The Parables of Christ: Their Meaning

The term "parable" (translation)

Meaning: Comparison or parallel by which one thing is used to illustrate another.

- A proverb is a closed or contracted parable.
- Compared with a proverb, a parable is an expanded proverb.
- A fable gives speech and thought to irrational or inanimate objects; a parable never does.
- A parable looks at life as it is lived.

Compared with a fable, a parable:
- In a myth or allegory, fictitious persons, gods, and men are introduced, and their meaning lies within the story.
- In a parable, there are no fictitious persons, no personifications, and the meaning must be interpreted from outside the story.
- A parable need not refer to a historical person, or quote a specific individual.

Compared with a type:
- A type consists in the meaning given to a person or his acts, e.g., Isaac as lamb of sacrifice.
- A parable does not directly bring in a type, and refers to no determined persons.
- A metaphor is a vague term that might be applied to any figure of speech.
- A parable is definite and always includes a narrative story with specific action; it is always drawn from daily occurrences.

Compared with a metaphor:

Compared with pagan mythology:

1. The Hebrew genius was not garaed to myth-making.
2. It abhorred personifications of nature, which were considered gods.
3. Monotheism is of the essence of all the parables.

Compared with an example or histories with a moral:

Compared with a myth or allegory:

Compared with type:

Compared with a parable:

1. In parables there are no enchanted stones, talking animals, or trees with magical powers.
2. In parables, it is the world of every day.
3. In parables, there are no personifications of nature.
4. In parables, there is the idea of the world of every day.
5. In parables, there is the idea of the world of every day.