

June 23

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 an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Matthew 13:23

THE different measures of fruitage--the thirty, sixty, and hundred-fold, or the ten

pounds and the five, mark differences in obstacles to be overcome, etc., rather than unfaithfulness in the use of the means of grace. Some may work long and diligently for small results, while the same effort in others of more resolute will and of greater continuity may accomplish great things. Some by slips and occasional backslidings,

from which they subsequently recover, lose time and opportunities which can never be regained, although they are forgiven and generously reinstated in the divine favor, and thenceforth run with diligence and patience to the end. Z.96-99R1973:3

R5736 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008) IS MY HEART "GOOD GROUND"?

"That on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."--Luke 8:15.

WE RECOGNIZE these words as a portion of our Lord's parable of The Sower. A man went out to sow his field. As he scattered his seed, some fell on one kind of soil and some on another--some on thorny ground, some on stony ground, some on the hard, beaten pathway, and some on good ground. The good ground brought forth--some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold and some one hundred-fold.

According to the Master's interpretation of this parable, the good seed represents the Message of the Kingdom, which as it falls here and there appeals to some hearts differently from what it does to others. That seed falling upon the beaten pathway represented the Message as heard by persons into whose hearts it did not enter at all. They simply heard with the outer ear and forgot. It made no impression. The Lord said that the reason for this was that the Adversary came and caught the seed away. It had not penetrated even the surface of the hard ground. The conditions were not favorable for its entrance into the heart and the hearers soon forgot all that they had heard. The wiles of the Adversary would always, if possible, prevent the seed from entering the heart and taking root.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SHALLOW HEART

Amongst those who do receive the Truth are the stony-ground class. These are at first very much enthused, but they lack depth of character. They are not the kind the Lord is now seeking. They will not bring forth the fruitage, for they have not sufficient depth for rooting. They are shallow. They desire to trim their sails in harmony with the favorable winds of this life. As soon as they find out that the Truth is not popular, they foresee persecution or social ostracism; then their ardor cools and their interest in the Harvest Message wanes and gradually dies out. Thus they are like wheat planted in shallow soil, which comes up and flourishes a little while; but when the hot sun comes out it withers away, not having much root.

The heart that is like the thorny ground is favorable as to soil. It is good ground, with fine prospects for developing the fruits of the Holy Spirit. But it is infested with thorns, which are not removed, but are permitted to remain and so choke the wheat. These thorns are not the frivolous pleasures of life--theaters, cards, dancing, etc.; but, as the Lord explains in the parable, they are the cares of life, the ambitions of life, the deceitfulness of riches--perhaps the feeling that if they can accumulate wealth they can serve the Lord's Cause the better. This tendency to go out after other things allows a condition to obtain that is unfavorable to the wheat class. These may be good business men, fine politicians, or they may be immersed in some kind of study. Others of them may be fine housekeepers and have a pride as to how well things are kept, or they may be leaders in society or in works of reform, etc. All these are the thorns of the parable. A heart of this kind does not bring forth fruit, because the ground, while good, is otherwise occupied, and the Message of the Kingdom and its work are crowded out to a large degree, so that no fruit is brought to perfection.

HONESTY A BASIC QUALITY

Then we come to the "good ground" class of this parable, ground where the soil is not only good, but cleared of all noxious weeds which would prevent the proper growth of the wheat seed. This condition represents entire consecration to God. Everything which would hinder has been cast out. The cares of this life are not permitted to enter this heart and choke the Word. Such a one has made a bona-fide contract with the Lord and knows when he is keeping it; and he will keep it. He has the proper quality or depth of

character and more or less of ability. And there is the special trait of thorough honesty, loyalty.

Amongst those of the class who are styled the "good ground," we find different conditions in life--not many noble, but *some* noble; not many great, but *some* great; not many learned, but *some* learned; not many wise, but *some* wise. But they must all be good of heart, and they must be honest, else they could not bring forth the necessary fruitage--honesty being the most important feature of all, with a degree of intelligence and appreciation of the Truth. We see, then, how this class might bring forth varying amounts of fruitage, according to circumstances, conditions and ability. But they are in the right heart condition to bring forth their very best--some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold and some a hundred-fold.

