

Errors will be promulgated, which should be dealt with, (1 Cor. xi. 19.) "Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth," (1 Tim. vi. 5), will foist their views on others. "They will creep in unawares," Jude 4. The Antinomian will "turn the grace of our (not "their") God into (a plea for) lasciviousness." The heretic will "deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ," R.V., by repudiating His eternal Deity and everlasting Sonship, and subtly substituting forms of Sabellianism or Socinianism for them.

The duty of Christians towards such is plain. "A man that is a heretic, after a first and second admonition, reject (or avoid)," Titus iii. 10. "Mark them which are causing" "the occasions for stumbling contrary to the doctrine (or teaching) which ye learned, and turn away from them." Rom. xvi. 17, R.V.

How were Titus, in the discharge of his pastoral duties, and the Saints at Rome in response to Paul's appeal, thus to act, save by the exclusion of the offender from the Lord's table, which would be impossible were not this a Church ordinance, and subject to the jurisdiction of its Members as a whole.

A sound Christian who is so unwise as to attend a meeting for united Communion, or worship with an open Communion Church may see Arians, or grace-hating professors, or unbaptised persons, or those who are opposed to organised Christianity present. He can have no "fellowship in the gospel" (Phil. i. 5) with these—but his lips are sealed. He cannot "avoid" them, or turn away from them. His "eating with them" is a tacit assent to their views. He unites with them as trustworthy brethren, though he hates their errors.

The incongruity is avoided by keeping the Table of the Lord where only it should be—within the borders of a Scripturally constituted Church of Christ.

The Lord's Table must be observed as a Church Ordinance, to afford Christians the opportunity for expressing abhorrence of open sin. At Corinth one of their number was guilty of flagrant wickedness. Paul commands the Church, when gathered together in the Lord's name, to excommunicate him, or put him away from among themselves, and exclude him from their Communion, and forbids their keeping company with "any man" though "called a brother" if guilty of one of the six sins enumerated. With the world they as a Church had nothing to do. With one of their members *they had*. "Therefore put away from you that wicked person." "With such an one, no, (ye are) not to eat"—and eating at the Lord's Supper is clearly

implied, further proving it to be a Church Ordinance. (1 Cor. v. 4, 10, 11, 13.)*

Article xxii. enforces a fundamental principle of the Order which our Churches maintain. Disprove it, and the superstructure falls; establish it, and our position is impregnable.

The Lord's Supper—not a means of Grace for Invalids and the Dying.

Note 6.—The Popish Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Protestant Sacrament (or Ordinance) of the Lord's Supper, are vitally different. Some Protestants, however, manifest a serious leaning toward the former. The "Orders" for the "Visitation" and "Communion for the Sick," are the most sacerdotal services in the Liturgy. Some Dissenters also send bread and wine from the Lord's Table to bed-ridden Members, especially those that are apparently dying; which is a grave perversion of this sacred Rite. It is not, as the Church of Rome asserts, a Viaticum—affording "provision for the way" to those whose souls are shortly to leave this world for that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

The practice has no warrant in Scripture, while it is fraught with the great peril of producing superstitious reliance upon a mere Ceremony.

Earlier Dissenters sedulously eschewed it. The Assembly's "Confession of Faith" (1643) states that "the Lord hath appointed His Ministers . . . to take and break the Bread, and to take the Cup, and to give both to the Communicants," but "to none who are not then present in the Congregation," xxix. 3. Gill also insists that the Lord's Supper, "being a Church Ordinance, is not to be administered privately to single persons, but to the Church assembled as such for this purpose."—BODY OF DIVINITY, (1769.)

It is in substance to be found in many of the "Articles of

*It were well if the obsolete custom of publishing the names of those whom the Church has excluded, at the next gathering for the Communion, were revived. Such were received at the Lord's Table, and the termination of the Fellowship, then formerly recognised, should be as publicly proclaimed, in the same way. The Plymouth Brethren "read out" those that have been withdrawn from; and their frank manliness puts us to shame. (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) The act is most solemn and affecting, and—when followed by Newton's hymn "When any turn from Zion's way"—should be fraught with profit."

