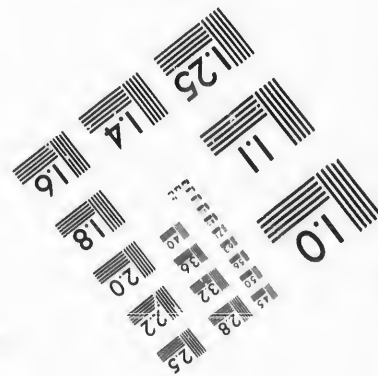
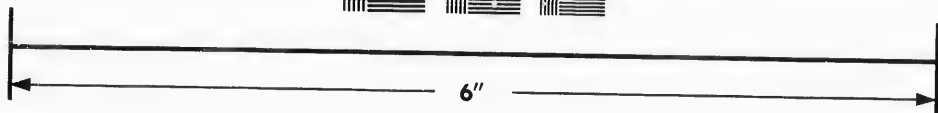
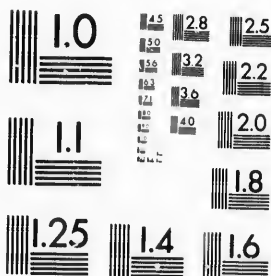


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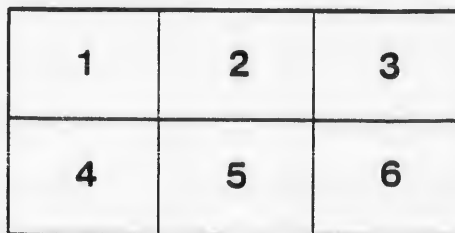
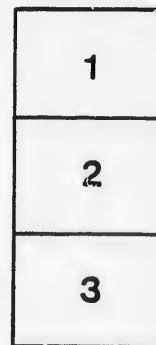
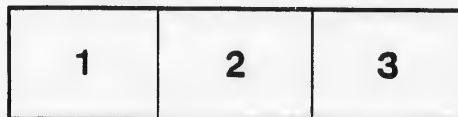
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THE

KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH.

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A REPLY TO A PLYMOUTH BRETHREN TRACT, WRITTEN  
BY MR. R. T. GRANT, ON THE ABOVE SUBJECT

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BY THE

REV. JAS. CARMICHAEL,

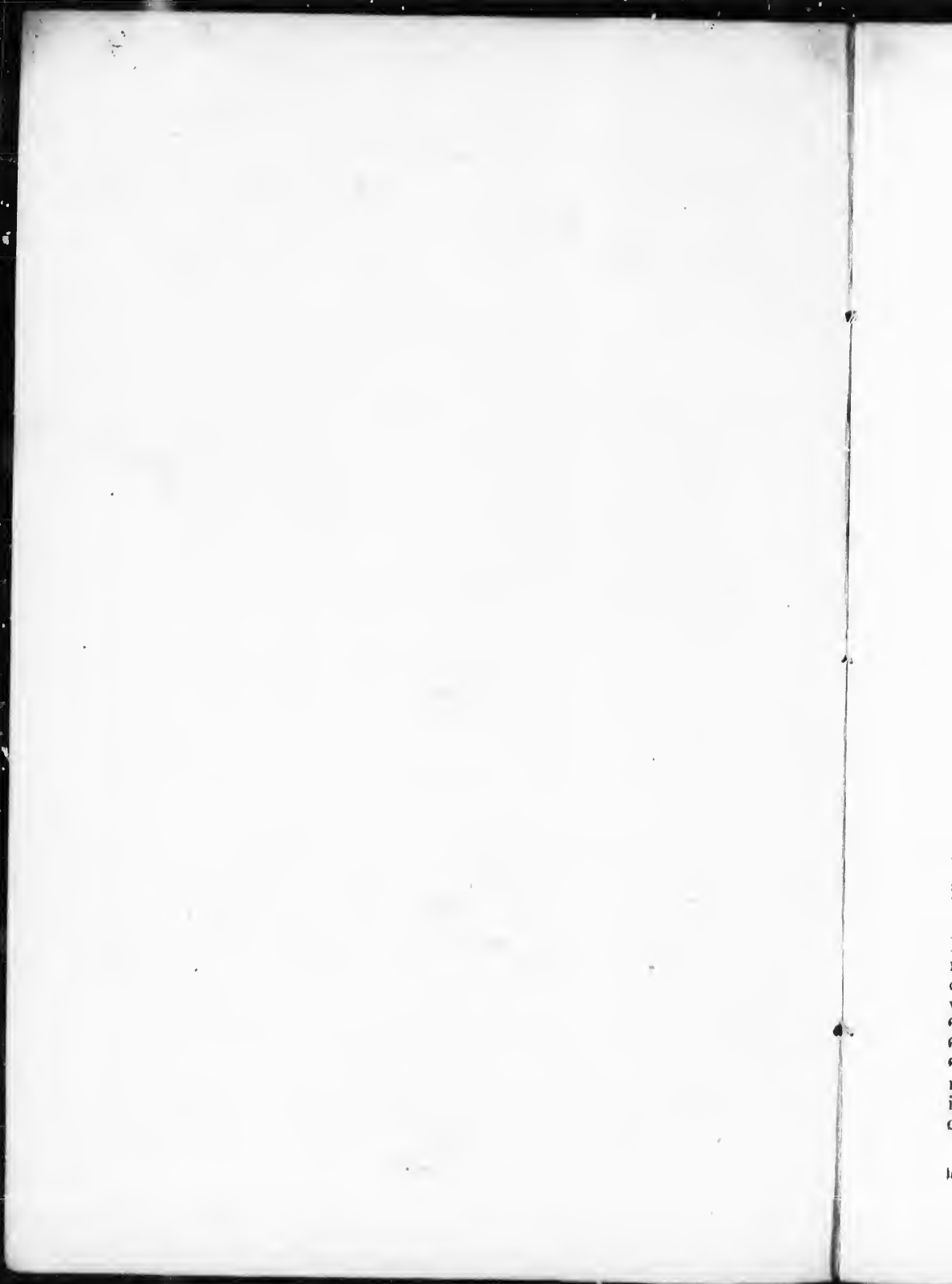
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1866.



