

The Approaching Advent of Christ

by
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CHAPTER VI

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES AND THE WHEAT

Up till now we have been examining the Scriptures on the resurrection of the saints. And we found that these all located that event at the Day of the Lord, when Messiah inaugurates His kingly rule. It is necessary now to examine some Scriptures in the N.T. that deal with the Church's position in the world at the End-time. The first to occupy our attention is one that our Lord spoke for the express purpose of enlightening us about the course and consummation of this present Age. Here again, as formerly, we confine ourselves to texts that pre-tribs themselves allow us to apply without loss of mental coherence or dispensational rectitude.

Matthew 13:24-30.

This Scripture relates the Parable of the Tares, which is interpreted by our Lord in vv. 36-43 of the same chapter. As to the general significance of this parable, little doubt obtains among prophetic students. Like other parables in Matthew 13, it describes the state of things following everywhere from the preaching of the word of God throughout the Gospel dispensation. It will save time to state the purpose of the seven parables of Matthew 13 in the words of some of our leading opponents;

Kelly in his *Matthew* says:

The Holy Ghost is conveying fully God's mind about the new testimony, commonly called Christianity, and even Christendom. . . . We have seven parables here, for the purpose of giving a complete account of the new order of things about to begin--Christendom and Christianity, the true as well as the spurious (pp. 263, 265).

Anderson remarks in his *Coming Prince*:¹

The thirteenth chapter is prophetic of the state of things which was to intervene between the time of His rejection and His return in glory to claim the place which in His humiliation was denied Him. Instead of the proclamation of the Kingdom, He taught them the mysteries of the Kingdom (p. 162).

In the same vein Scofield remarks:

The seven parables of Matthew 13, called by the Lord "mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven" (v. 11), taken together, describe the result of the presence of the Gospel in the world during the present age, that is, the time of seed-sowing, which began with our Lord's personal ministry, and ends with the "harvest" (vv. 40-43). Briefly, that result is the mingled tares and wheat, good

1 Cf. *The Bible and Modern Criticism*, pp. 204-6.

fish and bad, in the sphere of Christian profession. It is Christendom.²

We are therefore warranted in asserting that the "wheat" in the parable represents the whole company of Christians won by the Gospel, and that the "tares" represent the mass of mere professors in Christendom. The former class is the sons of God (Matt. 13:38,43); the latter, the sons of the evil One.

The vital question now arises whether the parable affords us any information when the wheat will be removed, [that is,] when the saints will be separated from the ungodly. In the parable itself we read:

Let them grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (v. 30).

Therefore, so far from the saints' being raptured to heaven some years before the judgment of professors, it is here indicated in the clearest manner that the rooting out of professors and the gathering of Christians take place at the same crisis. But even this is not all. Not only do we read that tares and wheat are to "grow together until the harvest," but our Lord in His interpretation states definitely that "the harvest is the consummation of the age" (v. 39, R.V. mg.).

In view of this plain statement it is impossible on candid principles to maintain the theory of a rapture some years prior to the End of the Age. Nevertheless, pre-tribs are hardy enough to attempt the task.

Here is the scheme as held by Darby, Kelly, Scofield, and others. The phrase "'time of harvest' implies a certain *period* occupied with the various processes of ingathering."³ At the beginning of this period the angels are sent forth in a purely providential way immediately before the Lord's Coming "for the Church." In some mysterious way, secret and providential, the angels gather professors into bundles *in readiness* for judgment. But no judgment whatever really takes place yet. The Lord then comes for the true Church, symbolized by the wheat, and gathers it to Himself. The ungodly professors, however, who had previously been bundled by the angels, are still left in the world for a number of years until the Lord comes forth in judgment. The "consummation of the age," according to this scheme, is a period of at least seven years, but it may run to seventy or a thousand.

Such is a fair statement of the position adopted. Can it be maintained? I think it can be shown that a lamer justification could not be offered. The reasoning coolly assumes as proved the very thing they require to prove. Not only that, it involves a glaring contradiction alike of itself and the Scriptures.

Where is the proof that "the end of the age" is a period of years beginning with the Rapture and ending with the Day of the Lord? Not a line is offered beyond the requirements of their prophetic program.