Faith" of our Churches, and it is implied in all, "that the Lord's Supper is an Ordinance of a Church, and should be administered to those Members only who are assembled in one place for its observance."

If this seems harsh, we submit that obedience to God's Word is paramount to romantic sentiment.

"Sick-room sufferers need not [therefore] be anxious. The Lord's Supper is not binding [upon any] unless they are able to join those who 'are gathered together into one place' (Acts xx. 7, 8, and 1 Cor. xi. 20), 'in His name.' This is a useful point to mark, for I constantly meet with sick people who have a half-superstitious feeling of uneasiness, if they cannot receive 'the Sacrament.'"—Dr. C. STANFORD. Letter to Dr. A. B. Grosart, "MEMORIES AND LETTERS," page 180.

Article XXIII.—Transient Communion to be extended only to Members of Churches of the Same Faith and Order, page 11.

Strict and Open Churches.

NOTE 1.—**Strict Churches** are those that consist of such Christians only as have professed their faith by Baptism by immersion: and whose views of truth and Church Order accord with the proclaimed sentiments of all the rest.

Open Churches are such as receive to full Membership any whom they judge to be Christians, whatever their Doctrinal views, whether they have been baptised or not; believe Infant Sprinkling to be Scriptural; or avow indifference on the matter.

Some styled "Union Churches" have both a Font and a Baptistry in their chapels to meet the convictions of each class of their Members.

Strict Churches only are contemplated in this Article.

A "Sister Church" is a technical term for one holding the same Doctrines and maintaining the same Principles of government as our own—in other words, a Church of "the same Faith and Order," (Col. ii, 5.) Whether Christian Communities, which differ from our own in these particulars, should be styled Churches at all, is an unsettled question, page 135. It here suffices to insist that they are not Sister Churches.

Transient Communion—its Antiquity.

NOTE 2.—"Transient Communion"—the term is Dr. Gill's, who shows that the custom of receiving to the Lord's Table

persons who are not Members of the Church dates from Apostolic times.

"Letters of Commendation" (2 Cor. iii. 1,) were, as a rule given to less known Christians, to serve as introductions,—though Paul did not need them. Extracts from some are preserved.

Acts xv. 23—27. The Apostles and Elders, with "the whole Church" at Jerusalem, wrote thus to the Members of the Church at Antioch in Syria: "We have sent unto you Judas (surname Barsabas) and Silas" . . . "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Acts xviii. 27—"The brethren," the members of the Church at Ephesus, "wrote" a Circular Letter, introducing Apollos to "the disciples," the members of the Churches in the district of Achaea, exhorting them to receive him. The commendation of Phœbe (Rom. xvi. 1), as one who had succoured many; and of Onesimus, Tychicus and Marcus, (Col. iv. 7—10), are of a similar character.

It were well if this ancient custom were maintained.

Terms of Transient Communion.

NOTE 3.—On these, great diversity of opinion exists in Strict Churches:—1. Some receive all that profess and call themselves Christians. 2. Others: Members of any Evangelical Church, whatever its Denomination or Faith and Order. 3. Others: any persons who have been baptised by Immersion. 4. Others: Members of any so-called Baptist Churches, whether Strict or Open, and whatever their views of Truth; and irrespectively of their Rules as to Transient Communion. 5. Others: Members of Baptist Churches consisting solely of Christians who have professed their Faith by Immersion—though they receive Pædobaptists and others, who widely differ from them, to transient Communion at their own Chapels.

6. "We believe as to the Supper of the Lord that it is wholly a Church Ordinance," . . . and "that since all Baptised Believers, partaking of it with unbaptised Believers or with Members of Churches which adopt this practice, deny by their conduct its Divine authority (Matt. xxviii. 19,) we cannot admit to the Lord's Table, as occasional Communicants, any but Members of Churches professing the same Faith and Order with ourselves."—"ARTICLES OF FAITH TO BE OBSERVED BY THE STRICT AND PARTICULAR CHURCH, MEETING IN HILL STREET, DORSET SQUARE.

