parable the **Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Church,** is compared to heaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

In this parable the Lord teaches that the Church is not established except by means of temptations, and the use which temptations accomplish in the growth of the Church, is set forth.

5. treasure hid in a field

In the fifth parable the **Kingdom of Heaven, or the Church, is compared to treasure hid in a field,**

which, when a man findeth he hideth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field;

for it is worth infinitely more than that which he already hath and he is willing to give it all in order to obtain the newly found treasure.

The treasure hid in the field is the internal sense of the Word,

and when this most precious of all treasure is seen to be in the Word, it is also seen that it cannot be acquired until all the ideas and affections of the natural man, or the proprium, are yielded up, in order that man as a clean vessel may come into the presence of the Lord, and be loaded with the riches of heaven.

The sixth parable is concerning the

6. Pearl of Great Price,

which a man, who is seeking goodly pearls, findeth and selleth all that he hath to purchase it. The treasure hid in the field will be of no value without the one Precious Pearl.

This one Pearl is the true idea of God, or the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine Human as the God of Heaven and earth.

In order to obtain this one precious Pearl, man must give up all false ideas of God, and all love of false gods. When he does this he obtains that which vivifies and makes luminous all the treasure of knowledge of genuine truth in the Word; all these truths, all the gates of the city New Jerusalem become as it were one Pearl.

When there is a true idea of God, or of the Lord in His Second Coming, or when there is a true and genuine Theology, or science of God in the Church, then can the judgment take place, and by the judgment a new heaven and a new Church be formed.

Therefore, the seventh parable follows, which closes the series of parables in this chapter.

7. net cast into the sea,

The kingdom of heaven is compared to a net cast into the sea, which gathered fish of every kind; and when the net was full it was drawn to the shore and the good were gathered into vessels, the bad were cast away.

Having spoken all these parables, "Jesus said unto His disciples, **Have ye understood all these things?** They say unto Him, Yea, Lord.

Then said He unto them, **Therefore every scribe, instructed into the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."**

In these words the Lord spoke unto them, as it were, **an eighth parable, which sums up all that is contained in the other seven.**

The Church is now established, and the infinite store of the Word is drawn upon for its instruction and enlightenment,-drawn from the spiritual sense, signified by "things new" and from the natural sense, signified by "things old;" and now the Church enjoys spiritual increase and prosperity, and the end in view from, the beginning is fulfilled.

The **general ideas of truth** running through the chapter as a whole, are,

- 1.First, the Lord as the Word;
- 2.second, the judgment, or the separation of the good from the evil;
3. third, the formation and establishment of a new Heaven and a new Church;
- 4.fourth, the regeneration of the individual man of the Church.

The chapter opens with the idea of the Lord's presence in His Word, revealing Himself in His Divine Human as the God of heaven and earth.

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For He is now no longer the Son of Mary; He is God, or the Word made flesh, the Divine Guide and Teacher of men.

Internal Sense from Beginning

1. The sea is the Word,
2. the ship on the sea, from which He teaches the multitude, is true doctrine by which and from which He teaches.
3. The Lord is the Sower which soweth the Word, and the Word of the kingdom is what the multitudes hear, and he that receiveth seed in good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it and beareth fruit.
4. The Lord is also the Man which soweth good seed in His field; we are told in the explanation of the Parable of the Tares that that Man which soweth the good seed is the Son of Man, that is, the Lord as the Word.
5. The devil also soweth his seed, which are the tares.
6. The Lord is the Man that soweth the grain of mustard seed in His field.
7. The Word as to its internal sense is the treasure hid in the held,
8. and the Lord in the Word is the Pearl of Great Price.
9. And the Word in both senses, the literal and spiritual, is meant by the things new and old,
10. which the householder, who is the Lord,
11. bringeth forth out of His treasure; the treasure or treasury is also the Word.

