

THE EARTHWORM'S PERSPECTIVE

by Angel Tarnowski

The parable of the sower:

(Matthew 13, 3–9) KJV

« ³Behold, a sower went forth to sow; ⁴And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: ⁵Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ⁸But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. ⁹Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.»

The explanation of it given by Jesus:
(Matthew. 13, 18–23)

“¹⁸Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When 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 his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. ²⁰But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. ²²He 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 he becometh unfruitful. ²³But 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.”

Introduction

This portion of the New Testament is very popular and since Jesus explained its meaning, it is easy to understand.

The Lord clarified this story from the point of view of who returns day after day to observe the results on his sown land, analyzing the growth of the plants and watching how and why some don't produce or die. Jesus taught from the perspective of the sower.

But let us have a look at this parable in a different way, from a different point of view. Jesus said that the word of the kingdom is sown in our heart. Obviously then, we are being identified in the parable as the ground, the soil into which that seed is thrown. In this illustration we are the soil.

Let us today consider the sown land of this parable, not as from the eye of a bird, but looking as if the soil -our heart- would have eyes to see what occurs inside of it. Let us watch from the perspective of the earthworm...

The word of the kingdom

Jesus' explanation begins saying: *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom* and when we read this we tend to think that that “word of the kingdom” is the Gospel, but really, although both concepts are very related, we ought to differentiate them. Of course the Gospel are words of the kingdom, yes, expressions of the kingdom of God; but here something more specific is being mentioned. The word of the kingdom is something that is within the Gospel “*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people* (these words can be found in Revelation 14, 6-7), *saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters*”. The Gospel is what is used to bring the word of God unto men. The Gospel contains and ushers the word of the kingdom closer to the understanding of men.

The seed of the parable contributes to our understanding of this: the Gospel is the

husk that covers and protects the word of the kingdom until it is sown in the heart. Of a different nature than its content, the usefulness of the husk finishes once the seed is sown. The apostle Paul grazed this matter once, saying: (1st Cor. 15, 37) “...*thou sowest not that body that shall be,...*”. They are two different things. This container is to take care of the content till it reaches its place in the soil, dissolving then, to allow the portion of real value to sprout, the living substance that will reproduce itself, the word of the kingdom.

What, then, is that “*word of the kingdom*”?

For the case of the seed sown in our hearts, the apostle John has the answer. He said that (Jn. 1, 1) in the beginning of all things *the Word* already existed and that this *Word* was with God and that *the Word* was God. (Jn. 1, 14) “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*” John makes it very clear: Jesus himself is “the word of the kingdom” made flesh.

The word of the kingdom is not the Gospel but the Gospel reveals it to us. Jesus said once: (Jn. 5, 39) “*Search the scriptures; (...) they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*”. The text is clear; the life is not in the Scriptures, it is not in the Gospel, it is not in the husk; the life is in Him, in the Word of the kingdom.

The parable mentions that the word of the kingdom is sown in the hearts, making us understand that the life of Jesus is put in us. It is interesting; we are not being asked if we want it. Graciously God sends Christ to be sown in us, and in every heart that gives him place the miracle of the virgin Mary repeats itself: The heavenly nature comes into the human nature. The Gospel brings a new nature to the heart, a different nature than the one of the ground. The divine seed falls into a dark and inert nature but it doesn't worry of becoming wrapped up in darkness, because it has within it enough life and light to produce fruitful results on the surface. If admitted below, then above, on the level of the fruits, it will promptly be seen that barren ground starts holding a plant that was never thought of being able to have.

This parable illustrates the wish of God to

have fellowship with his creation, explaining in a figurative form why he sent his Gospel to mankind.

But that is not the only thing it shows. It also reveals our reaction to that step God makes towards us. And we see that the ground, our heart, that place from which all the motivations that guide our lives spring up, doesn't always agree with what God wants. God sows life, but not all of us want that life.

