

*habitation of God through the Spirit, they deem that it ought to appear one body in its visible manifestation on earth—one body in which all believers in the Lord Jesus are baptized by one Spirit.” (a)* In other words, that the visible church on earth should be composed solely and alone of converted people, and that consequently “*a national church errs on the one hand, and all sectarian denominations on the other.*” (b)

Now, the answer to this is scripturally plain and decisive. If Christ wished such a church to exist, why did He utter the parable of the tares and the wheat, or the net cast into the sea? I know that the Brethren deny that these parables have anything to say to the church, but I am sure that an unprejudiced reader will admit that they refer to the kingdom of God on earth, and that that kingdom is identical with the church. To understand these two parables, the question to settle is, what did the Lord Jesus mean by the expression “kingdom” so often used throughout them. That he did not mean his millennial kingdom is obvious, for the glory of that kingdom will be the absence of tares; and that he did not mean the grace of God in an individual’s heart (Rom. xiv., 17) is equally plain, for our whole life should be spent in pulling up the tares there. We are, therefore, shut up to the conclusion that the kingdom referred to was the church, and for the simple reason that the

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(a) “Who are the Plymouth Brethren?” By Mrs. H. Grattan Guinness, page 13.

(b) Do. do., page 14.