

like the shallow soil on the rocky ground.

Then there are other people whose hearts are like the soil, full of their seeds. When they hear God's message they make up their minds to live good Christian lives, but they soon forget. During the week they are busy with their work and think of nothing but getting money, or they have so many things to think about, the pictures or parties or dances or golf and lots of other things. They let these things fill their minds so much and think them so important that God's work and prayer and charity and such things are crowded out. Their love of these things is much stronger than their love of God. Very often when Sunday comes again they go for a picnic, or to visit their friends and forget to worship God altogether.

Then there are people who are really in earnest. They are like the good ground. When they hear God's message they think about it and they try to do what God tells them. They bring forth fruit; that is, they do good deeds and kind actions, they go to their Communion, they give to charity and to help God's Church, they give to missions. Some cannot do as much as others but they do as much as they can.

## Lesson 69. MORE PARABLES.

### THE TARES.

When we talk about "Tares" we mean vetches, or plants that have little pea pods on them. Farmers sow them among the oats for feed for the cows in spring. The parable of the tares is not about this kind of tares. The tares that Jesus spoke about were a kind of wild wheat that was a weed and was good for nothing. The story Jesus told about them was this: A farmer sowed good seed in his field; but during the night an enemy came and sowed wild wheat seeds in the field. When they grew up they looked just like the good wheat plants, but by and bye they began to put forth their heads of seed. Then the farmer's servants saw that they were tares, and they came to him and said, "Didn't you sow good seed in your field? How is it, then, that there are tares growing there? Shall we go and pull up the tares?"; but the farmer answered "No! If you try to pull up the tares you will tread on the good wheat, you will disturb its roots and you will perhaps make mistakes and pull up the wheat instead of the tares. Let them all grow together until harvest time and then I will tell the reapers, when they cut the corn, to pick out the tares and burn them, but to gather the wheat into my barn." In those days people used to cut corn with a sickle, just a little bit at a

time, they had no reaping machines like ours. It was not hard to pick out the tares.

Jesus told his apostles the meaning of this parable too. He said the field was the whole world. He Himself was the farmer. The good seed was the children of His Kingdom, the bad seed was the wicked people, His enemy was the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels.

This parable is not an exact picture of the things it teaches; however wicked a man is he can become good if he repents of his sin and is converted to God; and however good a man is, he must always keep in touch with God by prayer and communion or else the devil will make him wicked. Even God's children may become worse than those who have never been baptised if they give up loving God and do not come for the strength of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, and neglect their Communion and run after worldly things instead of God.

Learn verse 2 of Hymn 271: "O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end."

### THE MUSTARD TREE.

This parable is about the Church. Jesus said a man took a little grain of mustard seed and planted it, and it grew into such a big plant that the birds came and rested on its branches.

God's Church was very small when Jesus told this story; there were only the twelve apostles and a few more disciples. But although the Church grew, when Jesus rose from the dead there were only about a hundred and twenty who came to a meeting that St. Peter called. So God's Church was like a grain of mustard seed. When Jesus sent down the Holy Ghost on Whitsunday, St. Peter went out and preached and three thousand more were baptised. From that time the Church grew very quickly. The more the devil tried to stop it, the faster it grew. Now there are Christians in nearly every country in the world. There are about a hundred million Anglican Church people and there are many more Roman Catholics, and a very great many besides who belong to the Churches of Russia and Greece and so on. The Church has become a very great tree.

## Lesson 70. PARABLES

(Continued).

### THE LEAVEN.

This parable, too, is about the Church.

A woman took some yeast and she mixed it with some flour and made dough. Have you seen yeast? It is all frothy. That is because a lot of gas is formed in it and the gas makes it bubble up. If you mix yeast with flour the yeast makes the dough

"rise." When it is warmed the dough gets bubbly, the yeast blows bubbles all through it until it swells up and is ever so much bigger than before. When it has swelled up enough mother puts it in the oven and bakes it and then we call it "bread."

The story means that the Church was only small to start with, like a little drop of yeast, it started in Jerusalem but soon began to spread all over the world. It is still spreading now wherever we send missionaries. Even people who do not themselves become Christians, learn to respect real Christian people and to copy the good things they do. So the "influence" of the Church and Christians spreads everywhere.

### THE HIDDEN TREASURE, ETC.

I will tell you a few more of Jesus' stories; they are very short ones.

**The Hidden Treasure.** A man hid a treasure in a field. By and bye another man was digging in the field and he found the treasure; but the field was not his, so he could not take the treasure home; but he went home and sold everything that he had and then went and bought the field and the treasure became his own.

When a heathen man finds out what glorious treasures of joy and happiness there are in the Christian Church, he gives up everything in order that he may be baptised and become an "inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." The greatest treasures hidden in the Christian Church are the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost and the Body and Blood of Jesus, which He gives us in the Holy Communion.

**The Merchant and the Pearl.** This story has the same meaning as the last one. A merchant was buying beautiful pearls, by and bye he saw one more beautiful than all the rest but he had not enough money to buy it, so he sold all his other pearls to get enough money to buy this one.

**The Draw Net.** Have you seen fishermen fishing with a long net? Sometimes they have two boats. The net is several feet wide and many yards long. It is all rolled up on a platform at the back of one of the boats. The net has lead weights all along the bottom edge, and big corks all along the top edge. The fisherman in the second boat has a rope joined on to the net in the first boat, he rows away till he pulls the end of the net off the platform and gradually he has pulled all the net into the sea. The corks are floating on the top of the water and the lead is on the sand at the bottom; then the fishermen row towards the shore and jump out of their boats on the sand. One fisherman pulls one end of the net and the other pulls the other end, and so the net is drawn up on the