Reasons for Strict Communion.

NOTE 4.—We maintain it because we believe that the Lord's Supper expresses the most perfect form of Fellowship which can exist between the saints on earth—and judge that this cannot be symbolised when either of the above five characters is present around the Table of the Lord.

(1.) A mere profession of religion from a stranger is no guarantee of his union of heart with us in Christ and His truth.

(2.) We cannot receive members of Evangelical Churches as such, whatever their Creed or Practice. Pædobaptists deny the Scriptural subjects and mode of Baptism, and give a Divine title to a wholly unscriptural Rite. Presbyterians though their ancient Formulae of Faith are substantially sound, have widely departed from these; and their Baptism and Church Order do not accord with the Word of God. Methodists are Arminians, and their Church Order is a mere human scheme. Members of the Church of England are out of the question. With none of these can we have full fellowship, and to receive them with cordiality, as approving of their religion as a whole, is impossible.

(3.) We cannot welcome so-called Christians, simply on the ground of their having been baptised. All religious immersion is not Baptism. That of the Plymouth Brethren is often invalid (page 167). Christadelphians repudiate our Baptism and re-baptise their perverts as well as immerse their converts. The Mormons (we have heard) sometimes baptise. We cannot, therefore, accept the mere observance of a Rite as a guarantee of full-orbed Christianity.

(4.) We cannot invite Members of Union or Mixed Churches, since these, by their practice, treat no branch of Religion as important, save attendance at their Chapels, and the occasional breaking of bread; make no stand for experimental Godliness and for the distinctive Truths of the Gospel: while they ignore its initial Ordinance, and give undue prominence to the Lord's Supper.*

Scriptural Terms of Transient Communion.

NOTE 5.—These we state to be creditable Membership with Scripturally constituted Churches of Jesus Christ in which the essential Truths and Ordinances of the Gospel are maintained and practised as by ourselves. This we maintain—

*It is common to describe professors as "not only seat-holders, but communicants"; as if the latter described those whose lives answer to all the requirements of the Gospel.

(1.) From the Nature of the Ordinance. All, we think, must grant that by partaking of the Lord's Supper with persons "we sanction their Christianity, their doctrinal profession, and their walk before men." Of these, we admit that in no case can we judge with absolute certainty. Fellowship with a Church that is circumspect in receiving its Members: jealous for the Truth: impartially observant of the Ordinances: and whose members "look carefully lest there be any [man of their company] that falleth short of the grace of God" (Heb. xii. 15), however, affords the highest attainable guarantee of the genuineness of the Religion of its Members.

We cannot therefore receive wandering or unattached Christians. Church Membership is as incumbent on them as on ourselves. To sanction their disloyalty would be wrong.

Those who surround the Lord's Table should be as really one in their vital and practical religion as the fragments of the broken loaf are one in substance. "We, being many, are one [loaf of] bread," etc, 1 Cor. x. 17. A Pædobaptist is not in accord with a Baptist. A brother whose views are those of Wesley is not one with us who are enamoured of distinguishing and invincible grace*. The presence of the former destroys the symbolic homogeneity (or similarity of nature or kind) of the whole.

We that attend the Lord's Supper, *at our own Chapels* are all Members of a Strict and Particular Baptist Church; and those whom we receive to Transient Communion from other Congregations must have complied with the same conditions to which we yielded our willing obedience, or the ceremony will be an acted lie.

(2.) We maintain the position of Article xxiii., by pleading

*How could *all* join in singing:—

" Ah, Lord, with trembling I confess,
A gracious soul may fall from grace."—WESLEY.

and, " Grace will complete what grace begins,
To save from sorrows and from sins."—WATTS.

or, " Help me to watch and pray, and on Thyself rely;
Assured if I my trust betray, I shall for ever die."—WESLEY.

and, " Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in heaven."—TOPLADY.

the supremacy of Christ. This is remarkably emphasised in passages in which this Ordinance is referred to. We take "the Lord's Cup." We surround the Lord's Table." We eat "the Lord's Supper." We show [proclaim] the Lord's Death. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily is "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. The Apostle "received of the Lord Jesus that which also he delivered," "that the Lord Jesus . . took bread." The chastening for unworthy communion is "of the Lord." "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?"