Further proof of this is seen when we ask our opponents how long the "consummation" is going to last. No certain reply is forthcoming. Some assert it will be but seven years, others that it will be about

2 *Reference Bible*, p. 1014. Cf. Ottman: "the wheat-field mingled with tares is plainly enough a parable of the present Christian dispensation" p. 351. See also Darby, *Synopsis, in loco*; Bland, p. 83.

3 See Kelly, *Matthew*, p. 278; cf. Ottman, pp. 351-2; Darby, *Synopsis, in loco*; Scofield, *Reference Bible*, p. 1016.

thirty-five years, and Anderson informs us that a thousand years may elapse between the removal of the Church and the Lord's descent to earth! In any case, "the consummation of the age," in their view, is really *a new age altogether*--an age, moreover, that itself will have a consummation. Two "second" comings, two "first" resurrections, two "last" trumpets, and two "ends" of the age. This is the program.

This, however, is not what our Lord taught. The age He had in mind was the present evil one during which Israel is in unbelief, Jerusalem trodden underfoot, Gentile dominion holds sway, and the saints of God suffer for His name. But this evil age will have a consummation: Messiah appears in His glory, Israel repents, the sleeping saints rise, Antichrist is given to the burning flame, and the Kingdom is established. This is everywhere the "consummation of the age." Proof of this is found in Matthew 24:3, where we read that the disciples came to our Lord and asked, "when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of *thy coming, and of the consummation of the age?*" (R.V. mg.). Here the Lord's Coming in glory is linked with the End of the Age.⁴ Now what put the idea into the disciples' minds that Christ's Coming in glory would take place at the End of the Age? Undoubtedly the closing verses of Matthew 23. Edersheim in commenting on them says:

To His prediction [of the ruin of the City and the utter desolation of the Temple] had been added these words: "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." In their view, this could refer only to His second coming, and to the end of the world as connected with it. *This explains the twofold question* which the four now addressed to Christ: "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the consummation of the age?" (ii. p. 432).

Now this excellent passage defines for us the phrase "the consummation of the age." When Messiah appears in His glory and Israel looks believingly, penitently upon Him, then the consummation of the Age will have come. "'The end' to which He pointed is that of the age which will be brought to a close by His coming *as Son of Man*" (p. 126). Thus Anderson remarks in his *Forgotten Truths* concerning "the End" in Matthew 24:14.

Returning now to Matthew 13:39, it is certain that when our Lord says "the harvest is the consummation of the age," He means that the wheat will be gathered and the tares burned at the time of His Coming in glory. This obvious truth, however, overthrows the theory that the saints will be gathered seven or more years before the End of the Age.

But if anything was lacking to refute pre-tribs explanation of the parable, it is found in their treatment of the burning of the tares. The wording of the parable, "Gather ye together *first* the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (ver. 30), and the words of the Lord's interpretation (vv. 41-3), that professors are gathered for judgment at the same crisis as the transfiguration of the righteous, naturally caused great embarrassment to men who separated them by

4 In *Zahn-Komm.* on Matthew (*in loco*), Zahn quotes important evidence from MSS and versions for "consummation" without the article in verse 3. And the Greek texts of Westcott and Hort, Weymouth, Tregelles, and Nestle (1930) actually give this as the true text. Zahn points out that, if this is so, then the Apostles asked of the Lord "a single sign for both"--the Parousia and End of the World-period. Darby brackets the article before "Consummation" and points the same lesson. In other words, the best text favors the view of the text above, that the Parousia coincides with the End of the Age.

several years. For it is a favorite feature of the system that the Rapture will be secret and that mere professors will be ignorant of the Lord's Coming. How, therefore, could the hard fact of the bundling of the tares at the crisis of the gathering of the wheat be explained to suit the theorists' system? Nothing was easier. In his *Matthew* (p. 278), Kelly explained it away altogether. He gravely proposes that the bundling of the tares refers to a mere providential work on the part of the angels among the ungodly. These will be gathered into "worldly association" some time prior to the Rapture!

I would observe that Kelly does not display much enthusiasm or confidence in defending the suggestion. He himself seems to feel that the ice that he stands on is extremely thin and cannot bear the strain of a vigorous combat with opponents on the vantage ground of solid rock. We read nothing now about "the brayings of ignorance" and "antagonists of the truth" in reference to those from whom he differs. "I do not pretend to say how it will be," he humbly confesses in regard to his theory of a providential bundling of the tares and their being left in the world unharmed and untouched for a generation before the judgment falls and after the wheat is gathered. And certainly if he cannot enlighten us on so important a point, he must not be surprised if plain people repudiate the system that requires so clear a departure from the parable and its interpretation by the Lord; for our Lord, be it noted, interprets the bundling of the tares for us. He shows us that not some secret, providential affair is meant, but the supreme crisis of the ungodly during this present age. Here are His words:

As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the consummation of the age. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth (13:40-42, R.V. mg.).

