No. 82.

On the parable of the wheat & tares.
In this parable our Lord has finely represented to us the condition & character of men in this world. The judgment which awaits them in the world to come. It would be difficult, I believe, to find any where else so much grand & noble truth under images so common, in a style so simple. In a subsequent part of the chapter, himself, to the respect of this obscure, explains it, & tells us the meaning of each of the figurative representations. The field, he says, is the mildly mankind at large; the sower of the good seed is the Son of man, Jesus is he, who was & is planted in the world. The good seed of right; the wheat, the natural produce of the good seed, represents the virtues & fruits, those whose hearts are formed on the spirit of the Gospel; the tares, sown by the enemy, represent the vicious & hardened, those who are wicked in spite of all the means of moral improvement afforded by...
Hope the harvest is an image of the end of their day.
The outline of awful scene of judgment succeeds.
Then as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so
shall they also have due iniquity experience the
dreadful fruits of their sins, described by our Lord
in the parable of the vineyard, by this grace of teeth,
and the judgment of the creature. In the kingdom of their Father.
By this parable it seems to have intended not only to present
a picture in which men in all ages should recognize the
features of truth, but to give at that time a sort
of prophetical view of the future and its woe which
shall meet in the world, of the course of events. It might be
expected to have. Keeping an eye on the exclamation of
our Lord, I shall proceed to remark on the different
parts of this parable.

1. Our attention is called to the representation, which
were made of the nature of the human heart.
Mind. Man is compared to a field, in which wood is to be
grown; and the companion is certainly very just and happy.
In
both there is the same natural variety, the same capacity
for improvement by culture. How different is the soil of
the earth in different places. Some of it is originally
soft and composed of rich materials, while in another it is
by nature coarse and hard. Here it is easily cultivated, prepared
to receive the seed, the plants, and you commit to it, but
there it is stubborn, you cannot make all your efforts to make
use of it. So it is with man's mind. The mind of some
seem even from their cradles more susceptible of
being moulded to virtue or excellence, being guided on the
good path, than those of others. Perhaps, this differ-
ence is not, strictly speaking, natural, but it appears
so early, that one cannot distinguish it from nature. In
man there is a keen sensibility, strong faculties, gentle dis-
positions; while another has almost unconquerably dull per-
severence, wayward, in his thought and actions. Their varieties correspond very aptly to
the varieties of natural soil. Again, there is a dif-
ference in the situation of different ground. One piece
of land is favorably exposed to the warming and fertilizing
influence of the sun, while another is parched and burnt by the blaze of the
some luminaries. I cannot retain the sweet, sunny, and shaded
hillsides upon them; as it is much for us to enter the cool shade of
an impenetrable forest. So it is with the situation of
men in life. Some are placed, not mere, along the sunny
slope of life, to receive every cheering and animating influence;
while others, placed in the shadow, are exposed to all the
menacing and consuming influences of vice, surrounded by the
traitorous similitude of a less example of crime,
mingled poverty. But after all, though there is a great dif-
ference in the natural quality and situation of
different souls—still a great deal, may almost every thing
depends on cultivation—the hand of industry can make
even the wildestness blossom as the rose, or turn an
desert into a garden; while the richest field, if
neglected, will soon exhaust its fertility, and run to
seed and be overrun with useless growing plants. There is perhaps,
no ground so barren & stubborn, that it will not in time

repay you for the toil of culture. You grow so rich
that it will not fail or manifest the one effects, founder
hence & negligence. And so there is perhaps no talent so
note & no disposition so rare, that it may not be
developed & ennobled by a long & patient application of the
means of moral & religious improvement; on the other
hand there is no heart so good that it may not become
destroyed & hardened by the neglect of the opportunities
of facilities of culture & instruction. The human mind is
so oftener to receive any impressions, with circumstance
as its means may thrive with it: it may be made good
as it may be made bad. Originally it seems to have no
character; but receives its character from the influences
surround it; & therefore our laws, compared it, is a field of
will spill no disgrace until the seed be planted, & then
the nature of the fruit will partake of that of the seed;
if the one be good & useful, so will the other; if there
be bad & pernicious, so will the other be. This is in this
light we ought ever to view the original condition of
man: otherwise we shall scarcely have a sufficiently

motive to apply with zeal of diligence all the opportunities of moral cultivation... Let no man expect that he is to be made good by a miracle. In the light of reason, yea, in the light of the eye, God has given us all the means of fortifying and sanctifying the heart; yea, he has given us means capable of being operated upon by these means. This is all that we have a right to ask from God. It is our own fault, our own crime too, if we do not use these means with the utmost industry... After we have become the bond-servant of vice, yea, if our souls to become total and insensible under the influence of habitual transgression, it will not do then to go back of lay the fault to the account of our corrupt nature. Our nature is such as God has given us; yea, only God does not compel us to be sinners. On the contrary our Saviour instructs us, "that the All has formed human nature, like the soil of the earth, capable of producing by due culture excellent and valuable fruits; but otherwise yielding an unfruitful and monstrous fruit."...

