

THIS DOCUMENT WAS TAKEN FROM THE COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW
DOWNLOADED FROM THE SITE OF THIRD MILLENNIUM MINISTRIES.

<http://thirdmill.org/books/series.asp>

IN THIS DOCUMENT, THE PORTION OF CHAPTER 13 WAS SEPARATED AND
SLIGHTLY REFORMATTED.

This expanded electronic edition of the J-F-B Commentary is in the public domain.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown

[\[Previous\]](#) [\[Next\]](#)

Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (1871)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Commentary by DAVID BROWN

CHAPTER 13

[Mt 13:1-52](#). JESUS TEACHES BY PARABLES. (= [Mr 4:1-34](#); [Lu 8:4-18](#); [13:18-20](#)).

Introduction ([Mt 13:1-3](#)).

1. The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.

2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship--the article in the received text lacks authority

and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore--How graphic this picture!--no doubt from the pen of an eye-witness, himself impressed with the scene. It was "the same day" on which the foregoing solemn discourse was delivered, when His kindred thought Him "beside Himself" for His indifference to food and repose--that same day retiring to the seashore of Galilee; and there seating Himself, perhaps for coolness and rest, the crowds again flock around Him, and He is fain to push off from them, in the boat usually kept in readiness for Him; yet only to begin, without waiting to rest, a new course of teaching by parables to the eager multitudes that lined the shore. To the parables of our Lord there is nothing in all language to be compared, for simplicity, grace, fulness, and variety of spiritual teaching. They are adapted to all classes and stages of advancement, being understood by each according to the measure of his spiritual capacity.

3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, &c.--These parables are SEVEN in number; and it is not a little remarkable that while this is the *sacred number*, the first FOUR of them were spoken to the mixed multitude, while the remaining THREE were spoken to the Twelve in private--these divisions, *four* and *three*, being themselves notable in the symbolical arithmetic of Scripture. Another thing remarkable in the structure of these parables is, that while the first of the Seven--that of the Sower--is of the nature of an Introduction to the whole, the remaining Six consist of *three pairs*--the Second and Seventh, the Third and Fourth, and the Fifth and Sixth, corresponding to each other; each pair setting forth the same general truths, but with a certain diversity of aspect. All this can hardly be accidental.

First Parable: THE SOWER ([Mt 13:3-9, 18-23](#)).

This parable may be entitled, THE EFFECT OF THE WORD DEPENDENT ON THE STATE OF THE HEART. For the exposition of this parable, see on [Mr 4:1-9, 14-20](#).

COPIED FROM THE COMMENTARY ON MARK 4:1-9, 14-20

[Mr 4:1-34](#). PARABLE OF THE SOWER--REASON FOR TEACHING IN PARABLES--PARABLES OF THE SEED GROWING WE KNOW NOT HOW, AND OF THE MUSTARD SEED. (= [Mt 13:1-23, 31, 32](#); [Lu 8:4-18](#)).

1. And he began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude--or, according to another well-supported reading, "a mighty" or "immense multitude."

so that he entered into a ship--rather, "the ship," meaning the one mentioned in [Mr 3:9](#). (See on [Mt 12:15](#)).

and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land--crowded on the seashore to listen to Him. (See on [Mt 13:1, 2](#).)

2. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine--or "teaching."

Parable of the Sower ([Mr 4:3-9, 13-20](#)).

[Mr 4:3, 14](#). THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND THE SOIL.

3. Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow--What means this? See on [Mr 4:14](#).

First Case: THE WAYSIDE. ([Mr 4:4, 15](#)).

4. And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside--by the side of the hard path through the field, where the soil was not broken up.

and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up--Not only could the seed not get beneath the surface, but "it was trodden down" ([Lu 8:5](#)), and afterwards picked up and devoured by the fowls. What means this? See on [Mr 4:15](#).

Second Case: THE STONY or rather, ROCKY GROUND. ([Mr 4:5, 16](#)).

5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth--"the rocky ground"; in Matthew ([Mt 13:5](#)), "the rocky places"; in Luke ([Lu 8:6](#)), "the rock." The thing intended is, not ground with stones in it which would not prevent the roots striking downward, but ground where a quite thin surface of earth covers a rock. What means this? See on [Mr 4:16](#).

Third Case: THE THORNY GROUND. ([Mr 4:7, 18, 19](#)).

