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THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

- *JUNE 26. - MATT. 13:24-43. -*

Golden Text: – "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." – V. 43.

HERE WE have introduced by another "Kingdom" parable a great prophecy. Our study of a week ago showed various classes of hearers of the truth. To-day's study ignores all except the "good ground" hearers, which shows that our Lord foreknew the history of the Gospel age. We are informed that he and his Apostles sowed none but good seed, but that after the Apostles had fallen asleep in death, the great Adversary, Satan, over-sowed the wheat field with tare seed, darnel. We are told that such spite-work is not uncommon in the Orient. The "darnel" seed is very different from the wheat, but the growing stalks look very much alike, and even when headed the resemblance is close, except to the expert, until the heads ripen; then the head of the wheat becomes heavy while the darnel, being light, stands upright. Only the expert can discern the wheat from the tares while growing.

The Master gave this parable to illustrate how error would be brought into the Church by Satan, and that the children produced by the error would in many respects resemble or counterfeit those produced by the truth. It was impossible for the Adversary to corrupt the seed of truth which Jesus and the Apostles sowed; neither was he allowed to interfere with the sowing of it, but he was permitted to over-sow it in the field and, if possible, to choke the wheat, and in a general way to deceive the outside world respecting the true character of the wheat – the children of the Kingdom.

We are to have in mind the Almighty power of God by which he could hinder Satan and prevent the accomplishment of his

plans at any and all times. We are to remember that the Divine Plan of the Ages permits many things which God does not approve, but in his Word condemns. We are to remember that the Divine Plan spans several ages and that only the finished work will fully display the Divine Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power. We are to remember that, in the present time, God permits the wrath of demons and men to oppose his purposes, but only so far as he can and eventually will overrule these to his own glory and for the good of all in harmony with himself.

"LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER"

The parable represents the servants as asking whether or not the "tares" should be gathered out from the "wheat," and thus the enemy's work be destroyed. The answer is, No, because in so doing there would be such a commotion in the wheat field as to disturb all of the wheat – so intimately were the true and false associated – their roots intertwining in society, in the home, etc. Instead the Master declared that both should be allowed to grow together throughout the age until the harvest-time [R4635 : page 204] at the end of the age; then the "reapers" should be instructed concerning the gathering together and separating of the two classes. The wheat would then be gathered into the barn and the tares would be bundled for burning, to the end that none of the bad seed might affect the future crop.

At the special request of the disciples the Master interpreted this parable also. Jesus himself was the sower of the good seed of the Kingdom message. Satan was the sower of the crop of seed of false doctrines and deception. The "harvest" time will be the end of this age, just before the inauguration of the new age of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. The wheat class will be those counted fit to be associated with Christ in the glory of his Millennial Kingdom, and the gathering into the "barn" or garner represents the resurrection change which this wheat will experience. The Apostle explains this, saying: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in

incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown an animal (earthly) body, it is raised a spiritual (heavenly) body." This is the resurrection of *the* dead – the first resurrection. – I Cor. 15:43,44; Rev. 20:6.

The tare class is represented as being gathered out of the kingdom (vs. 41), in the sense that the Church at the present time is God's kingdom in embryo – in a state of progressive development or preparation for the glory and work of the future. All of the Kingdom class are fully consecrated to God and begotten of the Spirit with a view to their becoming Divine spirit beings in the resurrection. Others who are not thus spirit-begotten have no right to class themselves with the "wheat" nor to consider **[R4636 : page 204]** themselves heirs of the Kingdom. Their presence in the Church of Christ is out of order. They have been permitted to commingle with the wheat for centuries, but with the end of the age the dispensational change will come, incidental to the inauguration of the Millennium.

It would be a mistake to suppose that there are to be thieves and murderers of the baser sort among these offenders, but they include some whom the Apostle describes as doing the works of the flesh and the devil, namely, anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. However, many "tares" are fine people of generous disposition, but not "New Creatures" in Christ Jesus. They are blame-worthy, not because of not being spirit-begotten, but because they are in the nominal church and posing as Christians. They are offensive in this sense in the Master's sight. Nor are they entirely to be blamed for thinking themselves Christians. They have been encouraged so to think and act by preachers and teachers, many of whom, like themselves, have no knowledge of the Kingdom nor of the spirit-begetting power which initiates into membership in it. The gathering of these into "bundles" – into lodges, societies, churches, sects, parties – will especially be an evidence of the "harvest" work in progress. The true are exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and that they come not into

bondage to sects and parties. They are to avoid membership in "bundles," but stand in the full fellowship of all who are of the true "wheat" class.

The casting of these bundles into the furnace will mean their destruction, but we are in no sense to understand the furnace to be a literal one, nor the fire which will consume the tares to be a literal fire. The fire with which this age will end will be a great "time of trouble" foretold in the Scriptures as preceding and introducing the Millennial Kingdom – "A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Daniel 12:1). In that time of trouble the delusions which now make the tares think themselves to be the true "Church" will all be dissolved – they will all be reduced to their proper plane – the earthly plane – and recognize themselves as merely of the earth, earthy, and not in any sense members of the called-out, spirit-begotten, elect "Church of the living God."

THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER

Hearken now to the Master's words respecting the consummation of the Church's hope in the end of this age. He says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"! "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." Not every one has the hearing ear, but this is the Lord's message to those who have the proper attitude of heart – to all who have the ability to understand spiritual things. Let such understand that with the close of this age the Lord's saintly ones, irrespective of the earthly Church systems, will be associated with the Redeemer in the glory of his Millennial Kingdom and will shine forth as the sun for the blessing and enlightenment and uplifting of the human family.

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