In the picture we see that the Truth is represented by the seed, and we see that the individuals are also represented by the seed. The thought is that a grain of Truth is planted, and that in an honest heart it produces a character which is in harmony with the Truth. That seed of Truth is the Message of the Kingdom, the Word of the Kingdom--not a truth about the philosophies of men or some scientific truth, but a particular truth--not something that ignores God's Plan and purports to be a better plan than that which God has arranged, but the one particular thing--the Word of the Kingdom.

FOUR HUNDRED MILLION TARES

It seems remarkable that with so many that are called Christian people--numbering now four hundred millions-- they know so little about the Kingdom! The vast majority have learned but very little of it, if anything. This is manifest when we look over in Europe and see millions fighting to the death, when we realize that other millions are ready to fight here in the United States also. This is because they have not become New Creatures. As the natural seed enters the ground, sprouts and brings forth something that is fostered and developed by the soil, so the good seed of the Truth in the proper heart brings forth good fruit. The Message of the Kingdom brings forth results in harmony with its nature. It reaches the proper class and brings them to an attitude where God accepts them as New Creatures. These New Creatures are the children of the Kingdom; and these children of the Kingdom are the wheat that will be garnered. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom."

Our Lord in another parable shows us a different kind of seed--tare seed. This tare-seed looks a little like wheat. It is not the true seed--not the seed of the Kingdom. It may be a seed, or message, of morality or purity of life or total abstinence from intoxicating liquors, etc. No matter; it will not produce the Kingdom class. The only seed which will produce this class is the good seed, the true Kingdom Message.

As we look about in the world we see that the great Enemy oversowed this wheat-field of the Kingdom with false seed, the darnel, the tare-seed, as represented by these various messages that have gone forth throughout the world. This seed does not necessarily bring forth bad people. They are people who are workers for various things, some of them more or less good, but they are not children of the Kingdom. At the present time these tares are, many of them, influential. And the whole four hundred millions of them represent, not the true wheat-field, but merely an imitation, usurping the place really belonging to the true wheat class.

TIME REQUIRED TO DEVELOP FRUIT

In this Harvest time, now about ended, a separation has been taking place between the true wheat and the tares. The true wheat

are being gathered into the garner, while the tares are being bound in bundles to be burned--not literally burned, but destroyed as tares, as imitation wheat. They will soon cease to call themselves Christians. They will recognize themselves as what they have always been--parts of the world. Many of these are Church members, but are purely of the world and its spirit. They discount the true wheat, and consider them a little queer, fanatics.

Many of these tares do not know what they are. But those who have received the Message of the Kingdom into good and honest hearts will bring forth fruitage in harmony therewith. It requires time to develop the right fruit. This class grow daily in knowledge, in love, and are building one another up in the most holy faith. They

also do good unto all as they have opportunity. This is the whole work which God is expecting of them. These are the ones who will ere long be gathered into the Heavenly Kingdom beyond the veil.

After the fire of this "Day of Wrath" shall have burned up this "present evil world," and burned out all the roots of pride, then will come the great time of blessing for the world of mankind. The great plowshare of trouble will prepare humanity for the great seed-sowing of the near future. It will take a thousand years to bring forth the glorious crop of the Millennium. Those gathered then will not be wheat, but the Restitution class; wheat being used in the parables of our Lord to represent the spiritual class, the saints of the Gospel Age.

R2627 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER
MATT. 13:1-8,18-23.--MAY 20.
"The seed is the word of God."--Luke 8:11.

JESUS and his disciples had just returned to Capernaum, his home, from a tour of Galilee, and the multitudes, many of whom had heard him before and witnessed his miracles, gathered about him as he sat on the beach of Lake Galilee, assuredly expecting that they would hear some gracious words from his lips. And the Master never seemed weary of presenting his message, although frequently, as in this case, the mass of his hearers understood but dimly his parables. There was a fishing-boat lying near, quite possibly owned by some of his friends or relatives, and evidently with the owner's consent Jesus used the boat as his pulpit, speaking to the multitude which lined the beach, which at this point is said to rise rapidly, and which therefore would give the general effect of an amphitheatre. A traveler once made an experiment, to see how well the voice would carry under such circumstances, at this spot, and says, "It was remarkable how distinctly every word was heard, though our voices were not raised, even at three hundred yards off; and it was very easy to comprehend how, in this clear air, a preacher sitting in a boat could address a vast multitude sitting upon the shore."