If our Lord had had the new theory in His mind, He could scarcely have given a more crushing refutation of it; for every line of His words is a condemnation of a secret, providential gathering of the tares into "worldly association."

Another consideration that is fatal to Kelly's contention has been forcibly stated by B. W. Newton in his *Second Coming*:

If we were to adopt the doctrines of this strange theory, we should be obliged to say that Antichrist, whose history constitutes the leading feature in the last days of this present age, is not revealed until after the age is terminated. For if (as is asserted) the saints are to be removed from earth before Antichrist is revealed, and if (as we know from Scripture) they will not be taken till the end of the age (Matt. 13) when "wheat and tares" are both removed, and Christendom ceases to exist, it is obvious that if we adopt the supposition referred to, we must say that Antichrist is to be revealed after Christendom has ceased to exist, and after the age of evil in which he is to act is ended. Will any, on reflection, affirm this?

It is very evident that if Antichrist is not to be revealed until after the wheat and tares have been removed, he never will be revealed at all: for the greater part of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman World which will form the very basis and strength of his power, are at present a part of the wheat and tare field; at present they form a part of Christendom, and so will continue until they are *by him* seduced from their professed allegiance to Christ (pp. 15-16).

In a footnote Newton remarks:

Some have endeavored to avoid the force of this argument by suggesting that the words "end of age" may mean an indefinitely lengthened period. But no period can be more definitely marked: "THE HARVEST" is the end of the age; and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the age. 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; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Is Antichrist to arise after this?

To this awkward question no reply has been given, for none is possible.

Lastly, the pre-trib theory of a rapture some years before the End of the Age is refuted by the closing verse of our Lord's interpretation: "Then (*tote*, at that time) shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (v. 43).

Here, as we have already seen, we find that at the very time that the ungodly are rooted out of Christ's Kingdom and judged, the resurrection and glorification of the righteous take place; for the shining forth of the saints has no reference to a previous concealment of the saints in heaven but to their transfiguration at the resurrection of the just. Matthew 13:43 is a clear reference to Daniel 12:2-3, which speaks of resurrection.

In view of the hopeless breakdown of Darby's and Kelly's interpretation of the Parable of the Tares, it is not to be wondered at that some advocates of the new theories of the Advent should have come to see the need of a new apologetic in reference to it. The exegesis that prevailed for seventy years among all the greatest of pre-trib teachers, as well as the rank and file, was seen to be not danger-proof. In particular, it was felt among the new theorists that if the gathering of the wheat in the parable signified the Rapture of the saints, then the new theories on the Second Coming could not be true. This point was at last clearly seen and admitted. What was to be done, therefore, to save the new doctrine, for the idea of giving up the theories as erroneous seems never to be entertained, such is the obloquy [derision] the alternative view inspires.

The new plan is simple. It denies that the Parable of the Tares has reference to Christendom; denies that the gathering of the wheat refers to the Rapture of the saints. The parable will have its fulfilment only *after the Church as been raptured*, when, *ex hypothesi*, the Jewish Remnant takes up the work of evangelizing the world. Bullinger, with praise-worthy consistency, rules all the parables of Matthew 13 out of court [consideration], so far as the Church is concerned. The fact that they were found in one of the Four Gospels precluded any reference to the Church. Had they been written in one of Paul's Epistles to the Body of Christ, the case would have been different.

Other teachers, however, like Gaebelin in his *Matthew*, hand over to the Jewish Remnant only such of the parables of Matthew 13 as do not square with their novel theories. The Parables of the Tares and the Drag Net, which are especially inconvenient, are referred to the period, *ex hypothesi*, between the Rapture and the millennium.

It would take us too far afield to go into these Remnant theories now; and as the whole Remnant hypothesis will come before us on another occasion, the fiction of their supposed preaching had better be deferred as well. One or two remarks for the present will suffice. First, not a word of evidence is

produced to support the assertion that the Parable of the Tares belongs to the Remnant. Such a body is not so much as hinted at in the whole course of Matthew 13. The real reason why this Remnant theory is produced at this juncture is clear to all candid minds. [Being] read naturally, the Parable of the Tares spells midnight to the new theories on the Second Coming, and so it is denied that the Parable has reference to the Church.