7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit--This case is that of ground not thoroughly cleaned of the thistles, &c.; which, rising above the good seed, "choke" or "smother" it, excluding light and air, and drawing away the moisture and richness of the soil. Hence it "becomes unfruitful" ([Mt 13:22](#)); it grows, but its growth is checked, and it never ripens. The evil here is neither a hard nor a shallow soil--there is *softness* enough, and *depth* enough; but it is the existence in it of what draws all the moisture and richness of the soil away to itself, and so *starves the plant*. What now are these "thorns?" See on [Mr 4:19](#).

Fourth Case: THE GOOD GROUND. ([Mr 4:8, 20](#)).

8. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit, &c.--The goodness of this last soil consists in its qualities being precisely the reverse of the other three soils: from its softness and tenderness, receiving and cherishing the seed; from its depth, allowing it to take firm root, and not quickly losing its moisture; and from its cleanness, giving its whole vigor and sap to the plant. In such a soil the seed "brings forth fruit," in all different degrees of profusion, according to the measure in which the soil possesses those qualities. See on [Mr 4:20](#).

9. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

After this parable is recorded the Evangelist says:

10. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve--probably those who followed Him most closely and were firmest in discipleship, next to the Twelve. **asked of him the parable--**The reply would seem to intimate that this parable of the sower was of that fundamental, comprehensive, and introductory character which we have assigned to it (see on [Mt 13:1](#)).

Reason for Teaching in Parables ([Mr 4:11, 12, 21-25](#)).

11, 12. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them, &c.--See on [Mt 13:10-17](#).

13. Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?--Probably this was said not so much in the spirit of rebuke, as to call their attention to the exposition of it which He was about to give, and so train them to the right apprehension of His future parables. As in the parables which we have endeavored to explain in [Mt 13](#)., we shall take this parable and the Lord's own exposition of the different parts of it together.

14. The sower soweth the word--or, as in Luke ([Lu 8:11](#)), "Now the parable is this: The seed is the *word of God*." But who is "the sower?" This is not expressed here because if "the word of God" be the seed, every scatterer of that precious seed must be regarded as a sower. It is true that in the parable of the tares it is said, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man," as "He that soweth the tares is the devil" ([Mt 13:37, 38](#)). But these are only the great unseen parties, struggling in this world for the possession of man. Each of these has his agents among men themselves; and Christ's agents in the sowing of the good seed are the *preachers* of the word. Thus, as in all the cases about to be described, the sower is the same, and the seed is the same; while the result is entirely different, the whole difference must lie in the *soils*, which mean the *different states of the human heart*. And so, the great general lesson held forth in this parable of the sower is, that however faithful the preacher, and how pure soever his message, *the effect of the preaching of the word depends upon the state of the hearer's heart*. Now follow the cases. See on [Mr 4:4](#).

15. And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but, when they have heard, &c.--or, more fully ([Mt 13:19](#)), "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." The great truth here taught is, that *hearts all unbroken and hard are no fit soil for saving truth*. They apprehend it not ([Mt 13:19](#)) as God's means of restoring them to Himself; it penetrates not, makes no impression, but lies loosely on the surface of the heart, till the wicked one--afraid of losing a victim by his "believing to salvation" ([Lu 8:12](#)) --finds some frivolous subject by whose greater attractions to draw off the attention, and straightway it is gone. Of how many hearers of the word is this the graphic but painful history!

16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground, &c.--"Immediately" the seed in such a case "springs up"--all the quicker from the shallowness of the soil--"because it has no depth of earth." But the sun, beating on it, as quickly scorches and withers it up, "because it has no root" ([Mr 4:6](#)), and "lacks moisture" ([Lu 8:6](#)). The great truth here taught is that *hearts superficially impressed are apt to receive the truth with readiness, and even with joy* ([Lu 8:13](#)); *but the heat of tribulation or persecution because of the word, or the trials which their new profession brings upon them quickly dries up their relish for the truth, and withers all the hasty promise of fruit which they*

showed. Such disappointing issues of a faithful and awakening ministry--alas, how frequent are they!