The Master had no difficulty in finding a topic. Quite possibly his eye rested on a seed-sower, and as a result we have this parable, designed to show that there are different classes of hearers, and that it is not merely the eloquence or force or truthfulness of the message that determines the result, but chiefly the attitude of the heart that hears; hence the importance of the injunction, "Take heed how ye hear"-- see that your heart is in a right condition to receive the truth, if you would expect a benefit from it; do not expect that the mere hearing of the truth will profit you, irrespective of your own character conditions.

The good seed of the parable is the Word of God, the truth, even as false teaching, human philosophies and doctrines of devils, are not wheat-seed but tare-seed; our Lord is not showing in this parable what will be the result of sowing good or bad seed, but merely that the good seed can accomplish its work only in certain classes of hearts.

The class of heart that is like the "wayside," solid and compact with selfishness, not open and generous, is very unfavorable ground for the truth; nothing need be expected from such ground. The sower will let as little as possible fall on such, but whatever does fall upon it the Adversary will soon take away. "Wayside" hearers are not necessarily bad people, in the sense of grossly wicked, but they are bad in the sense of being unsuited to the Lord's present work and call. They will need to have the furrow run through them again and again, that troubles of various kinds may make them more generous, more open, more ready for the message. But in many instances the Lord will not run the plowshare of truth through such soil in this present age; rather, he will leave it for the Millennial age, when he will be dealing, not only with these hearts that were partially prepared and which have become unsuitable, but when also he will have a work to do with the great masses of mankind, which, like the virgin forests and prairies of earth, are yet uncleared, unplowed and unbroken. The great time of trouble at the beginning of the Millennial age will be a time, we believe, in which the Lord will run the plowshare of truth in every direction throughout the world, as it is written, "The plowman shall follow close after the reaper." (Amos

9:13.) And, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9), and thus be prepared for the new sowing time of the new age, under circumstances more favorable in some respects than the present, though less favorable in other respects.

Another class upon which the same good truth falls at the present time is one that has a good appearance upon the surface--fine soil, etc., but underneath, and but a few inches from the surface, is rock. The soil on the surface is but a veneer to hide the rock; it has the appearance of depth of character, sympathy and love, but this is merely a deception. Civilized customs have popularized at least an outward imitation of the graces of the holy spirit, and appearances of good heartedness, but down below in the real heart and intention is selfishness, that would merely follow the ways of righteousness because of popularity or because of some hoped-for gain, but thoroughly unable to appreciate self-sacrifice for anything or anybody. This class of shallow characters sometimes receives the truth with avidity, with joy, and seems to contain some of the truth's most enthusiastic followers; but this is merely for a little while, because of novelty or pride to show off, and not from love of the truth. The selfishness which is the substratum of their character will not permit them to endure hardness for the truth's sake. Consequently, as soon as they find that with the truth always goes something of persecution and tribulation they are surprised, thoroughly disheartened, and all their interest speedily dies out. This class has no hope for the Kingdom either. They are not of the kind that the sower expects will yield a crop to maturity in the present harvest.

The third class of hearers favored by the truth in this present time is referred to by our Lord as "thorny ground." This does not mean poor ground, for the thorns are to be found in the very best of ground, especially the thorns of Palestine, to which our Lord undoubtedly had reference. Of these Prof. Thomson says, "These thorns are not briar bushes or brambles, but are an after-growth of a variety of thistles, which come up quickly in every wheat-field of Palestine." We may say, then, that every Christian who receives the wheat or word of God into a good and honest heart during this Gospel age is in danger of having it choked with the thorns, and of thus becoming one of the class referred to in the parable, a class that was favored, that had every advantage, but which brought forth no crop worth gathering, because the thorns took possession of it to such an extent as to choke out the wheat-seed.

We have heard Christian people describe the thorns which threaten the good seed in the hearts of God's people to be theaters, card-playing, carousals, etc., etc., but this is a great mistake; the hearts that are beset with such things are probably not good ground in any sense of the word, and probably have never received the good seed. But how reasonable is the interpretation which our Lord himself gives--the thorns are the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches--just exactly what every Christian realizes. The cares of this life are not gross immoralities, but the home duties, family cares, business cares, etc. The deceitfulness of riches is not merely the baneful influence which is exercised upon those who possess riches, but especially it represents the snares, the difficulties, the entanglements, the misleading of efforts to become rich. How many

Christian people can testify that their spirituality, their love for the Lord and for the truth and for the Kingdom have been choked in great measure by wealth-coveting and wealth-seeking! How many can testify that the cares of this life have crowded out their fellowship with the Lord, and the power of his word in their hearts, and how as a result their lives are barren, unfruitful of anything in the way of character development, service of God and for the "brethren" and others.