This is no meaningless tautology.

"Lord" is a relative term, and imports one invested with lawful and acknowledged authority over others. Its use here teaches that those only should surround His sacred Table who practically own the Master as their Lord; obey His commands; seek in all things to please Him; and are, in a word, overtly loyal to Him. (Luke vi. 46.)

We, while not denying the Christianity of many of whose practices we disapprove, dispute their claim to be in all things loyal to Christ. His table is for "obedient children" (1 Peter i, 14), and such only dare we welcome to keep His feast with us.

(3.) Our view is substantiated by the claims of Christian Benevolence or *good will*—the disposition to promote the welfare of all who love Christ. We must admit that Pædo-baptism, Arminianism, and unwarrantable methods of Church organisation and discipline are injurious errors; and desire that these were abandoned by all who love Christ. Upholding brethren in error is wrong. This, however, mixed Communion frequently does, and it were cruel kindness to act as if we sanctioned what we know to be unscriptural in the Faith or Practice of others. The motive may be good. It is a pleasing sentiment to wish to express our love for all Christians, by receiving them to Communion with us. Fidelity to Christ and His laws is, however, the surest way to benefit those that are of the "household of Faith," (Gal. vi. 10.) Our practice does our erring friends no harm. They lose nothing. It may, however, do them good—while in any case our own Consciences are clear in God's sight.

(4.) Our Practice is Expedient.—Expediency is sometimes the antithesis of rectitude.* What is wrong, is preferred to what is right, to save unpleasantness or satisfy the unscrupu-

*Thus Goldsmith in his RETALIATION describes Edmund Burke as "Too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*."

lous. It is then to be avoided by honourable men. There is, however, a form of expediency which is commendable. "It is expedient for you that I go away" (John xvi. 7), where *expedient* means *profitable* or *advantageous*. As also in 1 Cor. vi. 12, etc., "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." Many things are permissible unto me,—sanctioned by men, and not condemned by God;—but all *such* things are not under all circumstances advantageous or profitable.

It follows that if things which *may have* the Divine sanction are not always expedient, things lacking this can never be so.

Of these, indiscriminate transient Communion is one. Were this an *open question*, on which God had not taught us, we should refrain from it; while, as it has no scriptural support, and is therefore a branch of "will-worship," (Col. ii. 23,) we eschew it as inexpedient.

The History of the whole Baptist Denomination shows, that if the Lord is despised in one way, other departures from spiritual loyalty surely follow. The terms of Transient Communion having been changed, many Churches, once strict, have adopted open Membership. Flagrant dereliction in matters of Doctrine have succeeded. Fullerism is favoured where the Truth was loved. Arminianism and Pelagianism are the natural sequence. Love for the "Higher Criticism" follows.

Lax practice is mysteriously associated with departure from the "Faith of God's elect." Money for "the Cause" is obtained in the most dubious ways: and the concern proceeds on the "down-grade" deeper into error and folly.

We thus deem it, among other reasons, "expedient" to maintain the ways of our Fathers.* Happy the Churches that can say, We "have stuck unto Thy testimonies: O Lord: put" us "not to shame," (Psa. cxix. 31.)

