

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Consider the Apples in a Seed

(Jerry Fite)

Remember the thought as if it were yesterday. But decades ago, while flying into Houston after an encouraging week in a Gospel Meeting, I saw all of the housetops and considered the many souls that live around me and in need of the Gospel. I did not have to wonder if they needed the Gospel, for all have sinned and have fallen short of God’s glory (*Romans 3:23*). Jesus died for all dead in sin (*2 Corinthians 5:14*), and the saving gospel message is for all: Jew and Gentile (*Romans 1:16*). Therefore, with Paul I too felt constrained to do what I can to reach as many as I could with the Gospel.

We know the Gospel is for all and as followers of Christ, we understand our responsibility to spread the seed of God’s word to others (*Matt. 28:18-20*). With the weight of this responsibility on our heart, it is good from time to time to have encouragement that keeps us going. An aerial view reminding me of just how many potential souls are out there to be saved opened my heart to the possibilities. But the thought of

counting the apples in a seed is another stimulating thought.

In June of 1996, an article appeared in the *Guardian of Truth* written by Dennis Gullledge and entitled, “*Can You Count the Apples in a Seed?*” He writes, “*Someone has said that you can count the number of seeds in an apple, but you cannot count the number of apples in a seed.*” The point is, you may be able to count the number of people being saved at a given time, but “*you cannot count the number of good things done in the life of the one person who becomes a Christian*”

The example given is the baptism of James W. Shepherd. In 1877, an elder of the church was asked about the Gospel Meeting preached by James A. Harding. The elder said, “*Oh brother Harding did his usually powerful preaching, the attendance was fair, but the results were negligible. Only little Jimmy Shepherd was baptized.*”

This “*little Jimmy Shepherd*” grew up to preach the Gospel in New Zealand and Australia in the late 1800’s. His classic

work entitled “*Handbook on Baptism*,” was published in 1894. J.W. McGarvey said it was “*the best and most comprehensive work of its kind in existence.*” Brother Shepherd also compiled and edited “*Queries and Answers*,” containing questions answered by David Lipscomb. “*Little Jimmy*” grew to produce many good things in the Kingdom.

In 1999, Ann Stevens was encouraged by the 1996 article and wrote a hymn entitled “*The Apples in a Seed.*” The third verse reads: “*Do not doubt that someone will believe it, though a hundred hear and turn away, for if only one heart will receive it, through the one, a thousand may obey. It may be a gentleman of ninety. It may be a child of only ten. Sow the precious seed for the Almighty, You can watch it multiply again.*” **Chorus:** “*Who can count the apples in a seed? Who can say how much the fruit will grow? Who can know the harvest of tomorrow? Who can count the apples in a seed?*” Let us spread the Word to the next soul! Let us invite that next soul we meet to this week’s Gospel Meeting!