A short account of the controversy between Mr. Grant and the writer is necessary for the information of those parties into whose hands this tract might fall unaccompanied by others which preceded it. In July, 1865, I published a sermon at the request of some valued parishioners on "The Tares and the Wheat." The sermon was directed against a sect called the Plymouth Brethren, who had long wrested the parable from its original meaning, in order to prop up their views on the subject of a "Pure Church." Their theory being "That evil of any kind, if sanctioned in the assembly, will quench the Spirit."\* The parable of the Tares and the Wheat of course stood in their way, and with no little ingenuity they fixed on the expression used in the parable, "the field is the *world*," and then boldly stated that it had nothing to say to the Visible Church at all.† In my sermon I called the attention of my congregation to the fact that it was in God's *Kingdom* (not the field) that the Tares grew; that they were to be left in the *Kingdom* with the wheat till Christ came, and that on His Advent He would gather them out of His Kingdom and cause them to be destroyed. This Kingdom I stated to be the Visible Church, in accordance with the generally received opinion of most Christian bodies.

For six months the sermon remained unanswered, and then Mr. R. T. Grant (formerly an Episcopalian clergyman) answered it, or rather professed to answer it on the part of his sect. In his reply he did everything but grapple the point as to what the Kingdom of God was. He stated that it could not be the Church; "that the Kingdom is in mystery now, but will be established when the Lord comes; that the Church is in it and others in it too, and that the Jews will be in it."‡ So vague, undefined, and mystical a statement of course required explanation, and in a short reply I called on Mr. Grant to inform me what our Lord meant by the expression "Kingdom of God or Kingdom" used once in the parable and three times in its explan-

\* *Prac. Unity Ch.*, page 6.—J. N. D. † *Reasons for withdrawing from Church of England*, page 22.—H. B. ‡ *Brief Remarks*, page 4.

tion. His answer is now before the public and is entitled, "The Kingdom and the Church—are they the same?" and this tract is written in reply.

Mr. Grant's theory as to the Church may be summed up thus: The Church is distinct from the Kingdom (page 9); it was not in existence nor could be till the death of Christ; and in the Church Abraham and others have no part (page 9).

I call this a theory because it is not Scripture. Mr. Grant has not found it in Scripture. I will dispose of it in a few words. As to the distinction between the Church and the Kingdom, I will deal with it in its proper place. The two other points should be met here.

If the Church (Ecclesia) did not, or could not exist till after the death of Christ, why did Stephen, speaking of Moses, state "This is he that was in the Church (Ecclesia) in the wilderness?" (Acts 7, 38) or why did David say "I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the Church (Ecclesia) will I praise thee?"\* or why did Moses speak in the ears of all the Church (Ecclesia) of Israel the words of his song until they were ended?† or why did God give the Law in the presence of the Church (Ecclesia) at Sinai? It is an easy thing for Mr. Grant to say that the Church was not in existence till the death of Christ. Of course the Christian Church was not God's Jewish Church was. The Church of the wilderness was the Church of the Law.

