

The Quiet Hour

Parables of The Kingdom.*

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D. D.

"Another parable" (v. 24). Our Lord does not weary of teaching; let us remember His example. Let us keep on in keeping at it.

"The kingdom of heaven" (v. 24). The Messianic reign of Christ.

"Good seed" (v. 54). Christ in His interpretation of this parable" (Matt. 13: 36-43) tells us that the man who sows is Himself, and that the good seed is the "children of the kingdom"; that is, those who personally accept Christ's reign in their own hearts. The initial source of goodness is Christ, and Christians are in the world to grow in His likeness, illustrate Him, bring forth harvests of holy living and helpful, gracious service to others, to their Lord's glory. Are we feeling, acting, speaking, living, as if we really were good seed? Remember too, that a quality of seed is growth: are we actually growing into better likeness to our Lord?

"While men slept" (v. 25). The enemy came during the natural sleeping-time. That was his chance. He seized it. Our Lord tells us that the enemy is the devil. Notice how clear is our Lord's statement of the devil's personality and reality. And the personal devil is alert to seize his chance. Young men's nights, when they hang about street-corners and saloon and gloat on vicious plays are the devil's times for sowing his bad seed.

"Tares" (v. 25). Dr. Robinson says "Our path now lay through fields of wheat... Among these splendid fields of grain are still found the tares... They are not to be distinguished from the wheat until the ear appears. These seed resembles wheat in form, but is smaller and black... When this is not separated from the wheat bread made from the flour often causes dizziness." So the tares are not only unfit for food, but noxious. That is the sort of seed the devil sows; beware of him and it.

"Then appeared the tares also" (v. 26). You cannot hide and cherish a secret sin, somehow and at some time it will announce itself. Notice, too, that "went away"; tares do not need cultivation; nor do sins; they grow as weeds do.

"An enemy hath done this" (v. 28). Dark as the problem of evil is, there is this comforting light about it: it does not spring from God as cause, but from the devil. All sorts of questions perplex, but this fact stands forth. The ultimate source of evil is neither God or myself, but is the devil. I only make the devil's evil my own when I consent to it. Let me, then, refuse consent. Let me also gird my will with this other Scripture

certainly, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

"Let both grow together until the harvest" (v. 30). In His own interpretation of this parable our Lord distinctly tells us that the field in which He Himself sows the good seed and the devil the tares is "the world." So this parable does not refer to the church; does not teach that there is to be no church discipline, that notoriously wicked men are to be allowed in the church, as some have affirmed. Our Lord is teaching about the world; He is affirming that under His Messianic reign good men and bad will exist together; that we are not to attempt, by religious persecution, by killing those whom we think bad, as the Roman Church has done, to thrust them from the world. But learn that there is to be an adjudicating end, the judge of that end is Jesus Christ Himself, there is to be a lasting separation between the good and the bad, no most hidden evil shall miss its doom; there shall be punishment for evil, there shall be reward and safety for the good—"gather the wheat into my barn." Let us make personal application are we wheat or tares? We can be wheat through self-surrender to Jesus Christ.

"Less than all seeds" (v. 32). "The round kernels passed in Jewish phrase as an emblem for a small, insignificant object, being the smallest seed commonly gathered in Palestine, although not literally the most diminutive known." Trench says, "The Lord in His popular teaching adhered to the popular languages."

"The birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches" (v. 32). Dr. Hackett "saw stalks of mustard seven and feet high and before his eyes a bird came and pecked on a branch and sung." This is a parable of hope concerning the external and extensive spreading of Christ's kingdom. Its main teaching is, Do not despise small beginnings. History is full of illustrations.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven" (v. 33). The pervasive, interpenetrating quality of the leaven is the point here. So Christianity introduced into a heart, into a community, prevades and changes to the sort of itself. Our duty is to introduce Christian, by the word of our testimony, by kindly service. By beautiful living put Christianity into you family, neighborhood, etc. Have great faith in the contact power of Christianity; put into touch with others, it will produce effect. Have great faith in the secret, unseen power of Christianity; you cannot see the working of the leaven in the dough. Be hopeful; these two parables are parables of hope; never despair; somehow God's cause is moving on. Let us ask ourselves this question: Are we in our homes, business, companionships, leavening for God, really, by

what we are and do, spreading the kingdom?—C. E. World.

The Plodder's Petition.

BY HELEN GILBERT.

Lord, let me not be too content
With life in trifling service spent—
Make me aspire!

When days with petty cares are filled,
Let me with fleeting thoughts be thrilled
Of something higher!

Help me to long for mental grace
To struggle with the commonplace
I daily find,

May little deeds not bring to fruit
A crop of little thought to suit
A shriveled mind.

I do not ask for place among
Great thinkers who have taught and sung,
And scorned to bend.

Under the trials of the hour
I only would not lose the power
To comprehend.

The Independent.

Christ's Four Keys.

BY REV. JAMES H. COLLIE, M.A.

A minister, walking, along the road one day, met a woman who was evidently by her appearance bent on some very important errand. On entering into conversation with her, she told him she was on her way to a neighbour's to see if she had a key that would open one of her drawers containing some useful and valuable articles, as she had lost the original key and had in vain endeavoured to open it with the other keys she had. "Friend," said he, "are you as anxious that the door of your heart should be opened, as for the key of that drawer of yours. Jesus has the key that can open it. Will you let Him open it now, and He will bring salvation to your soul?" It was a word in season, and, I believe, led her to receive Christ. Dear reader, is the door to your heart opened for Christ, or shut against Him? It must be the one or the other. Jesus has the key of David, He shutteth and no man openeth. As the heart, however rusty the lock may be and however long the door may have been shut against Him. Let me tell you of four of Christ's keys.

1. There is the cross key of adversity. Perhaps you are in great trouble and distress of mind. Failure seems stamped on all your plans and purposes. Bitter disappointment meets you where you go and whatever you attempt. You see others prospering and you had as good prospects as they, but while they have succeeded you have failed. Trial after trial has followed, like waves of the sea, in quick succession. You have been losing heart. All is dark. Everything and everybody seem against you. Dear friend, it is only the cross key working in the lock. Jesus is turning it in love and great kindness to thy soul, that He may open the door and come in and fill it with Himself. Open and welcome Jesus and you will find all things working together for good.

2. Then there is the black key of bereavement. You may have seen one and another of your dear ones, the light of your dwelling and the joy of your heart, taken away from your happy home and laid in the cold grave. You thought it hard and cruel of the Lord thus to deal with you. You did not see that Jesus was but finding His way into your heart,

*S. S. Lesson for, May 27. Matt. 13: 24-33.
Golden Text.—The field is the world.—Matt. 13: 28.