By the wayside

One of the reactions of man to God's intention of nearing appears right at the beginning of the story. Part of the seed falls beyond the ploughed land. It remains on the open and the birds eat it. We interpret the figure considering the wayside as representing those who reject, who do not believe in the Gospel, thinking that the subsequent cases represent who more or less have believed and allow the word of the kingdom to grow in them.

Maybe that interpretation is proper; nevertheless, the earthworm (let us remember that we have brought our viewpoint down to the level of the earthworm) doesn't pick up so much psychology. It just about perceives that the seed fell on a ground that was hardened by treading, and that it had remained exposed. The earthworm captures little, but enough. It understood that the birds ate the seed because the soil didn't allow it to enter, because it didn't open a place for it, because it didn't cover it, didn't wrap it up, didn't shelter it. As the apostle John expressed at the beginning of his Gospel: (Jn. 1, 11) “*He came unto his own, and his own received him not*”.

God sends his seed of light and life also to the hard places, the earthworm heard it fall; but these hearts so compacted in themselves, hardened, don't let her in. This ground loses what has been given to it from above and fruit will never be found there.

The life that is in Jesus can sprout in the hearts, that is why it is sown there, and all the promises and the future of abundance can become reality for men; but for it to happen the Gospel needs to find a place inside of us, the seed needs to be accepted.

The words of the Gospel will let their content out only if they are received, if our heart shelters and wraps them up, if we embrace them.

Stones

Another seed had fallen on stony ground and because on this ground there was low humidity, the sun dried it out. Jesus explained that this is the person who happily receives the word of the kingdom, but later afflictions make her reject it. We relate the term "affliction" to the different persecutions the Church has suffered through the ages. But then, again, the earthworm can't reach thoughts of martyrdom. The only persecution the earthworm gets is the one happening under the surface, the one that occurs when the new nature that came in begins to develop and pushes the soil requiring more space for itself. When the husk opens up and that tiny sprout starts to be seen on the surface giving men the happiness of life, within the darkness underneath there is conflict: the root of God is penetrating in the heart more and more. The conflicts and persecutions Jesus mentioned are not only the ones the infidels raise against the believers. What happens is that now there is a seed in this soil from which a root of life and light is budding, and that light produces affliction to the darkness of our heart, because it hits like a strong light on the pupils causing the eyes to close in pain. The Holy One comes with His light into the darkness of our natures, and the unknown collision of the holy with the vile hurts us; it bothers us. We react, and with our attitude against that advance we will accept it, or we will deny ourselves to it.

The stones mentioned by Jesus are our rejections. What is mentioned here is not a great single rejection, but it is made noticeable that there are small and maybe constant refusals to His desire of settling in us, to his root to go deeper into us.

The stony ground is a heart that accepts Jesus to put of His in it, but that also opposes the intentions of God of making root in the heart. This ground accepts and covers the seed, and it rejoices in Jesus and has real life for a time, but at the end it loses it. By denying the root its growth within it, it brings it to death.

Thorns

"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 he becometh unfruitful."

From the perspective of the earthworm, what this means is that everything was going fine with the little plant of the kingdom inside of the heart until the nutrients the Kingdom of God requires to produce fruit were denied to it. The stones had been removed, the water didn't flow away, the humidity stayed, and the root was able to extend itself, but it didn't get from us our part. The ground needs to be tilled and prepared because that enables it to retain the rain or the irrigation waters, which the root needs to develop. But the waters from heaven are not the nourishment of the root. The root feeds itself with what she gets from the soil. The water dissolves the essence of the ground, and that nourishes the root.

The essence of the ground? Yes, the root nourishes itself with what the soil has to offer.