18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in--or "the pleasures of this life" ([Lu 8:14](#)).

choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful--First, "The cares of this world"--anxious, unrelaxing attention to the business of this present life; second, "The deceitfulness of riches"--of those riches which are the fruit of this worldly "care"; third, "The pleasures of this life," or "the lusts of other things entering in"--the enjoyments in themselves may be innocent, which worldly prosperity enables one to indulge. These "*choke*" or "*smother*" the word; drawing off so much of one's attention, absorbing so much of one's interest, and using up so much of one's time, that only the dregs of these remain for spiritual things, and a fagged, hurried, and heartless formalism is at length all the religion of such persons. What a vivid picture is this of the mournful condition of many, especially in great commercial countries, who once promised much fruit! "They bring no fruit *to perfection*" ([Lu 8:14](#)); indicating how much *growth* there may be, in the early stages of such a case, and *promise* of fruit--which after all never *ripens*.

20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred--A heart soft and tender, stirred to its depths on the great things of eternity, and jealously guarded from worldly engrossments, such only is the "honest and good heart" ([Lu 8:15](#)), which "keeps," that is, "retains" the seed of the word, and bears fruit just in proportion as it is such a heart. Such "bring forth fruit with *patience*" ([Mr 4:15](#)), or continuance, "enduring to the end"; in contrast with those in whom the word is "choked" and brings no fruit *to perfection*. The "thirtyfold" is designed to express the *lowest* degree of fruitfulness; the "hundredfold" the *highest*; and the "sixtyfold" the *intermediate* degrees of fruitfulness. As a "hundredfold," though not unexampled ([Ge 26:12](#)), is a rare return in the natural husbandry, so the highest degrees of spiritual fruitfulness are too seldom witnessed. The closing words of this introductory parable seem designed to call attention to the *fundamental* and *universal* character of it.

21. And he said unto them, Is a candle--or "lamp" **brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?**--"that they which enter in may see the light" ([Lu 8:16](#)). See on [Mt 5:15](#), of which this is nearly a repetition.

22. For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested, &c.--See on [Mt 10:26, 27](#); but the connection there and here is slightly different. Here the idea seems to be this--"I have privately expounded to you these great truths, but only that ye may proclaim them publicly; and if ye will not, others will. For these are not designed for secrecy. They are

imparted to be diffused abroad, and they shall be so; yea, a time is coming when the most hidden things shall be brought to light."

23. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear--This for the second time on the same subject (see on [Mr 4:9](#)).

24. And he saith unto them, Take heed what ye hear--In Luke ([Lu 8:18](#)) it is, "Take heed how ye hear." The one implies the other, but both precepts are very weighty.

with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you--See on [Mt 7:2](#).

and unto you that hear--that is, thankfully, teachably, profitably.

shall more be given.

25. For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath--or "seemeth to have," or "thinketh he hath." (See on [Mt 13:12](#)). This "having" and "thinking he hath" are not different; for when it hangs loosely upon him, and is not appropriated to its proper ends and uses, it both *is* and *is not his*.

Reason for Teaching in Parables ([Mt 13:10-17](#)).

10. And the disciples came, and said unto him--"they that were with Him, when they were alone" ([Mr 4:10](#)).

Why speakest thou to them in parables?--Though before this He had couched some things in the parabolic form, for more vivid illustration, it would appear that He now, for the first time, formally employed this method of teaching.

11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven--The word "mysteries" in Scripture is not used in its classical sense--of religious secrets, nor yet of things incomprehensible, or in their own nature difficult to be understood--but in the sense of things of purely divine revelation, and, usually, things darkly announced under the ancient economy, and during all that period darkly understood, but fully published under the Gospel ([1Co 2:6-10](#); [Eph 3:3-6, 8, 9](#)). "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," then, mean those glorious Gospel truths which at that time only the more advanced disciples could appreciate, and they but partially.

but to them it is not given--(See on [Mt 11:25](#)). Parables serve the double purpose of *revealing* and *concealing*; presenting "the mysteries of the kingdom" to those who know and relish them, though in never so small a degree, in a new and attractive light; but to those who are insensible to spiritual things yielding only, as so many tales, some temporary entertainment.

