

That faith is a condition of salvation, and one that God requires of men, is too evident to admit of diversion. Again, let it be observed just here, that if God requires us to believe it is because he has endowed us with the necessary faculties, and given us, at the same time, the most reliable testimony concerning the things he would have us believe. The very fact that God requires us to have faith, or to believe, should be sufficient evidence that we have the necessary faculties to believe, or have faith, is evident from the words of Jesus in answer to those who asked: "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" He answered: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And it is also evident that man, having the ability to believe, is held responsible for his unbelief; for, in speaking of his rejection by the Jews, Jesus says: "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin;" but now," he adds, "they have no cloak for their sins." Again, Jesus says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." This people had heard his words and seen many of his mighty works, but they would not believe; hence their "condemnation."

What was true of those to whom our Lord spoke these words is also true of all men to-day. How important, then, that we should examine ourselves to see "whether we be in the faith." What, then, is this faith, so essential to our eternal interests? This question can only be answered in the light of God's word. From the teaching of the Bible we learn that there are three things necessary to faith. 1st. We must have the capacity to believe. 2nd. We must have the testimony or the words which we are to hear. 3rd. There must be an object upon which our faith shall rest. Take away either of these and there can be no faith. As well may we expect to see without the eye, the organ of sight, as to expect to believe if we have not the necessary faculty to believe. And no matter how strong the sight may be, there can be no vision without the light. So with our faith. Unless there is the testimony of God's word, the only light the world has on the great question of man's salvation by faith, no matter how strong our faculties, there can be no faith. How true, as the apostle Paul says: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" And again: "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" which is saying "that faith comes by hearing the word of God." With this also agree the words of the apostle John. In giving his reason for writing his testimony concerning Christ, he says: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe." With this, too, agree the practice and testimony of the apostles. They did the preaching, and the people did the hearing and believing. How can they believe unless they hear, "and how can they hear without a preacher."

Having the capacity to believe and the necessary testimony, the word of God, the question is: What shall we believe? In order to a perfect sight we must have not only the eye, the organ of sight, and the light, but we must also have an object upon which to look. So, also, in order to faith. We must not only have the faculty to believe and the testimony, but we must have the object upon which our faith is to rest. Upon this question the word of God is very clear. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" is the testimony of the Spirit. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John, also, when he said he had "written these things that ye might believe," told us in the same verse just what we are to believe,

viz., "that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name." From these and other scriptures that might be quoted, it is evident that the object of the faith that justifies is Jesus the Christ the Son of God. Thus, with the faculties with which God has provided us, and by the light of the precious word of God, we are able to believe with all our hearts that Jesus is the Christ; and believing this we have "power to become the sons of God." Only such as believe on the name of Christ have the power to become sons of God. No one can come to God unless they believe; and we must come to him in order to be his children. We conclude, then, from all these scriptures that to hear the testimony of the word of God concerning Christ, and to understand it, and believe with all our heart that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, is the faith by which we may be justified and find peace with God.

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SEED SOWING.

A paper read before the meeting for Bible reading at Port Williams, N. S., October 19, 1890, by Miss TILLIE STEVENS.

Sowing seed is a very simple act in itself, yet there are three things necessary in the act: First, we must have soil; second, seed; and, third, a sower.

In the parable of the sower, related by the three evangelists, Mathew, Mark and Luke, we have four different results from seed-sowing. "When he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air devoured it; some fell on stony ground where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth, but when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away; and some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit; and others fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred."

Observe that the good involves no difference in the original character of the soil. It is the same; but a part is trodden, part is of shallow depth, a third part is infested with weed-seeds, while the last is deep, soft and free from weeds. Now, soil is the pulverized rock. Then, how important that the hard soil be loosened, the rock beneath the surface soil be broken up, and the weed-seeds uprooted before the seed be sown. Otherwise we can receive no fruit.

Seeing, then, that we have good soil, we must next look to the seed. Is it good and of the right kind? For instance, if we want a crop of wheat it will not do to sow oats or barley, but we must sow wheat. If we were to leave the seed lying in the granary it would not produce any fruit. It needs a sower, and the best to be found. Of course, one who has spent a life time in sowing seed might be better fitted for the work than one who has never sown; but one man could never sow the many fields which surround the earth.

The seed which Jesus refers to in the parable was the Word of God, which is sown in the heart as the husbandman casts his seed in the ground. In I. Pet. i: 23, the word is called an incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever. It begets in the soul an abiding life which shall continue forever. It is the efficient and sufficient producer of spiritual life and fruit. The word needs no more energizing than the seed. It only needs receptive soil, and having it, will surely do its work. If the word of God be the seed, every scatterer of that precious seed must be called a sower. The sower was, primarily, Jesus himself; but, subsequently, the apostles; and, as the ages roll on, all those who seek to plant in human hearts the word of God. In all cases described in the parable the sower is

the same, while the result is entirely different. Then the whole difference must depend on the different states of the human heart.

"When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart." The heart had been so trodden by evil passions, indulged in sin, careless indifference, that it became as marble to the impact of the seed. It cannot penetrate; hence, makes no impression there, but lies loosely on the surface until Satan, fearing they may believe and be saved, finds some frivolous subject to draw off the attention, and it is gone without one step being taken heavenward.

He that receiveth the 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 endureth for a while; for, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, or the trials which their new profession bring upon them, quickly dries up their relish for the truth, and withers all the hasty promises of fruit which they had shown. Their natures are too frivolous, and have no root worth mentioning. They believe for a while, and do a limited amount of service, and then are gone until the next protracted meeting comes, when seed again falls into the excitable soil, produces a sickly plant which is soon dead, and so it goes on.

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and becometh unfruitful. Good impressions have been made, and of some depth, but the weary burden of providing for the present life is a thorn. They allow themselves to think they can do nothing for Christ because they have so much to do for themselves and their families. Others, again, have the care of accumulating wealth. When wealth comes it brings new temptations. Associations are likely to be with those who are not Christians, and they learn to sacrifice fidelity to the demands of society. I do not mean to say that the Christian should not have pleasure, and that it is a sin to be happy; but just the reverse. We should not only be happy ourselves, but strive to make others so; but refrain from those pleasures which have a tendency to wean us from Christ.

Finally, he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred. The marked difference in the capacity of men is that indicated by a three-fold division. The good and honest hearts which hear, heed, accept and hold fast, are by no means equal in ability to bear; and God will hold them responsible only according to that ability. If you can only bear thirty, do so and receive God's blessing. If you can bear a hundred, thank God for thy glorious capacity and bear them; but think not to deceive God with the thirty which might have been a hundred.

My dear brother or sister, to which class do you belong? Has your heart, from wicked and frivolous thought, grown smooth and hard? Are you poor, and have you no time for Christ? Do the labors of the week make you too fatigued to go to the house of God on Sunday? Be careful, brother, or sister. Remember that fruit must be brought to the judgment seat. You who are rich, what is your money doing for Christ? Are you putting your goods in his barns, or does it take all your time to take care of yourself or of what he has given you? *Only fruit, not wealth, can be exhibited at the judgment seat.*

May the Lord help us to be in the group which hear, heed, accept, hold fast and bring forth fruit with patience. "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves."