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FIRST PRINCIPLES.

"Like priest like people" is an adage of old standing. "The sower went forth to sow" said Jesus. Some seed fell on thorny ground, some on stony ground, some on the way side, and others on good ground. The result varied. The seed was the same but the soil was not. The Saviour divides the hearers into four classes. This division will answer now as well as then. The honest hearer is the one who is the most likely to be benefitted by the preaching of the gospel. A proper understanding of this parable will assist in scattering the clouds from the mental horizon of those who have been trained in the foggy and mystical systems of the day. The worst description of soil, or that which would be most unlikely to produce a crop, would be the way-side, path or road. Find a man who has a heart which has been a thoroughfare for sin—hard as a stone road, and if a miracle, an operation of the spirit apart and distinct from the word, a miraculous influence be necessary in any case of conversion, surely it would be necessary in his. But the Saviour

teaches us that the word can find a place in even that heart. The thing is so plain that it cannot be obscured unless by a dishonest effort at interpretation. The Saviour teaches us that Satan takes the seed out of the heart. Then it must have been in the heart. But what is the object of the devil in taking the seed out of the heart? To prevent his being saved. By taking the word out of the heart he prevents the man's believing, and in doing so he prevents his being saved. So faith comes by hearing the word of God. Now is not this plain? First, the seed is sown or the word is preached—then faith—then salvation. Let the *word of God* slip out of the heart—no faith—no salvation. It is not said that Satan tries to prevent some miraculous influence operating upon the heart; no, he simply takes the word out of the heart! O, reader, be careful how you hear the word of God!

But we learn from this parable (8th of Luke, that much depends upon what is sown. Let one man sow the doctrines of the church of Rome. Another those of Universalism. Another those of Mormonism. Another those of Spiritualism, and another the pure word of God. Will the results be the same? Other things being equal the crop will be according to what is sown. As well might you expect a crop of pure wheat from a piece of ground upon which burst wild mustard, thistle and other noxious weeds with a little wheat, had been scattered broad cast, as to expect simply christians as a result of teaching the traditions of men. We say again, "like priest like people." The taught will hold similar views to those of the teacher. Reader, have you heard the word of God? O, then treasure it up in your heart. Let it not slip therefrom. Receive nothing else as a substitute for it. Remember it is "able to make thee wise unto salvation." It "is living and powerful." Buy the truth and sell it not."

SIMON.