2. The parable leads us to consider the actual produce of this field, of the manure in which it is treated. Obed is the husbandman, who sowed good seed in it; the field as we have seen, was capable of yielding both a good and bad produce; the consequence was, as the parable infers, that it actually did bring forth both good and bad. "But while men slept," says this instructive fable, i.e. while they also business it was to guard the field; were sleeping, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat; yea, went his own sowing. But when the blade was springing up, yea, brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." The enemy, who did the deed of mischief and depravity, as our first story tells us, is "the devil;" yea, as well as in many other places of scripture, bad men represented; or thieves of bad men, personified, under the image of an evil spirit... Let us the wickedness of evil influence of man, that scatters tares among the wheat, figuratively represented as the suggestion of a demon... Thus it is now, yea, thus it has been in all ages, the world is a promiscuous collection of thorns and thistles, of good and bad, of wheat and tares. All the different grades of character are mingled and blended in one mass... The variety...
the sinner, he who fears God, he who fears him not, 
dearly cross each other's paths & meet in the intercourse of life. So far as regards the essentials of life, perhaps, 
the are not easily discriminated. They are alike agitated 
by fears, of gladness by hopes - afflicting admirably to 
them both, the better end & prosperity calls them both 
to partake of her delights. Such is the world, just to the 
scene, as we might expect, in a state, where He whose 
eye sees all hearts, has as yet drawn no lines of discrimi 
nation, where the sea has been over, & some of its fruits 
have appeared - but where the harvest has not been yet 
reaped & expected. Men are showing in this world how the sun 
are the means of religious & moral advancement. men 
who, as we farm, have imparted - 

by, 

So you will do all they can to make themselves more 
meet for the inheritance of saints in light. "Our journey 
came to cultivate the field of the world, to raise a 
valuable harvest of good & virtuous men within it." Such is 
the proper design, such is the true effect of his gospel. 
But when we pause for a moment to reflect on the actual 
state of the world, we see sin deforming & polluting 
the finest moral life's hand, when we ascertain the 
worth of friendships being in equity, when we see in 
the conqueror: making the world the seat of his cou 

o 

in, 

in the different conditions the follow one under his 
character wheels, n' other, in humble scenes, we see the 
penury, the base & violable aims, the fraud & cruelty, 
the pride & animosity of men, we cannot but ask with 
the servants of the householder, for God, didst thou not 

"Go, thou art no good seed in thy field." - But there are parties 

& a power in the world, who are continually struggling 
in opposition to the spirit of the just. Yet striving to ordi 

state something else in its place. The partial excess of 

vice, & the partial triumph of corruption in this world, etc.
doubtless permits for wise & good purposes. - He suffers the virtues & vices to grow together until the harvest; one reason of this may be, that a state, in which different characters are mingled & connected together is probably the most favorable for all the purposes of moral discipline. It brings into action some virtues, which would otherwise lie in no place for exertion, & leads to the cultivation of some good feelings, which otherwise might otherwise remain in undeveloped institutions & efforts for the suppression of all the kinds of sentiments of purity, which are called forth by endeavours to check the progress of those of impurity. That vice is not without its use, that God has wisely ordered that the good & the bad should be thrown together in this world, to afford an opportunity for the exercise of many good qualities & their development. Once said, frequently accompanies that the influence of the good would be slow & gradual, so that the negligence & corruption of mankind would be frequently opposing obstacles to its progress, & that it would be long before the world would improve under that state, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. The produce that, though good men would always be few in the world by the influence of the age, yet they would be mingled with persons of an opposite character, who would have no more of the purity & virtue of others in them, than the sunbeams have of the goodness & value of pure grain. Each being the state of condition of mankind in this life, this mingled & compounded, it might seem, perhaps, that it would be well, if there was somewhere to give a chance of separating the tares from the wheat, even from genuine cotton, & of calibrating all who are corrupt & deceitful. But the assumption of this power is most certainly forbidden in the possible are considering, for we find that when the servants of the sun fields came, & said to him, "Will thou that we go & gather up the tares," he immediately & decidedly replied, "No, but while we gather up the tares, we must also let the wheat grow together until the harvest." Thus we see that himself does not choose to separate between the good & the bad in this
he says, "Let both grow together till the harvest; yea, it will become as us with all our failings, our weaknesses, to assume a form, as our God himself does not see fit to exercise. When we are convinced that our fellow men are wrong in their practice of wrong in their opinions, that their lives are stained with vice and impiety, that their views of religion are false as precious, it certainly becomes not only our right, but our duty, to endeavor by all the means of argument and persuasion to reclaim them from what we believe to be error or error. Kindness alone would prompt us to reach forth a hand to save those who seem to us to be travelling a downward path. But neither duty nor right will allow us to go a step beyond this; if we cannot reform or convince men, it is not ours to separate between the good and the bad—our Lord has said, "Let them grow together till the harvest." So let us say. It was this love of enforcing authority over others, that placed the judge on his throne, that lighted the faggots of persecution, and built the dungeons of the inquisition; it is the same spirit, though filtered through the sacred vessels of heaven]

