

LESSON IX.

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

May 27, 1900

Matt. 13: 24-33. Commit to memory vs. 31, 33. Read Matt. 13: 24-53; Mark 4: 21-29.

21 Another parable¹ put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares² among the wheat, and went³ his way.

26 But when the blade⁴ was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he⁵ said, Nay; lest¹⁰ while ye gather up the tares, ye root up¹¹ also the wheat with them.

Revised Version.—1 Set he before them; 2 Also; 3 Say; 4 Sait; 5 Nay; 6 Truly; 7 Omit also; 8 The; 9 Is up in heaven; 10 It was all.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of¹² harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 Another parable¹ put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is¹⁴ the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is¹⁵ the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven¹⁶ come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till¹⁷ the whole was leavened.

2 Away; 3 Sprang; 4 And; 5 Thou not; 6 Omit from; 7 first; 8 Less than all; 9 Greater than the herbs;

EXPLANATION

Connection—In the Lesson of to-day we have three parables about the kingdom. They were spoken on the same occasion as the parable of the sower, which showed how God's kingdom begins, and what things hinder it. They show us how the kingdom grows and develops. The first parable of to-day's group is fully explained by Jesus in vs. 37-43.

24. Another parable; following upon and fitting into those just given. Kingdom of heaven. Note that is not "the kingdom in heaven," but "of heaven." It means Christ's rule upon earth in the hearts and lives of men (Luke 17: 21). **Good seed.** In the parable of the sower, the word is the seed (v. 19), but here the seed are "the children of the kingdom" (v. 38), those who hear and obey the Word of God. "**Good**" here means "genuine, without mixture of other kinds." (Bruce.) **In his field.** Not the Church, but the world, which rightfully belongs to Jesus (v. 38).

25. While men slept; secretly, at night. His enemy. The great enemy that does his secret, deadly work is Satan (v. 38). Satan is always wide awake. He has undertaken an awful task—to fight Christ and to kill good. He never relaxes—

"Wherever God erects a house of prayer, The devil always builds a chapel there." **Sowed tares; among the wheat.** The grass known as the "darnel" is probably meant. It is something like rye, but with poisonous seeds. The tares are "the children of the wicked one" (v. 38).

26. Then appeared the tares. The blades of wheat and darnel can scarcely be distinguished, but when in ear the difference is noticed at once.

27, 28. An enemy hath done this. Where has evil come from into the world? This is the only answer to the question. It

has its source, not in the human heart, but in the great arch-enemy—Satan (Eph. 6: 22). **Wilt thou then, etc.?** They were more zealous than wise, as the next verse shows.

29, 30. He said, nay. The tares at that stage of growth could not be uprooted without injury to the wheat. Good and bad people intermingle like tares and wheat. Some over-zealous ones have tried to separate them by violent means (Luke 9: 54-56). This is the origin of most of the persecutions. It is not Christ's way. **Let both grow together.** Bad people, like the tares, are tolerated for the sake of the good. Ten righteous persons would have saved Sodom (Gen. 18: 32). It is the good that preserve the world from destruction. **The harvest;** the end of the world (v. 38). **To burn them.** Fire is an emblem of judgment (vs. 41, 42). **The wheat;** the true members of the kingdom of God (v. 43).

31, 32. Another parable; which shows the external growth of the kingdom. The least of all seeds. Not the smallest seed known, but very small when compared with the size of the plant. **Greatest among herbs.** Dr. Thomson, the author of "The Land and the Book," says he has seen it grow as tall as a horse and his rider. **A tree;** as big as a tree. **The birds, etc.;** seeking shelter and food. The parable shows what great results may come from small beginnings (Zech. 4: 10).

33. Another parable; showing the internal growth of the kingdom. Leaven; any substance that produces fermentation; generally a lump of old dough. **A woman hid, by kneading. Three measures;** three seahs (Gen. 18: 6). A seah was about a peck and a half. The new life spreads in the heart like leaven. "Each true Christian, leavened by Christianity, operates as leaven on his neighbor."