What can such as realize that thorns are growing in their hearts and choking the Word of the Lord do to get rid of them? How can they overcome this difficulty of permitting the cares of this life to absorb their time, their talents, their influence? How can they get rid of the false allurements and attractions of riches? How can they become fruitful toward God in good works, in riches of grace in their hearts and characters, in riches of the knowledge of the divine Word and plan?

It is a difficult matter to get rid of these thorns, if they spring up and get well under way after we have received the wheat, and it will probably be a slow and tedious business to root them out; and one in which we could not hope at all for success by ourselves, unaided. All such must go to the Lord himself for the aid which he alone can give, and the method and process by which the Lord will assist them will be in the transforming of their minds so that they will mind not earthly things but heavenly things, set their affections on things above, not on things beneath, set their affections upon true riches of the divine nature and high calling, instead of on earthly riches, which are but transitory and unsatisfactory, even if attained.--Matt. 6:19-21.

And the way to effect this transforming of the mind, this uprooting of the thorns, is to draw time and attention away from the earthly things in a compulsory manner, limiting the time that we will give to earthly things, and devoting more and more time to spiritual interests in our own hearts and in the hearts of our families and friends. This will mean more time for the study and practice of the truth; and as the truth comes in it will be found to be the sanctifying power of God which alone can uproot the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and keep our hearts in the right attitude to bear much fruit to our Master's praise.

The "good ground" hearers are those whose hearts are in good condition, ready for the word of the Lord, plowed and furrowed by experiences. This class, free from thorns, is ready to bring forth an abundant harvest, and yet even of this class all may not yield the same amount of fruitage to our Master's sowing, for he represents that some will bring forth thirty, some sixty and some an hundred fold. He does not speak slightly of those which bring forth but the thirty fold, but leaves it to us to discern that those who bring forth the hundred fold are the most pleasing in his sight. We have much to do with this matter of the amount of fruitage which we yield to the Lord; it will be measured by the degree of our zeal, our love for him; consequently the class bringing forth the hundred fold

represents those Christians who love the Lord the most fervently, whose hearts are warmest for him, his truth and his people. The Apostle Paul was undoubtedly one of this hundred-fold class, the Apostle Peter was another, and no doubt there have been many in humble positions unknown to fame, whose love for the Lord, and zeal for his cause have been counted to them as hundredfold return for every seed of truth they received. Let us each with more and more care seek to bring forth much fruit, and as one means to this end to keep down the thorns and everything that would choke or hinder the influence of the truth in our hearts, in our daily lives, and in our words. Let us cultivate the seed and not the thorns.

THE MESSAGE OF THE KINGDOM

Luke says, "The seed is the Word of God"; Matthew says, "The word of the Kingdom." Our Lord no doubt used both expressions--the good seed is God's word or message of the Kingdom. Indeed, the message of the Kingdom may be said to be the only message God has yet given to mankind as a message of hope. He intimated the Kingdom to Abraham when he promised him that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; the intimation was that Abraham's seed should be blessed by being granted Kingdom powers which should prove a blessing to the world at large. Israel, at the time of this parable, was hoping to attain this very promise.

All the promises through the prophets pertain to the Kingdom, the time when it shall be established, the blessings which shall flow from it to the uttermost parts of the earth, when all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, when righteousness shall flourish throughout the world, and when sin and sinners and Satan himself will be subjected to the powers of righteousness, in the hands of the Messiah. At the time of the utterance of this parable the seed, word or message of the Kingdom had taken on a special form, viz., an invitation to some to become joint-heirs with the Messiah, the heir of the Kingdom.

Whoever has never heard anything about the Kingdom has never heard anything about the gospel, for it is the "gospel of the Kingdom," as our Lord declared. Hence we see that much of the preaching of eternal torment and other things falsely called the Gospel of the Kingdom, are delusions which are not of God, not his word, not the good seed that would bring forth the good fruit. The false messages have brought forth "tares" in abundance. This good seed of the Kingdom it is that rightly received into a good heart cannot be easily choked with earthly hopes or ambitions--for the Kingdom hope is above all, grand, pre-eminent, soul-satisfying. The Kingdom hope is as an anchor to the soul, and does not permit the cares of this life to seem large and to crush it out. On the contrary, to honest hearts which have received the good seed of the Kingdom the cares of this life are merely incidental trials which are to be overcome, that thereby character may be formed, much fruit brought forth, to the Lord's praise, and a share in the Kingdom attained. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," and bringeth forth much fruit.

