

## 189. In the Visible Church There Is Much Rubbish.

**The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.** *Matt. 13, 47. 48.*

The kingdom of heaven, that is, the Church, is likened by our Lord to a net cast into the sea. The net spoken of is a hauling-net, which was sometimes half a mile in length. A net of such dimensions will naturally enclose fish of all sizes and kinds, some bad and others good. And so it is with the net of the Gospel. It is a large draw-net; it is not merely let down into one stream or river, but it dips the ocean, the wide and open sea of the world, and its threads are so strong, so well knitted together, that scarcely a single fish can escape. In other words, we have here a picture of the all-embracing Church of Christ, the preaching of the Gospel to every nation. But as the divine fishermen, the ministers of Christ, cast their net and enclose an abundance of human fishes, they find that not all are of the same quality; it is a mixed and motley multitude.

Behold, then, such is the outward appearance of the Church upon earth. Where the true Church is established, there you will find the sad effects of Satan's pernicious work. You will find wicked people among the good, godlessness developing alongside of piety, vice cropping forth on the very side of virtue, and children of the Evil One standing next to the children of God. This has always been the case, and thus it will be to the end of the world. Was there not a Judas among the disciples of Christ? Do we not find divisions in the congregations of the early Church, much quarrel and angry controversy among the members, injustice, a wrong use of the Lord's Supper, false prophets, men denying the doctrine of the resurrection, even a man who had committed incest? Is there a congregation or a whole church-body which has arrived at the stage of perfection? There is no such congregation or Church on earth; and why? Because Satan will always corrupt the divine Word; and our hearts, corrupted by sin, are always susceptible of all that is evil.

## Prayer.

O almighty God, I come to Thee laden with sin and confess that I have deserved eternal damnation, being not only by nature a child of wrath and sold under sin, but having times untold transgressed all Thy commandments. But I take refuge in Thy boundless mercy and humbly pray Thee, enter not into judgment with me, but for Thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity. O Lord, here on earth Thy Church is polluted with many offenses; but at the end of the world a great change will come. Then a separation will take place. The good will be gathered into heaven, but the bad will be cast into eternal darkness. I submit to Thy will; do Thou as it seemeth good unto Thee; for Thine I am and would remain. Amen.

Abide with Thy protection  
Among us, Lord, our Strength,  
Lest world and Satan fell us  
And overcome at length.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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