

military strength. It seems now impossible to determine whether Aemilius performed these duties in the first or the second governorship of Quirinius. He does not mention a number, which was usually added when a person was governor for the second time, and the omission might suggest the first governorship; but in this case the context does not call for the specification even if the second administration be meant.

This important inscription was formerly condemned as a forgery, apparently for no other reason than that it mentioned the census of Quirinius and supported Luke; but the discovery not long ago of one half of the long-lost stone proved that the document is genuine.

W. M. RAMSAY.

*REMINISCENCES OF THE PARABLE OF THE  
SOWER CONTAINED IN THE EPISTLE OF ST.  
JAMES.*

IN p. lxii. of my edition of this Epistle I have pointed out the close connexion between it and the Sermon on the Mount, and in pp. lxxxv., to xc. and cci. to cciii., I have touched on the resemblances between the Epistle and the Gospels generally, including that of St. John. In p. lxii. I also said that these resemblances had the appearance of thoughts frequently uttered by the original speaker, and sinking into the mind of an attentive hearer, who afterwards reproduces them in his own manner, along with further developments. This has been shown in a very interesting way with reference to the earliest and best known of the Parables, that of the Sower, by the Rev. A. S. W. Young in a sermon which he has kindly allowed me to make use of. He points out first the thoughts which St. James

has borrowed directly from the Parable, and then the further reflections to which they gave rise in his own mind.

We will consider (1) the outer form and the inner meaning of the Parable, as it is given in the Gospels, and (2) the embodiment of these in the Epistle, and the higher truths which are there associated with them.

The Parable turns upon the natural image for teaching, which is also used in the Parable of the Tares, and in that of the Seed growing secretly. "The sower went forth to sow his seed." In the Parable of the Tares (Matt. xiii. 37) the Sower is said to be the Son of Man, who is the supreme Teacher: but it would seem more natural to understand the word "sower," in the earlier parable, to refer to teachers generally, showing the various difficulties which are sure to present themselves according to the various temperaments and histories of the hearers of the word. This is not so in the case of St. James, who asserts distinctly that "it is God, the Father of lights, who of His own will begot us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." The seed is the word, which is further defined as the Word of God (Luke viii. 11) or the Word of the Kingdom (Matt. xiii. 19). It fulfils its purpose when it falls into good ground, and brings forth fruit an hundred-fold; by which is signified, as we are told, those that, in an honest and good heart, hold fast the seed, and bring forth fruit with patience (Luke viii. 15).

But there are many dangers and hindrances which interfere with the right growth of the seed. Sometimes it falls on the hard wayside, and the birds of the air devour it, which is explained (in Matt. xiii. 19, Luke viii. 12) of them that have heard the word without understanding it (i.e. those on whom the word makes no impression); then cometh the devil and taketh away the word from their heart, lest they should believe and be saved. Sometimes

the seed falls on rocky ground, where it quickly springs up in the thin, shallow soil, and, as quickly, withers away under the hot sun, because it has no root ("no moisture" which might be gathered up by the root, Luke viii. 6). These are they which receive the word with joy, but in time of temptation fall away. Other seed falls among thorns, which grow up with it and choke it; by which is signified those who are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of life ("the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches," Matt. xiii. 22), and bring forth no fruit to perfection.

It will be noticed that this parable (as contrasted, for instance, with that of the Barren Fig-tree or the Rich Fool) is mainly descriptive of a fixed state of things, while the language of St. James and that of the Old Testament is mainly hortative and admonitory, demanding a change in the adverse circumstances. Compare Jeremiah iv. 3, "Thus saith the Lord to Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns"; Isaiah v. 1 foll., "My well-beloved had a vineyard on a very fruitful hill, and he made a trench about it, and gathered the stones out of it, and planted it with the choicest vine . . . and it brought forth wild grapes . . . I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard . . . I will break down the fence thereof, and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briars and thorns." And St. James is not less stern in denouncing double-mindedness, bare profession, talking instead of listening, hearing without doing, the love of pleasure and of the world instead of the love of God.

In St. Luke (viii. 18) the section which contains the Parable ends with the warning, "Take heed therefore how ye hear; for, whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even

that which he seemeth to have" (cf. also Matt. xiii. 9, "He that hath ears, let him hear")—a warning which frequently reappears in St. James. Thus we read (in i. 19), "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak"; (in ver. 21), "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls; but be ye doers, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves;" (vers. 23–25), "Such an one is like a man who beholdeth his face in a mirror . . . and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but an active doer (lit. 'hearer of forgetfulness,' 'doer of work'), this man shall be blessed in his doing"; (ver. 26), "If any man seemeth to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain." We shall have occasion to return to some of these warnings hereafter in treating of the dangers which beset the sowing of the seed.