R1972 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

STEWARDSHIP OF THE POUNDS AND TALENTS

MAY 17.--Luke 19:11-27. Compare also Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Cor. 4:1-7.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."--Luke 16:10.

THE Parable of the Pounds and the Parable of the Talents, as companion parables, illustrate from different standpoints the responsibilities of the stewardship of God's people. St. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers [servants] of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." This stewardship and ministry, while it belonged in a special sense to the apostles, belongs also to the whole Gospel Church, all of whom have the anointing and the commission (Isa. 61:1,2) and the consequent responsibilities of the sacred trusts committed to them. And as stewards of God we have nothing of our own, nothing with which we may do as we please; for, says the Apostle, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Nothing. And what have we to call our own that has not been included in our covenant of consecration to God? Nothing. Consequently all that we have belongs to God, and we are merely stewards of his goods.

"Moreover," says the Apostle, "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful"; and the parables under consideration show what is considered as faithfulness to our stewardship. To merely receive the gifts of God is not faithfulness, tho many seem to think so. Many indeed seem to think they have done God a great favor in merely accepting his grace through Christ, and are satisfied to make no further efforts. But such make a great mistake; for faithfulness, as here shown, consists in a proper and diligent *use* of our gifts in harmony with the divine purpose and methods; and both the Lord and the Apostle point to a day of reckoning, when even the secret things will be brought to light, and all the counsels of the hearts shall be made manifest.--Luke 19:15; 12:2,3; 8:17; Mark 4:21,22; Matt. 25:19; 1 Cor. 4:5.

We observe that in the former parable each of the servants received exactly the same thing--a "pound," while in the latter the gifts

varied: one received five talents, another two, and another one, "every man according to his several ability." ⁽¹⁾The "pound," being the same to all, fitly represents those blessings of divine grace which are common to all God's people. Among these are the Word of God and the various helps to its understanding, the influences of the holy spirit, the privileges of faith and prayer and communion with God and fellowship with Christ and with his people. But the "talents" being distributed according to every man's several ability, represent opportunities for the service of God along the lines of such abilities as we possess. They may be talents of education, or money, or influence, or good health, or time, or tact, or genius, with opportunities for their use in God's service.

In both parables our Lord is represented as about to take his departure to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And a part of their object was to disabuse the disciples' minds of the idea that his Kingdom would immediately appear. He thus intimated that while he was about to return to his Father in heaven there would be an interim between then and the time of his return, during which time their faithfulness to him would be fully tested, and that all that would prove faithful to their stewardship in his absence would be owned and blessed of him in his Kingdom upon his return.

The commission to each and all of the Lord's stewards is expressed in the words, "Occupy [which, in old English, signified, "Do business with," "Use," "Traffic with"] till I come." And the *first* business with the King on his return is not to deal and reckon with and judge the world, but to reckon with these servants to whom his goods--the "pounds" and the "talents"--had been committed; to see how much each had profited thereby, as a test of their fidelity, to determine what place if any should be granted them in his Kingdom. Notice also that the reckoning with them is as individuals, and not by groups or classes.

In plain language, these parables teach that it is the duty of every Christian to make good use of all that the Lord has given him. The right use of the "pound" is to diligently profit by all the means of grace for the spiritual upbuilding of ourselves and others. We cannot afford to neglect any of these; for we cannot do so without loss. If we neglect to consider and ponder the principles and precepts of God's Word, or to heed their wholesome instructions; if we fail to consider or to follow the leadings of the holy spirit; if we neglect the privilege of prayer and communion with God; or if we fail to cultivate the fellowship and communion of saints, we are folding our "pound" in a napkin. It cannot yield its legitimate increase while thus unused. Christian character cannot grow and develop in the neglect of the very means which God has provided for its perfecting. In such neglect a spiritual decline is sure to set in; and the more persistent and long-continued is the neglect, the less realized is the decline, and the less inclination is there to energy, diligence and zeal in correcting it. But in the diligent and proper use of these means of grace there is a "feast of fat things" which is sure to build up and invigorate the spiritual life and cause it to bring forth much fruit unto holiness, which is the increase for which the King is looking.