The Holy Being needs us to fulfil His purpose? He depends on us, as if without us He could not do it? This God can change stones into bread whenever He wants to, and with three loafs He can feed a multitude. Only by His word He created the world and everything that exists. No, He neither depends nor needs us to maintain His life. But He wants us to participate in this project. His purpose is to make something together. The resulting fruit will be formed with parts of Him and of us. His nature will settle in our hearts and it will grow and give forth fruit; but it will nurture on us. And when that fruit appears, He doesn't say: "What a good fruit have I given", but putting all the benefits on us He says: "What a good land! How it produces!" The soil that by itself can do nothing ends receiving the praise for the fruits obtained from the plant. Without the seed there would be no harvest; nevertheless the ground takes the laurels. What a God! He makes it all, but He undresses His honour and puts that mantle on us.

Just why? Because we honoured His Person believing Him and giving Him all the space He needed. That is why He doesn't apply for only a little place where to grow His

plant, for just a little corner of our heart, but He makes His root push downwards and makes it extend to every side. He is endeavouring to join what is His with what is ours. He wants to be one thing with us. By giving us Jesus completely, He longs us to dedicate ourselves completely too. The seed brings everything that belongs to Jesus and asks all the ground of our heart.

The nutrients get to the root thanks to the rains from heaven, but the thorns are faster in taking the nourishment away, and the good plant loses its share. God wants to feed His plant because He knows that the fruit to be obtained is much and very beneficial, but men often prefer not to give only to Him. And they share their nutrients with other roots they have accepted in their bosom.

Which are these *cares of this world, and deceitfulness of riches that choke the word*? We can outline some ideas, but it doesn't seem easy to define. Although it will be good for us to know that the thorns have a particularity: they live, expand, grow, extend branches and even have flowers; but it is all for themselves. They won't give anybody a useful fruit. They will consume the nutrients of our lives without giving anything in exchange. They will use us for themselves till leaving us worn out and without benefit.

Those who in their hearts allow thorns to remain by the seed of God are living a duality that deludes them and that impedes the proper nourishing of the root of True Life. These people, even though they have given God much place and the root and the plant of His seed have therefore grown much, at the end will not give God what He is expecting. And the soil that lodged the thorns will also end without fruit. Jesus said (Jn. 15, 8): *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"*. The thorns choke the glory of the Father.

The parable doesn't mention if that plant surrounded by the thorns dies, but knowing the way the thorns act, we dare to say that this land will also lose what it could have had. Although for a long time it lived together with the holy seed, its eternal finale will remain empty.

30, 60, 100

The last group. The good ground. The one that gave fruit. It is interesting to observe that, not like us, who in our need to be distinguished would want to be the most fruitful (underestimating in our haughtiness the ones that don't give much), Christ doesn't seem bothered at all that not everyone is producing hundredfold.

His own words are that some will produce thirty, others sixty, but He doesn't think that is wrong. The quantity doesn't seem to be the most important, but the dedication, and this very much encourages the heart that searches to please Him.

Whatever the reasons may be for these differences, what stands out is that all this group was a ground that did not oppose the entrance of the root of light in their lives, and who in due course, because of their surrender to the invasion of the Holy One, gave fruit. If they would have reacted negatively against the push of the root within them, they wouldn't have produced anything; yet they accepted, and the Father was glorified in their fruit.

Let us consider for a moment what makes a soil to be good. The farmers know something about this, and from them we learn that what gives the land its quality, besides having the necessary nourishment's and being free of counterproductive elements, is its capacity to hold the rainwater.

A stony ground lets the water drain down, leaving the plant rapidly without humidity, and the thorns rob the water meant for the good seed. But the good ground is the one that, being porous, holds the water for a long time, and the root can therefore be lengthily nourished. The good land keeps itself humid, holding for a long time what has been given to her from above, and that favours the seed (which has also come from above).

Isaiah the prophet, in his chapter 55, verse 10, explains how important the waters from heaven are: They water the earth and make it bring forth and bud...

The good ground takes care in holding as much as it can the rain that falls on it, because it has understood that this provision

is vital for the seed. It rejoices that what comes from heaven refreshes it and fills it, but knows that this is not for it, but for the nourishment of the seed it has within.

