A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning that explains an unclear idea by laying it alongside a clear idea to enhance understanding of the subject better. In a parable, the known clarifies the unknown, making it more interesting, easier to understand and remember, and apply to life. In this tract we closely study the parable of the Wheat and Tares.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 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? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of 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," (Matt. 13:24–30).

We now answer the questions we derive from this parable.

1. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

"Both the parable of the tares and that of the net plainly teach that there is no time when all the wicked will turn to God. The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. The good and the bad fish are together drawn ashore for a final separation." (COL 123.1).

"The parable is a description of that which pertains to the kingdom of God, His work of salvation of men; and this work is accomplished through the church." (COL 70.2).

"Satan is a powerful general … he deceives men, and seeks to obliterate the line of demarcation between believers and unbelievers." (Review and Herald, vol. 4, p. 307, col. 3, June 4, 1901).

"It is Satan's work to mingle evil with good, and to remove the distinction between good and evil. Christ would have a church that labors to separate the evil from the good …" (7BC p. 958, col. 1).

"The eternal God has drawn the line of distinction between the saints and the sinners, the converted and the unconverted. The two classes do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of the rainbow. They are to be as distinct as midday and midnight." (TM p. 87).

"The principles of God's government—the only principles that will endure from everlasting to everlasting—are to be followed by those who are seeking for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The line of demarcation (distinction) between those who serve God and those who serve Him not is to be kept clear and distinct." (Manuscript Releases, vol. 20, p. 154).

"We must have a firm determination to do the Lord's will at all times and in all places." (My Life Today, p. 73).

"Thus in every age, from the midst of apostasy and rebellion, God gathers out a people that are true to Him—a people 'in whose heart is His law.'" (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 338).

2. WHAT IS THE FIELD?

The field is the world (Matt. 13:38), *"but we must understand this as signifying the church of Christ in the world."* (COL, p. 70).

"True, the Holy Spirit has gone out into all the world; everywhere it is moving upon the hearts of men; but it is in the church that we are to grow and ripen for the garner of God." (COL 70.2).

"The world is a fallen world, and the church is a place represented by a field in which grow tares and wheat. They are to grow together until the harvest." (TSA 45.2).

3. WHAT IS THE WHEAT?

"…the good seed are the children of the kingdom." (Matt. 13:38). *"The good seed are the children of the kingdom… The good seed represents those who are born of the word of God, the truth."* (COL 70.3).

4. WHO SOWED THE WHEAT?

Jesus Christ sowed the good seed (Matt. 13:37). *"He that sowed the good seed is the Son of man. . . . The good seed are the children of the kingdom."* (COL 70.3).

5. WHAT ARE THE TARES?

"…but the tares are the children of the wicked one." (Matt. 13:38). *"The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles."* (COL 70.3).

6. WHO SOWED THE TARES?

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil …" (Matt. 13:39). *"The enemy that sowed them is the devil."* (COL 70.3).

7. WHAT IS GROWING TOGETHER?

"Let both grow together until the harvest" (Matt. 13:30).

"As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast." (COL 72.1). Also read Christ's Object Lessons, p. 71.3.

On how to deal with the erring, read the following references: TM, p. 41–47; TM 46.1; TM 47.2.

8. WHEN IS THE HARVEST?

"…the harvest is the end of the world." (Matt. 13:39). *"The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time."* (COL 71.3).

9. WHAT IS THE SEPARATION?

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

"He requires those who follow him to be separate from sin and sinners," (Signs of the Times, July 22, 1880, par. 3).

"Many who embraced the third message had not had an experience in the two former messages. Satan understood this, and his evil eye was upon them to overthrow them; but the third angel was pointing them to the most holy place, and those who had an experience in the past messages were pointing them the way to the heavenly sanctuary. Many saw the perfect chain of truth in the angels' messages and gladly received them in their order, and followed Jesus by faith into the heavenly sanctuary. These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan." (LDE 68.2).

10. WHEN IS THE SEPARATION?

"…and in the time of 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." (Matt. 13:30).

"And in the loud cry of the third angel's message a voice is heard from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities' (Revelation 18:4, 5)." (RH, Dec. 6, 1892). Also read 2SM 118.2.

"Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6–12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that 'believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness' (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: 'Come out of her, My people' (Revelation 18:4)." (GC 390.2). Also read Great Controversy GC 389.2.

"The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner. At that time the wicked will all be destroyed. They will become 'as though they had not been.' Obadiah 16." (PP 541.2). Also read GC 390.2.

"The great issue so near at hand [enforcement of Sunday laws] will weed out those whom God has not appointed, and He will have a pure, true, sanctified ministry prepared for the latter rain." (3SM 385, 1886; LDE 179.2). References: GC 389.2; GC88 604.1.

THE REAPERS

Christ said He will send the reapers (Matt. 13:30), and that these reapers are angels (Matt. 13:39, 41). These reapers will come in the time of the harvest, for it is written *"and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers"* (Matt. 13:30).

"I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, 'Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner.'" (EW, p. 118).

"I saw a little company travelling a narrow pathway. All seemed to be firmly united, bound together by the truth, in bundles, or companies. Said the angel, 'The third angel is binding, or sealing, them in bundles for the heavenly garner.'" (EW, p. 88.3).

HAS THE ANGEL COME?

"When Christ entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of the atonement…" (4SP, p. 273). First comes the third angel, then the second coming of Christ.

PROPHETIC STUDY SERIES

The Wheat & Tares

A PARABLE STUDY

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers."

Matthew 13:30

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