1. The first and prime idea then is the Lord as the Word;

2. then follows the judgment, which is executed by the Word, or by the Lord as the Word.

good and evil together

In the first parable, the evil and good alike receive the seed, for the evil and good are together; but it is plain they cannot remain together always; separation must some time take place.

separation after a time, of good and bad

In the second parable we are told that although the tares are in the midst of the wheat, they must remain together until the harvest, which is the general judgment when the separation is to be effected. For the householder said to the reapers when the harvest is come, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Mustard Seed least of all seeds

In the third parable, **all other seeds must be removed** that the mustard seed, at first the least: of all seeds, may sprout and grow and become the greatest among herbs, and finally a tree.

3 measures of meal judgement re-appears

In the fourth parable the judgment again appears; the wheat is now turned into flour, and the leaven is also there and is made use of; but finally the noxious gases generated from it are expelled, and the good bread only remains.

judgement/separation again in -sell all that he hath....

We see the judgment also in the fifth parable, or the idea of removal and separation. The man selleth all that he hath, in order to buy the field in which the treasure is hidden.

merchant selleth all that he hath -separation/removal

And in the sixth parable there is again separation and removal, the merchant selleth all that he hath in order to purchase the Pearl of Great Price.

final judgement

In the seventh parable the idea of the final judgment manifestly appears. A net is cast into the sea and when it is full it is drawn to the shore, and the good are gathered into vessels and the bad are cast away.

The idea of the Church, in the spiritual world and in the natural world, appears throughout the chapter.

1. **The disciples are the Church itself,**
2. **and the multitudes the Church with the simple and the gentiles.**
3. In all the parables the
 - a. Church is called the kingdom and the kingdom of heaven; it is a spiritual kingdom which the Lord came to establish, and not a natural kingdom as the Jews vainly imagined, and the disciples first thought.
4. **The Church is also called a field** in which the seed is sown, and by other names, such as **ground, barn, and woman.**

In the last verse is described the state of the Church in its full establishment:

1. It has as its center a true idea of God, or a true Theology, or science of God;
2. a loyal and enlightened priesthood, signified by the scribes instructed into the kingdom of heaven;
3. and all the stores of the Word of God in its spiritual and natural senses, all the treasury of heaven and earth, are opened unto it.

And as it is with the Church in general, so it is with the Church in the individual; for where the establishment of the Church is the subject, the regeneration of the individual man is involved, and this chapter is no exception.

- 1. The Lord soweth the Word in the mind of the individual man,**
- 2. and it must bring forth fruit in him; if not, he is cast out in the general judgment.**
- 3. But if he receives it in heart and life, the judgment will go on in him; that is, he must undergo temptations;**
- 4. for the devil soweth tares in the midst of the wheat, and they are not removed except through great tribulation.**

The Parable of the Sower treats of man in the first stage of regeneration, the stage of instruction, or the stage of the implantation of the Church in him. The stage includes infancy, childhood, youth, and early manhood. But at this period the **truth in him is mingled with falsity arising from the fallacies of the senses, and he thinks that he does good from himself**, and consequently thinks of his own merit in his good works.

But as each parable is in itself a complete form, the closing and final words look to a completed state of regeneration.

the sower

So it is with this parable, though it treats in general of regeneration in its beginnings; but the closing words look to a full fruition of the regenerate life. "He that received seed into good ground is he that heareth the Word and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty."

The Parable of the Tares

treats of the second stage in regeneration following the first in which two opposite states likewise appear.

In the first it is the evil and good ground, but now it is the tares and the wheat. The devil is doing his work also; he enters the field, even as the serpent entered the Garden, and sows tares among the wheat, that is, **implants falsities in the midst of truths.**

In this state the falsities cannot be rooted out, because they are grounded in the fallacies of the senses which as yet have great power; and man still has an idea of his own merit. In order that falsities may be removed temptations are necessary, and temptations are to come.

On account of the presence and activity of falsities, and the idea of merit, and because temptation has not yet done its work, **there is but little positive advancement in regeneration,** therefore,

in the third parable we find the grain of mustard seed described as the smallest of all seeds.

But the state is now to change, and in the next parable temptation and its effect and use is described.