12. For whosoever hath--that is, keeps; as a thing which he values.

to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance--He will be rewarded by

an increase of what he so much prizes.

but whosoever hath not--who lets this go or lie unused, as a thing on which he sets no value.

from him shall be taken away even that he hath--or as it is in Luke ([Lu 8:18](#)), "what he seemeth to have," or, thinketh he hath. This is a principle of immense importance, and, like other weighty sayings, appears to have been uttered by our Lord on more than one occasion, and in different connections. (See on [Mt 25:9](#)). As a great ethical principle, we see it in operation everywhere, under the general law of *habit*; in virtue of which moral principles become stronger by exercise, while by disuse, or the exercise of their contraries, they wax weaker, and at length expire. The same principle reigns in the intellectual world, and even in the animal--if not in the vegetable also--as the facts of physiology sufficiently prove. Here, however, it is viewed as a divine ordination, as a judicial retribution in continual operation under the divine administration.

13. Therefore speak I to them in parables--which our Lord, be it observed, did not begin to do till His miracles were malignantly ascribed to Satan.

because they seeing, see not--They "saw," for the light shone on them as never light shone before; but they "saw not," for they closed their eyes.

and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand--They "heard," for He taught them who "spake as never man spake"; but they "heard not," for they took nothing in, apprehending not the soul-penetrating, life-giving words addressed to them. In Mark and Luke ([Mr 4:12](#); [Lu 8:10](#)), what is here expressed as a human fact is represented as the fulfilment of a divine purpose--"that seeing they may see, and not perceive," &c. The explanation of this lies in the statement of the foregoing verse--that, by a fixed law of the divine administration, the duty men voluntarily refuse to do, and in point of fact do not do, they at length become morally incapable of doing.

14. And in them is fulfilled--rather, "is fulfilling," or "is receiving its fulfilment."
the prophecy of Esaias, which saith-- ([Isa 6:9, 10](#) --here quoted according to the *Septuagint*).

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, &c.--They were thus judicially sealed up under the darkness and obduracy which they deliberately preferred to the light and healing which Jesus brought nigh to them.

16. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear--that is, "Happy ye, whose eyes and ears, voluntarily and gladly opened, are drinking in the light divine."

17. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired--rather, "coveted."

to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them--Not only were the disciples blessed above the blinded just spoken of, but favored above the most honored and the best that lived under the old economy, who had but glimpses of the things of the new kingdom, just sufficient to

kindle in them desires not to be fulfilled to any in their day. In [Lu 10:23, 24](#), where the same saying is repeated on the return of the Seventy--the words, instead of "many prophets and righteous men," are "many prophets *and kings*"; for several of the Old Testament saints were kings.

Second and Seventh Parables or First Pair:

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES, and THE GOOD AND BAD FISH ([Mt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50](#)).

The subject of both these parables--which teach the same truth, with a slight diversity of aspect--is:

THE MIXED CHARACTER OF THE KINGDOM IN ITS PRESENT STATE, AND THE FINAL ABSOLUTE SEPARATION OF THE TWO CLASSES.

The Tares and the Wheat ([Mt 13:24-30, 36-43](#)).

24, 36-38. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field--Happily for us, these exquisite parables are, with like charming simplicity and clearness, expounded to us by the Great Preacher Himself. Accordingly, we pass to: [Mt 13:36-38](#). See on [Mt 13:36](#); [Mt 13:38](#)

25, 38, 39. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way--(See on [Mt 13:38, 39](#)).

26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also--the growth in both cases running parallel, as antagonistic principles are seen to do.

27. So the servants of the householder came--that is, Christ's ministers.
and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?--This well expresses the surprise, disappointment, and anxiety of Christ's faithful servants and people at the discovery of "false brethren" among the members of the Church.

28. He said unto them, An enemy hath done this--Kind words these from a good Husbandman, honorably clearing His faithful servants of the wrong done to his field.

The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?--Compare with this the question of James and John ([Lu 9:54](#)), "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume" those Samaritans? In this kind of zeal there is usually a large mixture of carnal heat. (See [Jas 1:20](#)).

29. But he said, Nay--"It will be done in due time, but not now, nor is it your business."

lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them--Nothing could more clearly or forcibly teach the difficulty of distinguishing the two classes, and the high probability that in the attempt to do so these will be confounded.

30, 39. Let both grow together--that is, in the visible Church.

until the harvest--till the one have ripened for full salvation, the other for destruction.

(See on [Mt 13:39](#)).

and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers--(See on [Mt 13:39](#)).

Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them--"in the fire" ([Mt 13:40](#)).

but gather the wheat into my barn--Christ, as the Judge, will separate the two classes (as in [Mt 25:32](#)). It will be observed that the tares are burned *before* the wheat is housed; in the exposition of the parable ([Mt 13:41, 43](#)) the same order is observed: and the same in [Mt 25:46](#) --as if, in some literal sense, "with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked" ([Ps 91:8](#)).

Third and Fourth Parables or Second Pair:

THE MUSTARD SEED and THE LEAVEN ([Mt 13:31-33](#)).

The subject of both these parables, as of the first pair, is the same, but under a slight diversity of aspect, namely--

THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM FROM THE SMALLEST BEGINNINGS TO ULTIMATE UNIVERSALITY.

The Mustard Seed ([Mt 13:31, 32](#)).

31. Another parable 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 is the least of all seeds--not absolutely, but popularly and proverbially, as in [Lu 17:6](#), "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed," that is, "never so little faith."

but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs--not absolutely, but in relation to the small size of the seed, and in warm latitudes proverbially great.

and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof--This is added, no doubt, to express the *amplitude* of the tree. But as this seed has a hot, fiery vigor, gives out its best virtues when bruised, and is grateful to the taste of birds, which are accordingly attracted to its branches both for shelter and food, is it straining the parable, asks TRENCH, to suppose that, besides the wonderful *growth* of His

kingdom, our Lord selected this seed to illustrate further the *shelter, repose* and *blessedness* it is destined to afford to the nations of the world?

The Leaven ([Mt 13:33](#)).

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, till the whole was leavened--This parable, while it teaches the same general truth as the foregoing one, holds forth, perhaps, rather the *inward* growth of the kingdom, while "the Mustard Seed" seems to point chiefly to the *outward*. It being a woman's work to knead, it seems a refinement to say that "the woman" here represents *the Church*, as the instrument of depositing the leaven. Nor does it yield much satisfaction to understand the "three measures of meal" of that threefold division of our nature into "spirit, soul, and body," alluded to in [1Th 5:23](#), or of the threefold partition of the world among the three sons of Noah ([Ge 10:32](#)), as some do. It yields more real satisfaction to see in this brief parable just the *all-penetrating* and *assimilating* quality of the Gospel, by virtue of which it will yet mould all institutions and tribes of men, and exhibit over the whole earth one "kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them--that is, on this occasion; refraining not only from all naked discourse, but even from all interpretation of these parables to the mixed multitude.

35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying-- ([Ps 78:2](#), nearly as in the *Septuagint*).

I will open my mouth in parables, &c.--Though the Psalm seems to contain only a summary of Israelitish *history*, the Psalmist himself calls it "a parable," and "dark sayings from of old"--as containing, *underneath the history*, truths for all time, not fully brought to light till the Gospel day.

36-38. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field, &c.--In the parable of the Sower, "the seed is the word of God" ([Lu 8:11](#)). But here that word has been received into the heart, and has converted him that received it into a new creature, a "child of the kingdom," according to that saying of James ([Jas 1:18](#)), "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." It is worthy of notice that this vast field of the world is here said to be *Christ's own*--"His field," says the parable. (See [Ps 2:8](#)).

38. The tares are the children of the wicked one--As this sowing could only be "while men slept," no blame seems intended, and certainly none is charged upon "the servants"; it is probably just the dress of the parable.

39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil--emphatically "*His* enemy" ([Mt 13:25](#)). (See [Ge 3:15](#); [1Jo 3:8](#)). By "tares" is meant, not what in our husbandry is so called, but some noxious plant, probably *darnel*. "The tares are the children of the wicked one"; and by their being sown "among the wheat" is meant their being deposited within the territory of the visible Church. As they resemble the children of the kingdom, so they are produced, it seems, by a similar process of "sowing"--the seeds of evil being scattered and lodging in the soil of those hearts upon which falls the seed of the world. The enemy, after sowing his "tares," "went his way"--his dark work soon done, but taking time to develop its true character.

The harvest is the end of the world--the period of Christ's second coming, and of the judicial separation of the righteous and the wicked. Till then, no attempt is to be made to effect such separation. But to stretch this so far as to justify allowing openly scandalous persons to remain in the communion of the Church, is to wrest the teaching of this parable to other than its proper design, and go in the teeth of apostolic injunctions ([1Co 5:1-13](#)).