This leads me to Mr. G's second point—that Abraham will have no part in the glorified Church. Has Mr. G. ever read the 3rd chapter of Galatians?—"Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham, for the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. If I have faith in Jesus Christ I expect to be blessed with faithful Abraham. Mr. Grant does not. I'm very sorry for it.

Mr. Grant's theory as to "the Kingdom" is of a more elaborate nature. I have read it very carefully, and I am sorry as a literary production that it is not more creditable to the writer and the sect to which he has allied himself. It is a foolish theory, unsupported either by Scripture or common sense. It leaves a person just as dark on the subject of the Kingdom as if Mr. Grant had never written a special tract to throw light on it. It suits me, however. It proves to me that the "Kingdom of God" in the Tares and the Wheat must mean the Visible Church, according to Mr. Grant's own theory.

He first refers to Nebuchadnezzar's image vision of the Kingdoms and to the Millennial Kingdom which should break the others to pieces. This Kingdom, he states, was recognized by both John the Baptist and our Lord in the announcement "That the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand."

Christ then goes forth and preaches this Kingdom to the Jews, but his labour ends in rejection. Then our Lord and the Kingdom

\* 2nd Petru., ap. LXX. † Deu. 31-30, ap. LXX. ‡ Deu. 18-16, ap. LXX.



take a change of position. The setting up of the Kingdom among the Jews in power is "deferred" or put off, and the Kingdom is offered to the world at large, first by Jesus Christ, then by the Apostles at the conversion of Cornelius. But in preaching the Kingdom to the Gentiles Jesus adopts a style different from that used when speaking of it to Israel. He does not say "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," but He deals in parables or similitudes which all have reference to the Kingdom during his absence from the earth.

Mr. Grant does not think it necessary to dwell much on these parables. He admits that wheat and tares grow in this Kingdom. He gets slightly sarcastic, and wonders how any one could confound the Church and the Kingdom "because the Kingdom was offered to the Jews, and who could say the Church was?" So he quietly excommunicates Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and consoles himself by the thought that he is in a very different position.

It will be seen from this outline of Mr. Grant's views that he believes in a *Gentile* Church and a *Gentile* Kingdom, the former united to Christ and pure; the latter mixed and composed of *good* and *bad* people.\* But I would ask Mr. Grant where is this mighty organization outside of what is generally spoken of as "the Visible Church?" what road must we take to look for it? what guide book will Mr. G. put in our hand? Could Mr. Grant shew me a holy man a member of God's Kingdom yet who is altogether outside of the Church and has nothing to say to it? What admits a man into the Kingdom and yet debars him from being a member of the Church? and why, if a man be a holy man, is he left in an impure Kingdom, when as a holy man (according to Mr. Grant) he has a right to belong to the Church? If in accordance with Plymouth views the good should separate in toto from the evil, in worship, in everything, surely it is impossible that God would shut the door of a pure Church on a holy man and leave him mixed up with evil men till the second advent. The good man can only be good, because he has faith in Christ, is sanctified by the Spirit, lives, and speaks, and moves as a Christian; but if he be thus blessed, according to Mr. Grant's own views, he is part of the "Body of Christ" and could not be a member of the Kingdom at all. If Mr. Grant stated that the members of the Kingdom were altogether *wicked* then indeed the case would be different. But he would ask sensible Bible readers to believe that God owns two distinct classes of Christian people. One class—THE CHURCH—is pure, holds no connection with worldly people, and the other class—KINGDOM CHRISTIANS—are to remain mixed with the evil till the second Advent. It would be better, after all, for Mr. Grant to screen himself behind Bishops, Priests and Deacons—behind men who wrote sense and read their Bibles—than to broach ideas so dishonouring to God as the covenant Father of his people. In the meantime I would ask Mr. G. to give me, a Gentile, in this Gentile land, a letter of introduction to a true *Christian* who does not belong to the Body of Christ, does not belong

\* Kingdom and Church, page 8. † The Kingdom and the Church, page 4.

to the Church, yet who as a "righteous being shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father."<sup>o</sup>

Such is Mr. Grant's theory about the Kingdom. It is not original, and I cannot say that it is to his credit either as a scholar or divine. As a scholar, he has omitted to mention that the expression "Kingdom" is used in many senses; and as a divine he has forgotten that all Christians, all good people, are one with Christ, whether bond or free, male or female, Kingdom Christians or Plymouth Saints; that if they are good at all they have put off the old man and put on the new man, and that, clothed in his righteousness, they are members of the Church militant here, and entitled to the glories of the Church triumphant hereafter.