Falsities, having been spoken of as the tares sown in the midst of the wheat, are now mentioned as leaven hid in three measures of meal.

By the fermentation of the leaven and its use in the making of the bread, is described **the use which the falsities of evil are made to serve, when their presence is seen and known, and combat arises in consequence.**

The use of the combat of temptation is the opening of the internal or spiritual mind, which is the same thing as the opening of heaven, or the opening of the internal of the Word.

5th parable(treasure hidden in a field)

This introduces the fifth parable in which a man finds treasure that has been hidden in a field. This treasure is the spiritual truth that lies in the bosom of the Word;

this treasure when it is discovered is valued above all things, and man is willing to give up all that he has hitherto possessed in order to obtain it,

for it cannot be otherwise acquired. *He must yield up all his own ideas, all the falsities he has cherished, all idea of his own merit, he must renounce all things of his proprium.*

This leads to the sixth stage in which

the regenerating man, now called a merchant seeking goodly pearls, finally discovers a Pearl of Great Price, and sells all that he has in order to acquire it.

In the process of

1. self-renunciation and consequent spiritual advancement,
2. he finds, in the midst of the treasures of the internal sense of the Word, one knowledge which is the universal of all;

3. it is the idea of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine Human as the God of Heaven and earth.
4. **When this is seen, and known, and acknowledged from the heart, then self-renunciation is complete,**
5. **and the time for the final judgment has come, or the last combats of temptation, described in the seventh parable,**
6. **that of the net cast into the Sea; when the net is brought to shore, the bad fish are cast away, and the good preserved; evil affections are removed and the good are established and made whole.**

The last verse of the series, which is as it were, an eighth parable, describes the heavenly state, or regeneration completed,

in which man becomes a scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven,

an inhabitant of a heavenly society, and all the treasures of the Word are open to him.

And as was shown before,

the last verse treats also of the final triumph of the Christ on earth, when intelligence and wisdom shall reign in it.

The Church, conjoined with heaven, shall be the Lord's heaven on the earth; and the promise involved in the sowing of the seed, in the first parable, becomes a real fact in the world.

NOTES FROM THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINES

Arcana Coelestia (Potts) n. 3310

3310. That "a man of the field" signifies the good of life from doctrinal things, is evident from the signification of "field." In the Word frequent mention is made of "earth" or "land," of "ground," and of "field;" and by "earth" or "land," when used in a good sense, is signified the Lord's kingdom in the heavens and on earth, thus the church, which is His kingdom on earth.

The like is signified by "ground," but in a more restricted sense (n. 566, 662, 1066-1068, 1262, 1413, 1733, 1850, 2117, 2118, 2928).

The same is signified also by "field," but in a sense still more restricted (n. 368, 2971); and as the church is not the church from doctrinal things except insofar as these have respect to the good of life as their end; or what is the same, unless these doctrinal things are conjoined with the good of life, therefore by "field" is principally signified the good of life; and in order that this may be of the church, there must be doctrinal things from the Word which have been implanted in this good.

Without doctrinal things there is indeed good of life, but not as yet the good of the church, thus not as yet good truly spiritual, except only in the capacity of becoming so; as is the case with the good of life among the Gentiles who have not the Word, and therefore are ignorant of the Lord.

[2]

That a "field" is the good of life in which are to be implanted the things which are of faith, that is, spiritual truths which are of the church, is very evident from the Lord's parable in Matthew:

The sower went forth to sow, and as he sowed, some fell upon the hard way, and the birds came and devoured them; and others fell upon stony places where they had not much earth, and straightway they sprung 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 among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them; but others fell upon the good ground and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold: he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear (Matt. 13:3-9; Mark 4:3-9; Luke 8:5-8).