The good ground is the one that stops looking for its own because it has recognized that the seed has life and promises of much fruit after it matures, so it sides with heaven to take care of what was sown in her.

What about us?

Having meditated a little in this story we find ourselves in front of something we hadn't thought of: it seems that, some less, others more, we all have characteristics of what the parable shows.

We sometimes oppose with stones the entrance of the light that shows our sin, we sometimes let our Christianity mix with the mundane, and we often don't worry holding what from God descends to us for nourishment of the Christ sown in our hearts. Stones, thorns, weakness in holding the waters from heaven. Many of us didn't think this would be in us.

The matter is disquieting, because by giving place to any of those things, we indicate that we are not greatly interested in God.

With these actions we declare that, yes, we like the seed that was sown in us, and we offer some ground so as to convince that we receive it willingly, but we don't want everything the seed brings with it; it is not so important to us. We in fact deny its growth in us leaving it in the midst of stones and thorns. We say: "God, gives us what is yours...", but adding: "just don't ask of what is ours". His Person is not very pleasant to us.

We thought we were better than those infidels, the unbelievers, those at the wayside who in their hardness didn't receive Him, but, strictly speaking, we also don't want Him; that spirit we attributed to those who rejected the Gospel seems to exist also in us.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not". Paragraphs above, when we remembered these words of John, we didn't refer to us, nevertheless...

But let us be kind to ourselves.

Even if we have the conflict of in part wanting God and in part rejecting Him, let us suppose that we really want God to obtain all things just as He would like them.

We have a nature so opposed to His that we are not able to transform our rejection into a genuine acceptance, but let us suppose that we want to stand on God's side.

How will we do it?

Maybe the first thing would be to believe Jesus when He said that through our efforts we cannot change.

One of the prophets of the ancient world said, speaking in the name of God: (Jer. 2, 22) *"For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD"*.

Jesus expressed something in that same sense: "No man can make himself even a bit taller than what he is, no matter how much he tries to". And like the soil can't do anything by itself, we also can't modify any of our characteristics. What is, is, outside and inside. Let us humble ourselves, and let us accept the sentence of Jesus. This should be the first step towards the change, because, it is amazing, but we men don't accept that we can't. We are always convinced that if we stretch a bit more and put enough determination and effort, that we will indeed be taller, and because we believe so, we have produced actions which we thought to be the fruits God wants.

We believe that if we make good deeds and charities we will wash away the stains of our sins. But it is an error.

It is Adam's error that repeats itself. God explained to him how things were, yet Adam preferred to believe Satan: "God said so to you? No... It's not completely so..." and through accepting that lie today all the humanity is immersed in tremendous sufferings.

This error convinces us that by having accepted the words of the Gospel we have to make the effort of fulfilling the will of God

(we, the incapable ground?) and that accomplishing it we will be offering (holy?) fruit that will please God. The enemy of our souls convinced us that with a Bible at home and by going to church we are already Christians and that we now “can”, therefore, “let us do”.

We have been convinced that from the moment Jesus comes near to us we are no more impotent and that we now can give forth fruit. But we are soil! And to this day, it has never been seen for ground to give anything. The fruit will not be given by the soil, but by the seed. Soil and seed are two different things. How did we get to the thought that the ground could give anything? Just because a seed has been put in it? How come we didn't understand that the secret is not to try to fabricate fruit but to look after the seed?

It is true, yes, that the Scriptures say that the earth is blessed when it produces grain instead of thorns, but for grain as for thorns, the plant sprouted from a seed, never from the soil. The ground is the place where it all happens, but it doesn't produce it. The earth will never produce any living thing. Man will never produce anything Heavenly, his nature is earthly. And we will not produce fruit simply because our nature is not for that. The ground doesn't have the capacity to reproduce itself; its nature is different from the plant's and it will never give fruit; even less the kind of fruit Heaven expects to see!