In opposition to this most unscriptural view, I will now proceed to prove the identity of the Church Visible and the Kingdom in the parable of the Tares and the Wheat, and in so doing take up Mr. Grant's challenge as given on the eleventh page of his tract.

Believing as I do most sincerely that the "Kingdom" mentioned in the parable under dispute refers to the Christian Church, still I do not wish to fall into Mr. Grant's error and confine the expression within narrow bounds. This Mr. Grant does. His Kingdom from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the present moment is the Millennium in its nursery. But surely Mr. Grant is aware that the expression when used outside of the 13th Matthew is of a much wider application;—sometimes it refers to the Gospel, sometimes to the influence of the Spirit within a man's heart, at other times to Heaven as the home of the redeemed, and often to the Millennial Kingdom of Christ set up after the second Advent. Of course I have nothing to say to these terms. My duty is that of proving that under some circumstances the Church and the Kingdom are identical and that the term Kingdom in the parable of the Tares and the Wheat refers to the Visible Christian Church.

The Church of God is characterized by certain marks or notes that it carries with it wherever it goes. Its most prominent note is, that to it has been committed the Gospel, and that through it salvation is to be made known to all. It was to the Apostles as founders of the Church our Lord said "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you," (Matt. 28, 19-20) or as Mark (16-15) expresses it: "Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." By these words Jesus committed His oracles to the Apostles as the founders of the Church, and as His representatives. Now wherever that Church went, or goes, there certain events followed and do now follow, consequent on the mode in which the Gospel is received. In some cases people do not understand it, in other cases it makes only a slight impression, but always some receive it. It matters not to what part of the world the Church of God goes in a missionary spirit, whether to the burning plains of India or the ice-bound coasts of Northern

<sup>o</sup> Matt. 13-43.

climes, wherever the Church of God raises the standard of the Gospel these events are sure to follow.

Now if the Kingdom and the Church are perfectly distinct how comes it to pass that to the Kingdom also is committed the Gospel, and that the effects of the Kingdom Gospel are identical with those of the Church? "I do not know that it is necessary to dwell much on the parables," (Matt. 13) writes Mr. Grant. "I suppose he meant, I do not think it's wise. But I will dwell on them. "When any one heareth the words of the Kingdom," said Christ, then certain events follow: some do not understand it, others cannot retain it in the face of tribulation, others allow the deceitfulness of riches to choke the word, whilst others hear it and bring forth fruit to God's glory. Now I put it to the common sense of Bible readers whether, viewed in this light, the Kingdom and the Christian Church are not identical. To both are given the oracles of God—to both God commits the dissemination of the Word. They must be identical, unless Mr. Grant would have us believe that God has two distinct agencies at work for spreading the Gospel—one agency He set in motion when he said to the Apostles "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and the other agency—when, Mr. Grant, and where and how?

Another important mark of the Church is that controversially styled "The Power of the Keys." Avoiding anything controversial, I would simply refer to the fact that God has left power in His Church, which can best be expressed in the words of Scripture, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 18, 18). And when He had said this He breathed on them and said unto them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John, 20, 22). That these words conferred certain powers on the Church no one I think can deny, however men may differ as to the nature and extent of the powers conferred. But whatever these powers were they belonged to the Kingdom as well as the Church; the Kingdom gave birth to the power of the keys, and to the same extent as to the Church. A reference to the 16th of Matthew will at once prove this. After Peter's confession of Christ, our Lord said that on that confession He would build His Christian Church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it; and then he added, "and I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Now if the Church and the Kingdom are totally distinct, (so distinct that Mr. G. wonders how any one can confound them together) how comes it to pass that to both Church and Kingdom God has committed what controversialists call the power of the keys. This Kingdom that is nothing, compared to the Church; this Kingdom that Mr. Grant put into mystery in his first tract and leaves in greater mystery in his

second, why this Kingdom after all has all the powers of the Church. It binds, it loosens, it remits, it retains. Is it not apparent that in Matt. 16, 19, the Kingdom of heaven is formally, as elsewhere virtually, identified with the Church? (Ecclesia.)