Here **four kinds of earth or ground in a field**-that is, in the church-are treated of. That the "seed" is the Word of the Lord, thus truth, which is said to be of faith, and that the "good ground" is the good which is of charity, is evident, **for it is the good in man that receives the Word; the "hard way" is falsity; a "stony place" is truth that has no root in good; "thorns" are evils.**

[3]

As regards the good of life from doctrinal things, which is signified by "a man of the field," the case is this: They who are being regenerated, at first do what is good from doctrinal things, for of themselves they do not know what is good, **but learn it from the doctrinal things of love and charity;**

from these they know:

1. who the Lord is;
2. who is the neighbor;
3. what love is, and
4. what charity; thus what good is.

When they are in this state they are in the affection of truth, and are called "men [viri] of the field;" but afterwards when they have been

regenerated, they do not do what is good from doctrinal things, but from love and charity, for they are then in the good itself which they have learned through doctrinal things, and then are called "men [homines] of the field."

Good from the commandments

The case herein is as with one who by nature inclines to adulteries, thefts, and murders, but who learns from the commandments of the Decalogue that such things are of hell, and so abstains from them. In this state he is affected by the commandments because he is afraid of hell, and from these and likewise from many things in the Word he learns how he ought to direct his life; and in this case when he does what is good, he does it from the commandments.

But when he is in good, he begins to be averse to the adulteries, thefts, and murders to which before he had been inclined; and when he is in this state, he no longer does what is good from the commandments, but from good, which then is in him. In the former state he learns good from truth; in the latter state he teaches truth from good.

[4]

The same is the case also with spiritual truths, which are called doctrinal things, and are still more interior commandments; for doctrinal things are the interior truths that belong to the natural man.

The first truths are:

1. of sense, the next are of
2. memory-knowledge,
3. the interior ones are of doctrine.

These doctrinal truths are founded upon truths of memory-knowledge, for man can form and retain no idea, notion, or conception of them except from memory-knowledges.

But truths of memory-knowledge are founded upon truths of the senses, for without sensuous things no memory-knowledges can be comprehended by man.

These truths, namely, those of memory-knowledge and of sense, are what are signified by "a man skillful in hunting;"

but doctrinal truths are those which are signified by a "man of the field."

In this way do these truths follow in succession with man; and therefore until he is of adult age,

and through truths of sense and of memory-knowledge is in doctrinal truths, no man is able to be regenerated, for he cannot be confirmed in the truths of doctrine, except by means of ideas derived from the things of memory-knowledge and of sense.

natural and sensual in every part of mans thought

For nothing is possible in man's thought, even as to the deepest arcanum of faith, that is not attended with a natural and sensuous idea, although the man is for the most part ignorant of the nature of it;

but in the other life, if he desires it, it is presented to view before his understanding, and even, if he so wishes, before his sight; for however incredible it may appear, in the other life such things can be presented to the sight.

Doc. of Life (Potts) n. 2

2. That religion is of the life and that the life of religion is to do that which is good is seen by everyone who reads the Word, and is acknowledged by him while he is reading it. The Word contains the following declarations:

1. Whosoever shall break the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of the heavens; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.
 - a. For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5:19-20).
 - b. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matt. 7:19-20).
 - c. Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in the heavens (verse 21).
 - d. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied by Thy name, and in Thy name done many mighty things? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me ye that work iniquity (verses 22, 23).
 - e. Everyone who heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them, shall be likened to a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and everyone that heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand (verses 24, 26).
 - f. Jesus said, Behold, the sower went forth to sow; some seeds fell on the hard way, others fell upon the rocky places, others fell among the thorns, and others fell into good ground; he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the Word, and attendeth to it, who thence beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.
 - g. When Jesus had said these things, He cried, saying, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. 13:3-9, 23, 43).
 - h. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, and then shall He render unto every one according to his deeds (Matt. 16: 27).

- i. The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21: 43).
- j. When the Son of man shall come in His glory, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory. And He shall say to the sheep on His right hand, Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me, I was sick, and ye visited Me I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer, When saw we Thee so? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me. And the king shall say the like things to the goats on the left, and because they have not done such things, He shall say, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:31-41).
- k. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees every tree, therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire (Luke 3:8, 9).
- l. Jesus said, Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Everyone that cometh unto Me, and heareth My words, and doeth them, he is like a man building a house, and he laid a foundation upon the rock; but he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation (Luke 6:46-49).
- m. Jesus said, My mother and My brethren are these who hear the Word of God, and do it (Luke 8:21).
- n. Then shall ye begin to stand, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and He shall answer and say to you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity (Luke 13:25-27).
- o. This is the judgment: that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil;

for every one that doeth evil hateth the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God (John 3:19-21).