(5.) Only by restricting Transient Communion to Members of Churches of our own Faith and Order can we maintain the dignity of our Section of the Baptist Denomination

*Candour, however, enforces the admission that free communion at the Lord's Table was very early practised. Henry Jessey (1601-1663); Hansard Knollys, who baptised him (1598-1691) Vavasour Powell (born, 1617); John Bunyan (1628-1688)—all Baptist Ministers of great note—with many others sanctioned it. Robert Hall (1764-1831) published largely in its favour, and rendered it almost universal among such Particular Baptists as hold the Modified Calvinism of Andrew Fuller (1752-1815).

and our own Church in particular. If the Lord's Supper is a Church Ordinance, it is a Church act to welcome occasional communicants to it. When a Church, however, delegates this reception to its Pastor or Deacons, requiring that they only should inquire as to the fitness of applicants, it waives its own right of judgment, and invests a few with the authority which belongs to the whole Body. The Scriptural order, however, maintains the proper dignity of the Churches. We receive no one without the assurance that another Church has duly approved of him. We thus yield honour to whom honour is due; by showing respect to our sister Churches; and maintain our own high position as a Church, owning and owned by their Lord and ours.

Objections Answered.

NOTE 7.—Against restricted transient Communion, the following objections have been urged:—

(1.) That the Practice is a Solecism—or that it involves inconsistency or logical absurdity,

We own (as we are reminded) the Christianity of many who are not Baptists; we worship with them, and invite them to do so with us; our Ministers exchange pulpits with theirs; we give them pecuniary help and accept their money for religious purposes; we join with them in holy service—Yet we refuse them the privilege of uniting with us at the Supper of our common Lord.

We reply, that with such brethren we go to the utmost verge of Christian association to which, in Conscience, we can. If the Lord's Supper signified only what is referred to above, we would gladly receive them. It, however, expresses far more; and where the essential features of Christian character and conduct symbolised by it are lacking, we can but (as we have said) withhold the Rite where the reality does not exist.*

**I have several dear and highly esteemed friends who cannot or will not see Baptism. This does not a whit lessen my love for them, nor hinder Communion. We gladly talk of our agreements, not our differences, and I should be the last to cram Baptism down their throats. True, we cannot together surround the Lord's Table; and I have more than once felt pain at seeing them sit by, whilst I "broke bread" to others with whom I had little or no fellowship. In this Time-state such things will, however, occur; though they might be much remedied by making the door into the Church much narrower than is the practice. I must not do evil that good may come, or violate a

On the other hand, a Strict Church in connection with an open Table presents a great and most serious anomaly. Clearly it is illogical to admit persons to the highest spiritual privilege of Church fellowship, and refuse Membership. This, however, Strict Churches do, who welcome an Independent to the Lord's Supper, yet refuse him Membership unless he is baptised and subscribes to their agreed Articles of Faith first. Those that are scripturally entitled to the one, are as fully entitled to the other. There is no logical resting-place between a Close Church with a Close Table, and an Open Church with an Open Table. The former only is right; but both are consistent.

(2.) We are told that "it is not the Baptists' but the Christians' Table. All Christians should, therefore, be welcomed to it."

We reply, that it is not the Baptists' nor the Christians', *as such*, but the Lord's Table, and He must determine who shall surround it. Were it *ours*, we should invite whom *we* choose—but we defer our *wishes* to our Master's *will*, and, often at no small cost of religious sensibility, invite His loyal friends only to join us as fellow-guests.

(3.) By restricting Transient Communion to Members of Sister Churches it is alleged that we prevent well-disposed Christians from obeying Christ's command in relation to the Lord's Supper.

We reply that duties should be performed in the order in which they are enjoined. Here the authorised sequence is Baptism : Church Membership : and the "Breaking of bread." It is right to profess Faith by Baptism. It is right to assemble ourselves together (Heb. x. 25), in open Fellowship with a duly constituted Church. It is right to meet with God's people "to break bread." It is, however, wrong to give attention to the last, while either or both of the first are neglected. "Let all things be done decently (becomingly), and in order" (or "according to their appointed succession.") (1 Cor. xiv. 40.)

True, we exclude some, whose religion we respect, from the Lord's Table—but simply to mark our conscientious disapproval of their disregard for previous duties.

Divine Command to bring about more unity, lest I make myself wiser than God. If I love and esteem my friend, I shall not wish him to act wrongly by leaping over one Ordinance to attend to another. If he so regards me, he will not wish me to act contrary to my Conscience by admitting him to the Lord's Supper."—J. C. PHILPOT. See also page 135, note 9.