But there is another most important mark of the Church which requires notice. Baptism was and is God's ordained mode of reception into the Christian Church. Previous to His ascension, our Lord commissioned the Apostles to go forth "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And on the day of Pentecost Peter said to the startled multitude, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." Now a reference to the 3rd of John will show us that Baptism was also necessary for reception into the Kingdom; for when Nicodemus came to our Lord he told him "except a man be born of Water and the Spirit he could not enter into the Kingdom of God." It was the same in the case of Philip (Acts 8-19) "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus, they were baptized, both men and women." If the Kingdom and the Church are not identical, will Mr. Grant please explain whether the baptism administered to those "who believed the things concerning the Kingdom" was different from that which admitted a man into the Apostolic Church, and if so, will Mr. Grant kindly inform me where I could now get "Kingdom Baptism" for a child if I did not care to have it made a Church member?

Again, it is a sore yet saddening fact that the Church of God has ever been mixed with evil. She has ever had her Judas, ready to take the cup, (Luke 22, 21) ever some sinner to be dealt with gently lest he should be swallowed up of over much sorrow. All efforts to render the Church pure have failed. The Donatists tried, and failed. The Sandemanians, Walkerites, Kellyites, &c., all failed; and the Plymouth Brethren, after thirty years trial, are failing too, for Mr. Henry Grattan Guinness (who, if not a member, was an admirer of the sect,) states "that the shape of their churches is simply shapeless; that their system is the mere negation of system, and that the wear and tear of reality has put their ideal of a Church to the test "and it has FAIRLY GONE TO PIECES."† That God for his own wise purpose permits this mixture in the Church is plain, for surely He would otherwise have blessed the efforts of men like Kelly, Pope, and Walker. No man could doubt *their* piety or the prayerful earnestness with which they embarked in the cause of Church purification.

Now as with the actual undeniable history of the Church, so with the Scriptural history of the Kingdom. The wheat and the tares, the net cast into the sea, may indeed be the history of the Kingdom, but they are equally the history of the Church, for in some strange way their histories have assumed a twin-like uniformity, both are mixed with evil, both either men or angels have desired to cleanse, and of

\* See Dean Alford on Mark 26-26. † Letter to Plymouth Brethren on the recognition of Pastors, by H. Grattan Guinness.

both God has said, to one by inspiration, to the other by stern fact, "make no division." His inspired words on record with reference to the Kingdom are, "Let both grow together until harvest," and his teaching in reference to the Church may be read in the failures of the Donatists, Sandemanians, Kellyites, Popeites, and Darbyites.

Once more. The history of the Christian Church has been of a peculiar nature. The smallest of all religious parties in the East, it has swept on for 1800 years, wielding an influence that it would be impossible fairly to describe. Nations, languages, peoples, and tongues have received the Gospel committed to its keeping. It speaks for Jesus in nearly every tongue, and is fast decreasing the few remaining languages of the earth which as yet have not pleaded for His atonement.

Heretofore again the literal history of the Church is identical with the Scriptural account of the Kingdom. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs and groweth unto a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." If the Visible Church and the Kingdom are not identical will Mr. Grant explain how their distinct histories are so peculiarly alike.

The Kingdom of God then is possessed of the following notes or remarks in common with the Visible Christian Church:—

#### THE VISIBLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

- 1—Has arisen from small beginnings to a mighty power.
- 2—Baptism is the seal of admission into the Church.
- 3—The Church has power to bind, loose, remit, and retain.
- 4—The Church is the guardian of the Gospel.
- 5—The Church has ever been mixed with evil.
- 6—The Church is the Church of God on earth.

#### THE KINGDOM

- 1—Has arisen from small beginnings to a mighty power.
- 2—Baptism is the seal of admission into the Kingdom.
- 3—The Kingdom has power to bind, loose, remit, and retain.
- 4—The Kingdom is the guardian of the Gospel.
- 5—The Kingdom will ever be mixed with evil.
- 6—The Kingdom is the Kingdom of God on earth.

A glance at the above table (which could be easily enlarged) will prove, I think, to the readers of this tract that in many places in the New Testament the expression "Kingdom of God or Kingdom" refers to the Christian Church.