And the reapers are the angels--But whose angels are they? "The Son of man shall send forth His angels" ([Mt 13:41](#)). Compare [1Pe 3:22](#), "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom--to which they never really belonged. They usurped their place and name and outward privileges; but "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners [abide] in the congregation of the righteous" ([Ps 1:5](#)).

all things that offend--all those who have proved a stumbling-block to others
and them which do iniquity--The former class, as the worst, are mentioned first.

42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire--rather, "the furnace of fire":
there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth--What terrific strength of language--the "casting" or "flinging" expressive of indignation, abhorrence, contempt (compare [Ps 9:17](#); [Da 12:2](#)): "the furnace of fire" denoting the fierceness of the torment: the "wailing" signifying the anguish this causes; while the "gnashing of teeth" is a graphic way of expressing the despair in which its remedilessness issues (see [Mt 8:12](#))!

43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father--as if they had been under a cloud during the present association with ungodly pretenders to their character, and claimants of their privileges, and obstructors of their course.

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear--(See [Mr 4:9](#)).

Fifth and Sixth Parables or Third Pair: THE HIDDEN TREASURE and THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE ([Mt 13:44-46](#)).

The subject of this last pair, as of the two former, is the same, but also under a slight diversity of aspect: namely--

THE PRICELESS VALUE OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM. And while the one parable represents the Kingdom as "found without seeking," the other holds forth the Kingdom as "sought and found."

The Hidden Treasure ([Mt 13:44](#)).

44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field--no uncommon thing in unsettled and half-civilized countries, even now as well as in ancient times, when there was no other way of securing it from the rapacity of neighbors or marauders. ([Jer 41:8](#); [Job 3:21](#); [Pr 2:4](#)).

the which when a man hath found--that is, unexpectedly found.

he hideth, and for joy thereof--on perceiving what a treasure he had lighted on, surpassing the worth of all he possessed.

goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field--in which case, by Jewish law, the treasure would become his own.

The Pearl of Great Price ([Mt 13:45, 46](#)).

45. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls.

46. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it--The one pearl of great price, instead of being found by accident, as in the former case, is found by one whose *business* it is to seek for such, and who finds it just in the way of *searching* for such treasures. But in both cases the surpassing value of the treasure is alike recognized, and in both all is parted with for it.

The Good and Bad Fish ([Mt 13:47-50](#)).

The object of this brief parable is the same as that of the Tares and Wheat. But as its details are fewer, so its teaching is less rich and varied.

47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind--The word here rendered "net" signifies a large *drag-net*, which draws everything after it, suffering nothing to escape, as distinguished from a *casting-net* ([Mr 1:16, 18](#)). The far-reaching efficacy of the Gospel is thus denoted. This Gospel net "gathered of every kind," meaning every variety of character.

48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore--for the separation will not be made till the number of the elect is accomplished.

and sat down--expressing the deliberateness with which the judicial separation will at length be made.

and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away--literally, "the rotten," but

here meaning, "the foul" or "worthless" fish: corresponding to the "tares" of the other parable.

49. So shall it be at the end of the world, &c.--(See on [Mt 13:42](#)). We have said that each of these two parables holds forth the same truth under a slight diversity of aspect. What is that diversity? First, the *bad*, in the former parable, are represented as vile seed sown among the wheat by the enemy of souls; in the latter, as foul fish drawn forth out of the great sea of human beings by the Gospel net itself. Both are important truths--that the Gospel draws within its pale, and into the communion of the visible Church, multitudes who are Christians only in name; and that the injury thus done to the Church on earth is to be traced to the wicked one. But further, while the former parable gives chief prominence to the present mixture of good and bad, in the latter, the prominence is given to the future separation of the two classes.

51. Jesus saith unto them--that is, to the Twelve. He had spoken the first *four* in the hearing of the mixed multitude: the last *three* He reserved till, on the dismissal of the mixed audience, He and the Twelve were alone ([Mt 13:36](#), &c.).

Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52. Then said he unto them, Therefore--or as we should say, "Well, then."
every scribe--or Christian teacher: here so called from that well-known class among the Jews. (See [Mt 23:34](#)).

which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven--himself taught in the mysteries of the Gospel which he has to teach to others.

is like unto a man that is an householder which bringeth forth--"turneth" or "dealeth out."

out of his treasure--his store of divine truth.

things new and old--old truths in ever new forms, aspects, applications, and with ever new illustrations.

