



THINK ON THESE THINGS..... (our contributor this morning is Tony Wilson)

**Reading:** Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. (Matthew 13:8)

**Reflection:**

I'm sure many of you know that the URC has a new General Secretary. He's Rev. Dr. John Bradbury. He was interviewed in the July/August issue of 'Reform' magazine. One thing he said that made me think was: 'How is it that we always go back to Scripture and see the new thing that we've not seen before and how do we allow that to form us into what we're called to be today?'

The Bible isn't an easy book. It was written gradually over a period of probably about a thousand years, ending just after the conclusion of the first century A.D. So it speaks to a time very different indeed to our own. In spite of this Dr. Bradbury shows he's confident that we can still see something new in it that's relevant for our present time.

A few weeks ago the reading for our YouTube Sunday Service was St Matthew's version of The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9). That was a real coincidence, as I'd been studying that parable in depth at the time. Among other things, I'd read a number of different commentaries on it I'm sure that when Jesus first told this parable, it was a very bright, vibrant and realistic story for His listeners. However agricultural methods have changed so much since then, that the parable can now seem rather strange and unclear.

One commentator suggested that a better name for it could be 'The Parable of the Four Different Types of Soil'. As soon as I read that, the parable suddenly became so much easier to understand. For it does seem to be more about the soil than about the sower or the seed. When I later read Dr. Bradbury's words, as quoted above, I realized I'd seen something new in the parable that could help us to discern what we are all called to be today. We're called to be good soil for God's message to us.

We're called to produce an amazing abundance of good things in our Christian lives in spite of all the obstacles we encounter along the way. That's a huge challenge to us. Perhaps we should look on it as a target to aim at so that we don't feel dejected if we don't quite meet the mark. But it is a bright, vibrant and realistic aim for us.

**Breath Prayer for today:**

Almighty God, we pray that you will guide us to be good soil for your message. May we show in our lives the fruits of your word through good works, energy in your service, and in living a holy life. Amen.