- p. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection [of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection] of judgment (John 5:29).
- q. We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God, and do His will, him He heareth (John 9:31).
- r. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them (John 13:17). He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words (John 14:21-24).
- s. Jesus said, I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine-dresser; every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit (John 15:1, 2).
- t. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and ye shall be made My disciples (verse 8).
- u. Ye are My friends if ye do the things which I command you; I have chosen you, that ye should bear fruit, and your fruit should abide (verses 14, 16).
- v. The Lord said to John, To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: I know thy works; I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first charity; repent, and do the first works, or else I will move thy lamb stand out of its place (Rev. 2:1, 2, 4, 5).
- w. To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: I know thy works (verses 8, 9).
- x. To the angel of the church in Pergamos write: I know thy works, repent (verses 12, 16).
- y. To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: I know thy works and charity, and thy last works are more than the first (verses 18, 19).

- z. To the angel of the church in Sardis write: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead; I have not found thy works perfect before God; repent (Rev. 3:1-3).
- aa. To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: I know thy works (verses 7, 8). To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: I know thy works; repent (verses 14, 15, 19).
- bb. I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their works follow with them (Rev. 14:13).
- cc. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, all according to their works (Rev. 20:12, 13).
- dd. Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work (Rev. 22:12).

In like manner in the Old Testament:

Recompense them according to their work, and according to the deed of their hands (Jer. 25:14). Jehovah, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his works (Jer. 32:19). I will visit according to his ways, and will reward him his works (Hos. 4:9). Jehovah, according to our ways, according to our works doth He to us (Zech. 1:6). And in many places it is said that the statutes, commandments, and laws were to be done:

Ye shall observe My statutes, and My judgments, which if a man do, he shall live by them (Lev. 18:5). Ye shall observe all My statutes, and My judgments, that ye may do them (Lev. 19:37; 20:8; 22:31). The blessings, if they did the commandments; and the curses if they did them not (Lev. 26:4-46). The sons of Israel were commanded to make for themselves a fringe on the borders of their garments, that they might remember all the commandments of Jehovah, to do them (Num. 15:38, 39). So in a thousand other places. That works are what make a man of the church, and that he is saved according to them, is also taught by the

Lord in the parables, many of which imply that those who do what is good are accepted, and that those who do what is evil are rejected. As in the parable Of the husbandmen in the vineyard (Matt. 21:33-44); Of the fig-tree that did not yield fruit (Luke 13:6-9); Of the talents, and the pounds, with which they were to trade (Matt. 25:14-31; Luke 19:13-25); Of the Samaritan who bound up the wounds of him that was wounded by robbers (Luke 10:30-37); Of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31); Of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-12).

True Christian Religion (Ager) n. 376

376. That charity and faith do not profit a man so long as they remain only in one part of his body, that is, in his head, and are not fixed in works, is evident from a thousand passages in the Word, of which I will here adduce only these:

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (Matt. 7:19-21). He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word and attendeth, who also beareth fruit and bringeth forth. And when Jesus had said these things, He cried, saying, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. 13:3-9, 23, 43). Jesus said, My mother and My brethren are these who hear the Word of God and do it (Luke 8:21). Now we know that God heareth not sinners but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth (John 9:31). If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them (John 13:17). He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him; and will come unto him and make My abode with him (John 14:15-21, 23). Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit (John 15:8, 16). For not the hearers of the law shall be justified by God, but the doers of the law (Rom. 2:13; James 1:22). In the day of wrath and of righteous judgment God will render to every man according to his deeds (Rom. 2:5, 6). For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one

