

listen to the preaching of the Gospel, but with it is equally as great a responsibility, for if the Gospel is not softening your heart, and reforming your character, it is making it harder. The same sun that melts the wax will harden the clay. The proclamation of the Gospel that will save souls will also harden men's hearts, so that the most difficult class of people on God's earth to reach are the Gospel-hardened, those who have sat under its preaching for years.

The second class described by our Master in this parable is "the stony-hearted hearer." "Some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprang 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." A hard rock under a thin covering of soil is the picture. The seed sown on this portion of the field sprang up quickly but soon died away. This represents the emotional class; a class you meet very often in evangelistic work. They are converted every time a special effort is made to save souls. They go on well for a short time but afterwards are back where they were before. A look at the context explains the reason. The sun, penetrating through the light covering of soil, reaches the rock, which becomes warm, and the heat of the rock causes the grain to spring up rapidly, but the same sun when he comes out in his noon-day strength causes it to wither. It is the preaching of the Gospel, such texts as "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" that causes him to lead a different life, but it is the same Gospel which causes him to backslide. The Gospel of Christ is broad. The same gospel which proclaims "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," also says "If any man will come