The question now arises: in what sense is the expression Kingdom of God or Kingdom used in the 13th chapter of Matthew, in the parable of the tares and the wheat—what Kingdom is it in which God sees fit to let the evil grow side by side with the good? It cannot mean the Kingdom of God in a man's heart, (14 Ro., 17) for our Christian life must be spent in tearing up and battling against all that would dishonour Jesus there. Neither can it refer to Heaven; there will be nothing to pluck up in Heaven—dogs are *without*, it is only the pure that enter in. Well, can it mean the Millennial Kingdom of Christ? Impossible, and for two clear reasons—first, it is on the second Advent of Christ that the Kingdom will be cleansed and the

tares cast out, and the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom is subsequent to the second advent and the cleansing of the mixed kingdom ; and secondly, there will be no tares in the Millennial Kingdom ; sin may exist as the exception, but godliness will be the general rule ; Satan will be bound ; the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea ; all men shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. It can only mean, then, that Kingdom which men enter by Baptism, where they hear the Gospel, and whose ministering servants have a right to declare and pronounce to God's people the absolution and remission of their sins. This Kingdom, which is indeed God's Visible Christian Church, will, according to the 13th of Matthew, be purged and cleansed and purified from all things that offend, at the second coming of Jesus Christ—then, but not till then, and consequently the Plymouth theory of "A pure Church" is wrong from beginning to end.

I would now wish to notice a matter in connection with this controversy by no means creditable to Mr. Grant and his advisers. I refer to his endeavour to lead the public to suppose I stated that no discipline should be exercised in the Church. I defy Mr. Grant to produce one sentence in anything I have ever published which could lead him to suppose that I denied the necessity or value of discipline on those who are liable to it. When I speak of kneeling in the same pew with a drunkard, or of good and bad being allowed to congregate together, what in the world have either cases to say to discipline ? They are cases outside of discipline. I was not speaking of Church members ; I was speaking of any well known drunkard (sober for the day) who might come to church and to whom I would throw open my pew door, Sunday after Sunday, and hand him a prayer book to enable him to take part in the Service. Mr. Darby states that the continued presence of such a man in the assembly would quench the Spirit.\* I replied "No ; that Comforter which abides with the child of God for ever will be with him just as much whether he kneels beside a drunkard or a saint. It would be too hard to rob me of my heritage because my next door neighbour had nothing to say to it." This was the point I was battling for and will still battle for. According to Mr. Darby, if evil is sanctioned to the smallest degree in any congregation the Spirit goes out of it, and therefore the Brethren withdraw from all men, worship alone, go to no place of Christian worship except their own, and make a close borough of Christianity that none dare enter save those who can pronounce their Shibboleth. The Church of God ought to be as Catholic as its founder ; He had indeed His chosen band around him, over them He could wield discipline, the scourge of a word, the look that could rend the heart ; but outside of his disciples the harlot, drunkard, publican and sinner were welcome to Jesus, for He never ceased to call them with the lovely words, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." And shall His Church be less Catholic ? God forbid. Again I repeat the sentence so distasteful to Mr. Grant : "The Comforter which abides with the child

\* Practical Unity of the Church. page 6.

"of God *for ever* will be with him just as much whether he kneels beside a drunkard or a saint."

As to discipline among communicants, of course it should be used, but with prayerful care. We may warn, rebuke, and admonish, and, in some cases, excommunicate, but we have no right to excommunicate as long as the erring one promises amendment, or to excommunicate any one simply because he does not come up to Mr. Darby or Mr. Grant's regulation standard of piety. The rule of the Church of England is plain enough on the subject. Its excommunication is not a tearing up, but a discipline of mercy which, whilst it excommunicates, does so in the earnest hope that the sheep will return to the fold, where a kind voice is ever waiting to welcome it.

Lastly I would notice Mr. Grant's puny argument based on the expression "on this rock *I will* build my Church."

He says: "Could our Lord say '*I will* build my Church' if it was built before?" I reply it is not likely our Lord would, inasmuch as *the* Christian Church, was not built before; but God's Church was. In proof of this I refer Mr. Grant to the texts already quoted in this tract as found in the Septuagint version of the Scriptures. A slight acquaintance with that version will at once shew him that the word "Ecclesia" is perhaps as common a term in the Old Testament as it is in the New.

I now leave Mr. Grant with a firm conviction that he believes in a Visible Church just as much as I do. His Kingdom in which the good and bad are mixed is the Visible Church. He may not call it so, but perhaps he will yet see that any religious organization to which God has committed the Gospel, the power of the Keys and into which men are admitted by Baptism, must be the Church and nothing else, and when he comes to see this then he will remember that the wheat and the tares are to grow together in that kingdom till the second advent, and that Messrs. Darby, Stanley, Macintosh, and others, have been rushing in the face of Scripture for the last thirty years in striving to make the separation.

\* Tares and Wheat, page 7.