Yet the parable shows different degrees of increase in different cases following the right use of the "pound." The "pound" in the care of one servant gains ten, while with another it gains five. This reminds us of what we commonly observe, that even the same means of grace do not profit all to exactly the same extent. Some, for instance, are by nature more studious and thoughtful, or more generous, or grateful. And therefore the appeals of the various means of grace to the heart differ in different individuals, and the consequent fruitfulness also differs in quantity. Another illustration of the same thing is also found in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:8), where the seed in *good ground* produces fruit in varying quantities--some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.

But all such fruitful characters are appreciated and rewarded as "overcomers," and of the "little flock" to whom "it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom." ⁽²⁾The different measures of fruitage--the thirty, sixty, and hundred-fold, or the ten pounds and

the five, mark differences in obstacles to be overcome, etc., rather than unfaithfulness in the use of the means of grace. Some may work long and diligently for small results, while the same effort in others of more resolute will and of greater continuity may accomplish great things. Some by slips and occasional backslidings, from which they subsequently recover, lose time and opportunities which can never be regained, although they are forgiven and generously reinstated in the divine favor and thenceforth run with diligence and patience to the end.

All of these, therefore, because of their faithfulness, because they have overcome the obstacles in their way and have diligently cultivated the fruits of the spirit in the use of all the means of grace provided, are accorded a generous welcome into the everlasting kingdom, although the best efforts were short of perfection, and each must still have the robe of Christ's righteousness imputed to him by faith. But the degrees of exaltation in the kingdom differ according to the measure of their fruitage here. The steady diligence that secured the gain of "ten pounds" here is rewarded with corresponding exaltation there, which figuratively is likened to authority over ten cities; while the faithfulness which was sometimes interrupted and imperilled by dangerous backslidings afterward healed, but which apart from these perseveringly gained "five pounds," is rewarded with an exaltation in the Kingdom represented as "authority over five cities."

The Parable of the Talents illustrates fruits of labor. In it the ratio of increase is the same with both of the faithful servants--each doubled his "talents"; and the same approval is expressed to each, according to the principle mentioned by Paul (2 Cor. 8:12),--"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." A truly "willing mind" to serve the Lord will always find a way to serve him in the use of whatever talents are possessed; and the increase is sure to follow; and if not under our immediate, present observation, it will appear by and by. "God is not unmindful of our work and labor of love," however unfruitful it may appear to us. The fruit will be manifest by and by when all the secret things shall be revealed.

The differences of reward, accompanied by the same words of approval and welcome to the Kingdom glory and joy of the Lord, call to mind those scriptures which bid us rejoice in all present opportunities for that suffering and service which attest our faithfulness, because they work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and also remind us that there will be some least and some greater in the Kingdom of heaven. This is an incentive to "lay up treasures in heaven," where moth doth not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal.-- See Matt. 5:11,12; 2 Cor. 4:17,18; Matt. 11:11; 6:20.

But what of the faithless servant who wraps his "pound" in a napkin (who failed to make use of the means of grace for his own spiritual upbuilding and character development) and who buries his "talent" (of time or means or education, or ability of any kind, great or small) in the earth-- in the service of self and Mammon? Is there any reward for his faithless misuse of the Master's goods? No! even that which he hath shall be taken away, and he shall be cast into outer darkness. (Luke 19:24-26; Matt. 25:28-30.) The principle announced in the golden text is that upon which the rewards are to be given. Great trusts are to be committed to the "overcomers" of this age, and their worthiness must be tested: they must endure the tests, and thus be proved.

The citizens that hated him (verse 14), and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us, represent not only the Jews who cried, Away with him! Crucify him! We have no king but Caesar! but includes also all who having come to a knowledge of Christ and his coming kingdom are so out of accord with righteousness that they do not desire the promised Millennial Kingdom. Wrath will come upon these, a great "time of trouble, such as was not since there was a nation," soon after the "servants" have been reckoned with and rewarded. "Bring them hither and slay them before me," speaks of the Lord's righteous indignation against evil doers, but in no way cuts off hope of forgiveness for those who shall then repent and become loyal subjects of the King.

⁽¹⁾ ½ Jun. 22 Manna, 1Cor 4:2, Mat. 25:15 (See R3948 for other ½)

⁽²⁾ Jun. 23 Manna, Matt 13:23