

THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

MATTHEW, CHAPTER XIII.

37.—“ He answered and said unto them : he that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man.

38.—“ The field is the world ; the good seed are the children of the kingdom ; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.

39.—“ The enemy that sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels.

40.—“ As therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world.

41.—“ The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,

42.—“ And shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43.—“ Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

The parable of the tares and the wheat is perhaps as striking and as important a parable as we have in the Bible. There is a solemnity about it apt to awe the reader, and it is of that short and pithy character that you would fancy few could find scope in it for disagreement.

And yet, perhaps, there is no parable that has been cited and quoted more constantly in opposition to its plain meaning, or no portion of Scripture more openly wrested from its original uses. Thank God for His mercy in enabling us to read Scripture in the light of Scripture rather than of man. Man will do anything to enforce his own views, and few have seldom set themselves in opposition to the teaching of the Church that they have not bent Scripture to their views, instead of bending their views to Scripture. I have chosen this parable, then, to-day in order to explain it Scripturally, for I feel that you may come in contact with some who from my heart I believe (however good they may be) are but poor hands at a logical exposition of the Word, but none the less dangerous for their lack of reasoning. May the Lord, then, be with us as we seek after the truth in God's own way, comparing Scripture with Scripture as He would have us compare it.

Now I would first give you the generally received opinion of the parable. Our Lord speaks in it of the Visible Church of God under the title Kingdom of God. It is in fact an epitome of the spiritual aspect of the Church in all ages and for all time. Under the figure of Good Seed Jesus represents the children of God. Under the figure of Tares he represents the children of the world. This seed