I go on now to inquire whether St. James has any parallel to what we read in the Gospels of the act of sowing; the nature of the seed; the nature of the ground or soil which is required in order that the seed may grow and flourish; the fruit which it bears; and the personality of the sower. In iii. 18, St. James teaches us that the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable . . . full of mercy and good fruits; and that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for the peace-makers. Hort's note on this passage is as follows: "St James cannot too often reiterate his warning, founded on our Lord's, against anything that bears no fruit,—an unfruitful religion, an unfruitful faith, and now an unfruitful wisdom." For there is an opposite to this heavenly wisdom: there is a wisdom, as we are taught in the parable of the Tares, as well as in St. James, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish; the tongue of the

human teacher may be set on fire of hell ; it may be tainted with the poison of falsehood and bitterness. In the Parable of the Sower the activity of the devil is negative, confined to the removal of the good seed : in the Parable of the Tares and in the Epistle it is positive, replacing the good seed by the bad, the wheat by the tares. In St. James' time there were some who imputed the growth of evil in the heart to the action of God Himself, but it is good only that comes from Him. " Of His own will He begot us by the word of truth that we might be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." Such a declaration goes far beyond the teaching of the earliest of the parables, approaching closely to the teaching of St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 23, " having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God"), and of St. John in his Gospel (i. 13 foll.), " To as many as received Him, to them gave He power (*ἐξουσίαν*) to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name ; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" ; and also in his first Epistle (i. 9), " Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him." We need not, of course, suppose that St. James lived long enough to read either St. Peter's or St. John's writings, but only that he was one of those who, after the Resurrection, learnt from his Master, as He spoke the things concerning the Kingdom of God (Acts i. 3), and also had all things brought to his remembrance by the Holy Ghost.

We turn now to see what is said of the seed, which is explained to be the word, and is then further particularised as the word of God, the word of the kingdom, described by St. James as the word of truth, the implanted word which can save your souls, the perfect law of liberty. By the word of the kingdom we are probably to understand the Gospel, i.e., the good news of the kingdom, which Christ

came to establish ; the implanted word is that word of God, whose nature it is to root itself in the heart, as seed does in the ground, and so to save the soul (see Luke viii. 12). The word of truth is the declaration of the truth, as the " word of God " is the utterance or manifestation of God ; and St. John can therefore say, *Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος*, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews can speak of the Son as the *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως* of God. Lastly, the perfect law of liberty is the law written in the heart, the ideal of humanity, as shown in the life of Christ, and accepted by His followers, not from fear, but from love.

The next point is the nature of the ground. In Luke viii. 15 the good ground is explained to be the honest and good heart, which, having received the word, holds it fast, and brings forth fruit with patience. The explanation of the seed which falls on the wayside, and is snapt up by the birds, is that the devil cometh and taketh away the seed from the heart. So in James i. 26 we are told that, if any one seemeth to be religious, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain ; while on the other hand we are bidden to stablish our hearts. The main division, however, in St. James, depends upon the spiritual influence to which we submit ourselves. Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust (i. 14) ; God tempteth none, resisting the proud, and giving grace to the humble. Be subject, therefore, to God ; but resist the devil (iv. 6, 7).

Lastly, who, and what, is the Sower ? In i. 18 we have seen that, to St. James, the Teacher or Sower in the highest sense is God ; but he has much to tell us of human teachers, and warns men most seriously against taking up this profession without a sense of its difficulty and responsibility (i. 19 foll., iii.). In the parable the main object is to point out the difficulties which beset the path of the sower, even

though he may sow only the good seed, following therein the example of his divine Master.

In conclusion, I will call attention to some further agreements in points of detail, which are to be found in the Parable and the Epistle. The characteristic of the good ground in Luke is that it is both receptive and retentive. So in the Epistle (i. 21), he that would be blessed in his doing must receive with meekness the implanted word, which can save his soul. He must gaze steadily into the law of liberty and hold fast to it. The seed which falls on the rocky ground represents those who receive the word with joy, but believe only for a time, and fall away under temptation (Luke viii. 13). So the double-minded man (in James i. 6) quickly loses faith and is unstable in all his ways. "Blessed is he who endureth temptation, for he shall receive the crown of life. The sun ariseth with the scorching wind and withers the grass . . . so also will the rich man wither away in his goings" (James i. 11).

The seed which fell among thorns is used to symbolise those who are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of life; with which we may compare St. James' repeated warnings to the rich, and against the pleasures which war in our members (iv. 1). So the version in Matthew, which speaks of the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, reappears in James i. 27, "Pure religion is to keep oneself unspotted from the world," and (iv. 4) "The friendship of the world is enmity against God; again the deceitfulness of riches is shown in i. 11, while other kinds of self-deception are mentioned in i. 22 and 26. The difficult verse (i. 21), "putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness" has been explained by some good scholars of the thorns and weeds which interfere with the growth of the seed. This would make very good sense, but I am not aware of any instance in which *περισσεια* bears this precise

meaning. I have myself taken it of the "defilement caused by the overflowing malice of the heart," referring to the preceding "wrath of man, which worketh not the righteousness of God." The A.V. rendering "superfluity of wickedness" is undoubtedly wrong.

J. B. MAYOR.

## *PERSONALITY AND GRACE.*

### XI. ETERNAL LIFE.

A LIFE every event of which is directed towards the realisation of its chief good would be a blessed life on the one condition that it could not be cut off before its good were realised. But it is blessed only in hope, and hope, even as faith, is illusion except in so far as it is based on reality.

To the world as it is, not faith but worldliness reconciles us. Thoughtlessness is only too easily reconciled to it, and such contentment is not divine, but is selfish and sensual. No man with large sympathies and spiritual aspirations can be reconciled to this life as it is, for the simple reason that it is not good. To be reconciled to anything is just to find it good, a thing impossible with respect to this present life, unless it has destroyed every fragment of a soul. Nay, its gifts are so qualified by the shadow of death, even if failure and struggle and sickness could be escaped, that the absence of soul itself will not shield any one to the close. The sunniest worldly face always ends in being a clouded, peevish one: worldliness under no condition being long justified in her children.

Ought we not, therefore, to have begun with this question of a future life? Unless we know whether our present life is the whole edifice or only the portico, how are we to judge it? Would not the whole business of faith be changed if we had some clear demonstration of another life? Suppose