That the parable has reference to the present dispensation is clear from the fact that the Lord says "the harvest is the end of the age," that is, of the age that we now live in; for the idea of another evil age succeeding this one is a mere figment of Gaebelein's imagination. The age, according to Scripture, that succeeds this present Age is the millennium.

But a simpler method of dealing with the wild vagaries of this dispensational sect is to point to the clear testimony of the real leaders of the school. In addition to those already given, I may cite some words from Kelly:

The Lord evidently speaks of the vast field of Christian profession, and of the sad fact that evil was to be introduced from the very beginning; and, once brought in, it would never be turned out till the Lord Himself returns to judgment, and by His angels gathers the tares in bundles to burn them, while the wheat is gathered into the barn.⁵

Such testimonies could be multiplied.

One other consideration refutes the application of the Parable of the Tares to an imaginary interval after the Rapture--under our very eyes the parable has already been fulfilled in a remarkable manner. J. G. Bellett, after remarking that the Lord in Matthew 13 "traces in a series of parables, the history of the gospel in the world, or during the present Gentile age," proceeds:

And may I not say, that this is graphic, to the very life of what has come to pass, and which with our own eyes, we see at this very hour? There is before us a field of mingled seed, the work of the Lord and the work of the enemy, with the prevalency of that which is of the enemy, and the obscurity of that which is precious and of God. What an anticipation of what we see, and cannot but see, all around us! (*Evangelists*, p. 29.)

In view of Gaebelein's failure to get rid of the Parable of the Tares, still another attempt has recently been made to overcome the difficulty that "the harvest is the end of the age." I refer to the position taken by Miss Habershon in her *Parables*. She rightly repudiates the vagary that the Parable of the Tares "refers only to the time after the Church has been taken up." She states that "the early part of the parable exactly describes the condition of things now, wheat and darnel growing together" (p. 127).

Yet is Miss Habershon unwilling to admit that the parable locates the Rapture of true believers at the End of the Age, [and] this in spite of the Lord's words that "the harvest *is* the end of the age." She

5 *Matthew*, p. 279. As for Gaebelein's groundless fancy that the Parable of the Tares speaks of an inferior or more elementary gospel than the one we are saved by, some other words of Kelly's may be cited: "The harvest is the consummation of the age, that is, of the present gospel dispensation--the time while the Lord is absent, and the gospel is being proclaimed over the earth. Grace is actively going forth now" (p. 287).

writes:

We may be quite sure that there is nothing in the parable which is contradictory to the teaching given to Paul about the Lord's return. It was among the things which the Lord could not reveal to His disciples while He was with them, because they were not able to bear it; but the parable must be read with the epistles, for the epistles are sequels to them. If we see this fact we shall not be so much in danger of accepting wrong theories about the Lord's coming. Many such have been founded on the parable through want of studying together these two portions of New Testament revelation (p. 79).

When Miss Habershon pleads for the recognition of harmony between the teaching of Paul and that of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Second Coming, all believing students will agree with her. But have we not an equal right to postulate that we may be quite sure that there is nothing in the Epistles that is contradictory to the teaching given by the Lord of Glory about His Return? I think that as Christians we have a right to demand that. Yet the plain fact is that it is Miss Habershon and her school who make Paul and Christ contradictory witnesses about His Return; for they would have us believe the Lord taught that He would return *after* the Great Tribulation while Paul taught that He would return *before* it. To be sure, pre-tribs will protest that they aim at making Paul and Christ agree; but that does not alter the fact that they make them differ. And it is not a little amusing to observe how pre-tribs "harmonize" Paul and Christ. The former spoke of the "second" Coming--that "for the Church"; the latter spoke of the "third" Coming--that for the world. But for my part I think that this is precisely one of the "wrong theories" about the Lord's Coming that many are "in danger of accepting."