3. We come to the last and second great scene described in the parable. We have just seen, that although they were growing together, the householders suffered no discrimination to be made between the tares and the wheat, but it was not always to be so. No; in the time of the harvest, says he, "I will say to the reapers, go ye together, first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn." So shall
It be in the end of the world. The sons of men shall go forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend them, and they shall be cast into a furnace of fire, and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Thus one 30 days before the great and final judgement of heaven's tribunal, he carries our minds to that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be known: when the true disciples of Jesus shall find that all their efforts to hide by contain the spirit of the age, all the self-deceived sacrifices they may have endured in quenching their passions, in humbling and purifying their hearts, all the heats of their warfare with sin, were but the price of eternal glory, and serve but to add to the brightness of the crown of their glory. And the sons of sin shall find, that all their quibbling, evasions, all their pride, all their envy, all their ungratefulness, all their injustice, all their envy, all their infidelity, have purchased for them nothing but shame, confusion, and torment.
In this world, still, the trees of the inward grow together; but not so in the world to come. In the present state, notwithstanding all that the providence of God, the efforts of the wise and good have done, to make the world better, you frame the spirit of peace and religion among them. Still there is much moral disorder, many proud passions that have not been tamed, many a haughty woman that cannot be cowed, often is power abused, innocence oppressed, virtue protected; often are the good unremembered, yet the wicked unpunished. But this will not be so above; the day is now on the wings, when the proclamation of God's justice shall ring through the universe; when the summits of heaven shall reach every grave, to break the death and dreadful silence, that has so long reigned there undisturbed, when friends shall meet, not to be separated, of foes, who had so long slept peacefully by the side of each other in the bed of death, shall wake together, and wander at the bidding of passions, about them as near on earth. Then every eye will

We thank thee, O our God, for that good seed after which hath grown in the world, for the height of instruction, for the truth and the hope that came to teach and to inspire. We lament that the enemy hath taken the fields, that the passions of the sons of men have so much obstructed the good effects of thy grace; that the spirit of violence and tyranny have so often taken place of the spirit of love. We pray that we may do all in our power to diffuse the knowledge of the knowledge of the virtues of the law, and that we may keep by our lives that we have truly learned in the school of it, that we may welcome true hearts, this heavenly spirit. May we keep in mind that there is a day coming, in which there will be a separation between the good and the bad, between those who used and those who have neglected the means of moral and religious improvement. O let that day may we all be so prepared that we may render up our account with joy. Amen. Amen.
read that solemn inscription over the judgment-seat of God, "As It shall be requisite to every man, according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil." Men of high opinion will do then more of the than gods, in which the eye of man, will do them in the idle apologies of foolish excuses, and do him deceives himself, and then will do them, though, nothing betrays the testimony of a good conscience, if the answer of a pure heart is: these, by the many of God, will enable us to look and with hope and joy, if God grant, may persuade us, that we may be sure that we more hear that empty sentence, "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And that, he that has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

No. 1820.

The parable related, Matthew xiii. 47–51, seems to have the same purpose to teach the same truths with that, which has been considered above.
At home, December 30, 1820, afternoon.
At Somers, March 25, 1821, forenoon.
At Ringham (Miss J.XPath), April 15, 1821, afternoon.
At Wattham, Mr. Ripley, May 24, 1821, afternoon.
At Dedham, June 23, 1822, afternoon.