may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done, whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, and then He shall render unto everyone according to his deeds (Matt. 16:27). I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow with them (Apoc. 14:13). A Book was opened, which is the Book of life and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Book; every man according to his works (Apoc. 20:12, 13). Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according to his work (Apoc. 22:12). Jehovah, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give to everyone according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his works (Jer. 22:19). I will punish him according to his ways, and will recompense him for his works (Hos. 4:9). According to our ways, and according to our works Jehovah does with us (Zech. 1:6). So also in many other passages. From this it can be seen that charity and faith are not charity and faith until they exist in works, and that while they exist only in the expanse above works, that is, in the mind, they are like appearances of a tabernacle or temple in the air, which are nothing but a mirage, and vanish of themselves; or they are like pictures drawn on paper which moths consume; or they are like an abode on a housetop where there is no sleeping-place, instead of in the house. All this shows that **charity and faith are perishable** things so long as they are merely mental or unless they are determined to works and coexist in them when possible.

Doc. of Life (Potts) n. 90

90. It is the **truth that is meant by the "seed in the field,"** of which the Lord said: A sower went forth to sow, and as he sowed some fell upon the way, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of heaven devoured it; and some fell upon stony places, and as soon as it was sprung up, because it had no root it withered away; and some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up with it and choked it; and other fell into the good ground, and sprung up, and bare fruit manifold (Luke 8:5-8; Matt. 13:3-8; Mark 4:3-8).

Here the "sower" is the Lord, and the "seed" is His Word, thus the truth; the "seed upon the way" exists with those who do not care for the truth; the "seed upon stony places" exists with those who do care for the truth, but not for its own sake, thus not interiorly; the "seed in the midst of thorns" exists with those who are in the concupiscences of evil; but the "seed in good ground" exists with those who love the truths that are in the Word from the Lord, and do them from Him, thus who bear fruit.

That these things are meant is evident from the explication of the parable by the Lord (Matt. 13:19-23, 37; Mark 4:14-20; Luke 8:11-15).

From all this it is evident that **the truth of the Word cannot take root in those who do not care for the truth, nor in those who love the truth outwardly and not inwardly, nor in those who are in the concupiscences of evil, but in those in whom the concupiscences of evil have been dispersed by the Lord.** In these the "seed"-that is, the truth-takes root in their spiritual mind (concerning which above, n. 86 at the end).

True Christian Religion #86

TCR 86. The reason Jehovah God came down into the world as the Divine Truth was **so that He could effect redemption.**

Redemption was the conquest of the hells, the ordering of the heavens, and afterwards the establishment of a church.

To achieve these aims the Divine Good is not powerful enough!, but the Divine Truth coming from the Divine Good is.

Divine Good regarded in itself is like a rounded point on a sword, or like a blunt piece of wood, or a bow without arrows.

But the Divine Truth coming from the Divine Good is like a sharpened sword, and like a piece of wood pointed to make a spear, and like a bow with arrows, all of which are potent against enemies. Swords, spears and bows in the spiritual sense of the Word stand for militant truths; see THE APOCALYPSE REVEALED (52, 299, 436) where this has been proved.

There was no other way in which the falsities and evils, in which the whole of hell was and perpetually is plunged, could be attacked, defeated and conquered

except through the Divine Truth coming from the Word!

There was no other way in which a new heaven could be founded, formed and set in order, as was then done.

There was no other way in which a new church could be established on earth.

Moreover, all the strength, all the might and power of God belongs to the Divine Truth **coming from the Divine Good.**

This was the reason why Jehovah God came down as the Divine Truth, which is the Word. Therefore it is said in the Psalms of David:

Gird your sword upon your thigh, o mighty one, and go up in your splendour, ride upon the word of truth; your right hand

shall teach you wondrous things; sharp are your arrows, your enemies shall fall beneath you. Ps. 45:3-5.

This passage describes the Lord, His combats with the hells and His victories over them.

(References: [Apocalypse Revealed 52](#); [Apocalypse Revealed 299](#); [Apocalypse Revealed 436](#); [Psalms 45:3-5](#))