[Mt 13:53-58](#). HOW JESUS WAS REGARDED BY HIS RELATIVES. (= [Mr 6:1-6](#); [Lu 4:16-30](#)).

53. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54. And when he was come into his own country--that is, Nazareth; as is plain from [Mr 6:1](#). See on [Joh 4:43](#), where also the same phrase occurs. This, according to the majority of Harmonists, was the *second* of *two* visits which our Lord paid to Nazareth during His public ministry; but in our view it was His *first* and *only* visit to it. See on [Mt 4:13](#); and for the reasons, see [Lu 4:16-30](#).

Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?--"these miracles." These surely are not like the questions of people who had asked precisely the same questions before, who from astonishment had proceeded to rage, and in their rage had

hurried Him out of the synagogue, and away to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, to thrust Him down headlong, and who had been foiled even in that object by His passing through the midst of them, and going His way. But see on [Lu 4:16](#), &c.

55. Is not this the carpenter's son?--In Mark ([Mr 6:3](#)) the question is, "Is not this the carpenter?" In all likelihood, our Lord, during His stay under the roof of His earthly parents, wrought along with His legal father.

is not his mother called Mary?--"Do we not know all about His parentage? Has He not grown up in the midst of us? Are not all His relatives our own townsmen? Whence, then, such wisdom and such miracles?" These particulars of our Lord's *human* history constitute the most valuable testimony, first, to His true and real humanity--for they prove that during all His first thirty years His townsmen had discovered nothing about Him different from other men; secondly, to the divine character of His mission--for these Nazarenes proclaim both the unparalleled character of His teaching and the reality and glory of His miracles, as transcending human ability; and thirdly, to His wonderful humility and self-denial--in that when He was such as they now saw Him to be, He yet never gave any indications of it for thirty years, because "His hour was not yet come."

And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56. And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? An exceedingly difficult question here arises--What were these "brethren" and "sisters" to Jesus? Were they, *First*, His full brothers and sisters? or, *Secondly*, Were they His step-brothers and step-sisters, children of Joseph by a former marriage? or, *Thirdly*, Were they cousins, according to a common way of speaking among the Jews respecting persons of collateral descent? On this subject an immense deal has been written, nor are opinions yet by any means agreed. For the second opinion there is no ground but a vague tradition, arising probably from the wish for some such explanation. The first opinion undoubtedly suits the text best in all the places where the parties are certainly referred to ([Mt 12:46](#); and its parallels, [Mr 3:31](#); [Lu 8:19](#); our present passage, and its parallels, [Mr 6:3](#); [Joh 2:12](#); [7:3, 5, 10](#); [Ac 1:14](#)). But, in addition to other objections, many of the best interpreters, thinking it in the last degree improbable that our Lord, when hanging on the cross, would have committed His mother to John if He had had full brothers of His own then alive, prefer the third opinion; although, on the other hand, it is not to be doubted that our Lord might have good reasons for entrusting the guardianship of His doubly widowed mother to the beloved disciple in preference even to full brothers of His own. Thus dubiously we prefer to leave this vexed question, encompassed as it is with difficulties. As to the names here mentioned, the *first* of them, "JAMES," is afterwards called "the Lord's brother" (see on [Ga 1:19](#)), but is perhaps not to be confounded with "James the son of Alphæus," one of the Twelve, though many think their identity beyond dispute. This question also is one of considerable difficulty, and not without importance; since the James who occupies so prominent a place in the Church of Jerusalem, in the latter part of the Acts, was apparently the apostle, but is by many regarded as "the Lord's brother," while others think their identity best suits all the statements. The *second* of those here named, "JOSES" (or Joseph), must not be confounded with "Joseph called Barsabas, who was

surnamed Justus" ([Ac 1:23](#)); and the *third* here named, "SIMON," is not to be confounded with Simon the Kananite or Zealot (see on [Mt 10:4](#)). These three are nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament. The *fourth* and last-named, "JUDAS," can hardly be identical with the apostle of that name--though the brothers of both were of the name of "James"--nor (unless the two be identical, was this Judas) with the author of the catholic Epistle so called.

58. And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief--"save that He laid His hands on a few sick folk, and healed them" ([Mr 6:5](#)). See on [Lu 4:16-30](#).