Miss Habershon argues that the teaching given to Paul about the Lord's Coming in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 could not be revealed to the Lord's disciples by our Lord Himself: "they were not able to bear it." Where is the evidence for this? The words of the Lord in John 14:3, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself," are a refutation of the theory maintained by Miss Haberson; for nothing more advanced than this was taught by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4, unless the single fact that at the Advent living believers will have no precedence over the holy dead. Moreover, the resurrection of the sleeping saints and the heavenly glory that shall follow are far higher truths than the Rapture, and yet not merely the Lord's disciples but the saints of the Old Covenant "were able to bear" the revelation of those glorious and comforting truths.⁶

And to suggest that the disciples "were not able to bear" the revelation that the Church would be exempt from the Great Tribulation--which is what Miss Habershon is driving at--is a mistake. To judge by the effect of such a "revelation" in the 1830's, we may conclude that the disciples would have reveled in it and written 365 tracts a year to defend it as precious and indispensable truth.

The main presupposition that Miss Habershon's reasoning proceeds upon is fallacious. It is a mere fiction that Paul revealed a new coming in 1 Thessalonians 4. The only "revelation" that he made there was concerning the relation of surviving to sleeping saints at the Advent. This and nothing else.

But if anything was lacking in our refutation of Miss Habershon's apologetic, it is supplied by her own treatment of the gathering of the wheat at the harvest. On this point she says:

6 Dan. 12:2-3; Isaiah 25:8, 26:19; Matt. 13:43; Luke 14:14-15, 20:35; John 6:39-54.

The Church alone cannot be meant, for the parable *takes us right on to the time of the Lord's coming in power to set up His kingdom*, and for the same reason the harvest cannot mean only the taking up of the Church, *though this may be included as a preliminary* (p. 127).

Here Miss Habershon admits, with priceless naiveté, that the real reason preventing her from accepting outright the gathering of the wheat as signifying the Rapture of the saints is that the rapture of the parable "takes us right on to the time of the Lord's coming in power to set up His Kingdom." Of course it does. Why propound, therefore, a set of novelties based on the denial of it?

That the harvest signifies that gathering of the saints is surely too plain to need much demonstration. It was so interpreted by Darby, Scofield, and Newberry; and not even a censor like Dr. Gaebelein will charge these writers with ignorance of dispensational teaching and inability to divide the word of truth rightly.

Kelly in his *Matthew* says of the gathering of the wheat into the barn: "Thus the heavenly saints are to be gathered into the Lord's barn, to be taken out of the earth to heaven" (p. 278).

And Darby in his *Synopsis* observes: "The wheat (that is, the Church) is in the barn, and the tares in bundles on the earth" (p. 96).

Again:

During the absence of Jesus the result of His sowing will be marred, as a whole down here, by the work of the enemy. At the close He will bind all the enemy's work in bundles; that is, He will prepare them in this world for judgment. He will then take away the Church. It is evident that this terminates the scene below which goes on during His absence (p. 93).

Finally, Scofield in his *Reference Bible* says: "At the end of the age (v. 40) the tares are set apart for burning, but first the wheat is gathered into the barn (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:14-17)" (p. 1016).

Miss Habershon's final solution of the gathering of the wheat is to fall back upon Bullinger's theory of the "first-fruit" resurrection. She says:

A harvest was never all gathered in one day. In Israel the first ripe ears that were cut were waved before the Lord as the sheaf of the first-fruits, *and this represents Christ and His Church*. "Christ the first-fruits (or, as some read it, 'the Christ'), afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." The real harvest "at His coming," is the time specially described in the parable (p. 127).

Now I want the reader to mark the extraordinary claims and admissions made here. Miss Habershon admits that the gathering of the wheat refers to a rapture at the End of the Age, but not properly that of the Church. She wants us to believe that though the body of the Parable of the Tares "exactly describes the condition of things now, wheat and darnel growing together," yet our Lord *passed over the gathering of Christians in silence*. She wants us to believe that though the wheat "exactly describes" the condition of Christendom now, yet the gathering of the wheat cannot represent the gathering of Christians at Christ's approaching Advent, but must be referred to a nebulous company that will arise *after* the Church has been taken up and be raptured at the very End of the Age! Moreover, her scheme

leads straight to the doctrine of *two* raptures.⁷ First we have the rapture--unrecorded--of the Church, then we have the rapture, recorded in the parable, some years later--so that as the new theories require us to believe in two "first" resurrections, two "second" comings, two "last" days, two "ends" of the age, [and] two "last" trumpets, so now we are to accept the theory of two "raptures" of saints, two "harvests"! And Miss Habershon's effort to unite these two raptures by calling them parts of the same "harvest" would only avail if the two reapings were separated by a question of *days*. But to ask us to believe that the reaping of the "wheat" of the whole Church dispensation followed by another reaping several years or decades after is but one harvest is a sheer travesty of exposition.

