

THE

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## THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

It is not our purpose at present to offer any full exposition of this remarkable parable of our Lord, but as it has been pressed into the argument for indiscriminate admission of all persons making application to the Church for membership however destitute of the marks of the children of God, and retaining in that position characters of every description, we venture a few observations on it. When a show is made of Scriptural authority, it is well to sift the alleged proof. Nothing can be to our mind clearer than that this is an unwarranted use of the Word of God.

For, 1st. The declaration of Jesus is emphatic—"The field is the world." The interpretation from which we dissent would require, the field is the Church. Both the righteous and the wicked exist in the world, in ordinary avocations and pursuits they are mixed up, but this is no proof that every line of demarcation between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not, is to be obliterated.

Because, 2nd. The character of the individuals is neither dark nor doubtful, but clear, they are known as tares. Then appeared the tares also. Whence then hath it tares? The servants saw that it was a different grain, and judged rightly of its noxious qualities; consequently they were not hypocrites, who are alluded to. Of disguise with these characters there is none. In every Church there is more or less of impurity, and often a mingling of false professors; the question, however, is not the retention in communion of the hypocrite, who in the nature of hypocrisy is unknown, but of known characters who are the children of the devil. To take the view of the parable which we oppose would assist the devil in breaking down all power for good arising from the testimony of a living church. Surely to do the same work as that malignant foe is far from being an honour.

And, 3rd. The interpretation would be inconsistent with many other parts of Scripture. To wit, those that speak of the nature of a Church of Christ, and of the discipline of the house of God. In the Epistles those addressed are called saints—holy brethren—elect—faithful brethren in Christ Jesus. If these persons were known not to be so, there was manifestly deception practised. Again, they are called to holiness of conduct, but on what principle could religious communities, destitute of the feeblest element of religious life, listen to such exhortations? We have also passages that point out the duty of putting away evil persons. "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power