We have fallen into a trap. We have been induced to believe that our inert, dirty and obscure lifeless ground was able to give fruit – Holy fruit!- by the mere fact that the Holy Seed is sown in it. But day-by-day we repeat the same phrases once and again: “I can't”, “I want to please God, but it is very difficult to be a Christian”, “I try, but I don't get to fulfill all His commandments”, “I make the effort, but it's very heavy”. We don't manage to fulfill the will of God.

What a contrast! We are convinced that we can yet we live frustrated because we cannot! It is because we have been created only to carry the fruit, not to produce it. Let us learn from the analogy of the parable. We are ground. Let us do what we can –and ought– ; the Holy One wants to expand, let us give up our place to Him.

If we manage to believe that we can't give

God what God expects, we are in position of going the next step.

The land where the heavenly seed is being sown has a keeper. There is a Gardener here who will clean up all bad things if he sees any possibilities of obtaining results. If there are stones, he will take them out, if thorns will consume the nourishment destined for the good seed, He will pull them up. If it is necessary to work the land, plough or till it, He will do it. Have we humbled ourselves, recognizing that we can't? Let us ask to be forgiven for having tried to offer fruits that are not even similar with those His seed wants to give and let us extend our arms to the Gardener asking him to work on our ground; to prepare it, to make in us what His seed needs.

This step consists in expressing clearly that we want the Gardener of our hearts to come and arrange things. He won't work if we don't ask him to. It is surprising, but God has left it up to us to authorize or negate His seed to have the use of our ground.

The Almighty God knocks at our door, showing us this parable through the peephole, letting us know about His desire to come and develop, but He remains outside waiting for our decision. The key to admit or negate God in our lives is in our hands.

Understanding

Where is this key? Jesus made it known to us: *“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 his heart.”*. And then, *“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit”*. The key is to understand.

The first one didn't understand the word of the kingdom, the seed didn't even remain in him: the latter did understand and that seed multiplied itself.

Rejection of the Heavenly seed or acceptance of it depends on our understanding the word of the kingdom.

Understand what? When God gave us life He had a purpose in mind. And to turn our

key towards God we need to understand that purpose: It is that God did not create us to take us to heaven, but to put heaven in us!

Jesus wants to put in us that nature that says: *“Father, thy will be done in earth so as it is done in heaven...”* In earth so as in heaven! That is the nature of the Son of God. That is the nature of that seed, the word of the kingdom of God. He wants the seed of His life and light to fill the dead dark places of our hearts so that the land He bought with His blood will be so full of His root that it will give abundant fruit.

That is the purpose our heart ought to grasp. If we understand that, we will turn the key for the Gardener to come in and do what He has to do; and we will find that what we read will happen in us: *“...he that heareth the word, (...) and with joy receiveth it; and (...) understandeth it; (...) beareth fruit.*

Jesus said: You can do nothing without Me. But we can side with Him and abide in Him: (Jn. 15, 4-5) *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*

Let us find that place in Him and we will be cleansed of the stones and thorns to bring much fruit that will glorify the Father.

Let us look upwards like an earthworm would towards the great root that is beginning to grow above.

Let us concentrate more in the root that is growing inside of the heart than on the fruits that will be seen outside.

Let us consider what we are and what God has placed within us, looking upwards every day to the word the Father lets rain every day for the nourishment of the seed that is in our heart.

Let us ensure this seed may deepen in us every day more; because then, in due time, there will be fruit that will glorify the Father.

Let us say to the Root: **Grow in me!**

Let us embrace the Root of life and light that longs to grow in the terrain of our heart, because it is crying out: Give me, Son, your heart, so I may bear fruit in you.

Let us join our voices to the voice of the Holy Spirit to say: **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Then it will also come to pass, what John saw in his Revelation: **And the Spirit and the Bride say: Come!**