Dr. Ottman seeks to turn this criticism by calling "the removal of the Church the barley harvest, while that which remains to be gathered in at the end of the seven years may be regarded as the wheat harvest" (p. 352). Think of the extraordinary hold that error has on some when the gathering of *wheat*--for Dr. Ottman admits that the wheat of the parable represent the Church--can be called a *barley* harvest!⁸

As for Miss Habershon's "first-fruit" argument, we have seen this to be worthless,⁹ because the "first-fruit" refers not to Christ and the Church but to the Lord Jesus Christ alone (1 Cor. 15:20). The reaping of the first-fruits took place, therefore, nineteen hundred years ago.

And Miss Habershon's admission that "the real harvest"--they that are Christ's at His coming--"is the time specially described in the parable" gives her whole case away completely. For while it was a fiction of Bullinger's that "they that are Christ's" were inferior saints, it is the doctrine of Scripture that they are Christians and members of the Church of this dispensation. Half a dozen texts are at hand to substantiate this statement, namely: 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22-23; 15:23; 2 Corinthians 10:7; Galatians 3:29; 5:24.

Most welcome, therefore, is Miss Habershon's confession that the real harvest of the parable is the gathering of "those that are Christ's." Welcome also is her contention that the reaping takes place at "the time of the Lord's coming in power to set up His kingdom." Her whole case has collapsed--because it was vital for her to prove that the gathering of Christians does *not* take place at the End of the Age but several years before it.

It is no wonder that the advocates of pre-trib theories of the Advent do not feel happy before [in expounding] the Parable of the Tares. No wonder they are in complete disarray among themselves in trying to make the words of the Lord--"let both grow together until the harvest" and "the harvest is the end of the age"--square with the theory that the tares and wheat do not so grow together and that the harvest is not the End of the Age but some years before it. Hence the fact that the most unnatural expedients are resorted to to avoid the natural sense of Christ's gracious words. To put the Four Gospels from us [set them aside] [and] to invent another secret harvest, to bring in the Jewish Remnant and rob us of precious promises, to reduce to thin air the binding of the tares, to make Antichrist rise after the End of the Age, to make the End of the Age a new age altogether--these are held as proof of a

7 Bullinger boldly advocated this: "There is more than one resurrection; why not more than one Rapture?" "Things to Come," vii., p. 33. So also Mr. D. M. Panton, *Rapture*.

8 Ottman says elsewhere: "But this harvest is seven years before our Lord's coming to establish the Kingdom," pp. 351-2. But this is rather different from what our Lord said.

9 See Excursus to Chapter IV.

special enlightenment and of "rightly dividing the word of truth." But to teach the obvious truth that the Parable of the Tares locates the gathering of Christians at the End of the Age, when false professors are judge, this is viewed as confusion and the work of the Enemy.

Many people will entertain the following conclusion about the Parable of the Tares. When writers like Darby, Kelly, Newberry, and Scofield insist that the gathering of the wheat signifies the muster of the saints at Christ's Coming, they do so because the natural reading of the words compels them so to interpret it. And when writers like Bullinger, Gaebelien, and Miss Habershon insist that the wheat is so gathered at the very End of the Age, when Christ appears in His glory, they do so because that is the natural force of the Lord's words, "the harvest is the end of the age." Now both sets of writers are right in what they affirm. Darby, Kelly, Newberry, and Scofield [are right] in that the gathering of the wheat signifies the Rapture of the Church. Bullinger, Gaebelien, and Miss Habershon [are right] in that the gathering of the wheat is located by the Lord Jesus at the End of the Age, when He comes forth in His power and majesty and establishes His Kingdom.

Matthew 13:47-50 (R.V. mg.).

Another parable of Christendom reads as follows:

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in the consummation of the age; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

There is no need to deal with this parable at length because it obviously stands or falls with that of the Tares. It is fitting to note, however, that here again the separation of believers and professors takes place "at the consummation of the age." As in the Parable of the Tares [wherein] wheat and tares "grow together until the harvest," so here good and bad fish (representing the true and the false in Christendom) remain together until the separation at the consummation of the Age. When that time comes, the faithful will be rewarded with the glory of Christ and His Kingdom; the false will be cast out into unquenchable fire. This, be it noted, at the same crisis.