Thus only can we gracefully do this. We are to "prove all things" (1 Thess. v. 21): and not to disprove every practice that we know to be wrong. It were inept to argue with Independents or Wesleyans whenever our paths cross. Should such, however, present themselves at the Lord's Table, we do rightly to remind them, fraternally but forcibly, of the irregularity or the doctrinal or practical defects in their Systems of religion.

We would gladly facilitate their Baptism, and receive them into Church Fellowship FIRST, and THEN most cordially unite with them in "showing our Lord's death till He come." Their exclusion is their fault, not ours.

Thus, so far from hindering Christian obedience, we promote it, by insisting on entire loyalty to our common Master in all who surround His Table.

Strict and Particular Baptists as Transient Communicants.

NOTE 8.—The converse of what we have proved is equally important, namely, that Members of Churches of our own Faith and Order should never take the Lord's Supper—even for once—with Open Churches, or with Strict Churches whose Faith, Order, and Terms of Transient Communion do not accord with their own. To do this were a flagrant insult to the Believers with whom they are in Fellowship: would sanction unscriptural irregularity, if not error: and would effect no good.

It has been objected that if one of our Members should be removed to a locality "in which there is not a Church of the New Testament Faith and Order, he would be debarred from the Lord's Table altogether. It is granted—but it were surely better to suffer personal deprivation, than to sanction the contempt which an unscripturally constituted Church is continually manifesting toward the commandments of the Great Master. 'The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them,' (Hos. xiv. 9,) and in no others.

During the long period that Israel were in the wilderness, the Rite of Circumcision, for circumstantial reasons, could not be observed, and therefore they omitted the Passover (though it was expressly enjoined by God) for nearly forty years (Josh. iv. 19 and v. 2—8.)

When, however, they entered Canaan, the hindrances were removed (Josh. v. 10.) Then Joshua renewed Circumcision; and (God's order being respected) they subsequently kept the

Passover at Gilgal. Between *their* conduct and *our* duty, there is an obvious parallel. I would abstain from going to the Lord's Table all my life, if I could not go to it scripturally."—"STRICT COMMUNION," a Sermon by JAMES WELLS, No. 25.

Article XXIV.—Reception of Members from Sister Churches. Page 12.

NOTE 1.—When Providence removes Members of our Churches to new localities they should, at once, seek a Chapel in which the Truth is preached and the Ordinances scripturally maintained, and "assay to join themselves to the Disciples" in Church fellowship, as Paul did when compelled to leave Damascus and reside in Jerusalem, (Psa. cxix. 60; Acts ix. 26.) Delay here often proves dangerous, while prompt obedience brings its own "reward."* (Psa. xix. 11.)

NOTE 2.—To effect this, a Member of a Church desiring to unite with another of the same Faith and Order should be "received, at his request, by an honourable dismissal from the Church to which he belongs."

The "custom" of "the Churches of God" (1 Cor. xi. 16), in this matter is to name the person to the Church he seeks to join when assembled as such, and, if all the Members present consent, to request their Secretary to apply by letter for the Transference solicited; and if this is satisfactorily answered, to receive him.

NOTE 3.—Care should be taken, in taking Members from adjacent Churches to ascertain that the applicant's motives in wishing to effect a change are commendable. Should any know him as "contentious," (1 Cor. xi. 16), hyper-critical† (Isa.

*Far better is this than retaining formal membership with the Church from which one is locally separated. "Paper members"—or those whose Membership consists simply in the retention of their names on a Church Roll, are, in most cases, blameworthy.

Equally reprehensible are those who attend the Lord's Supper occasionally only, "to keep up their Membership."

†"When people whine that 'there is no food for the soul,' I am disposed to inquire 'whether there is any soul for the food?'" JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

xxix. 21), unsocial, or devoid of the love that begets love, who therefore found his former associations uncongenial and unprofitable, it should be stated. A man who has troubled one Church is rarely of service to another. At the best, "transplanted trees seldom thrive."

NOTE 4.—A Church is an **Independent Body**. "In deference to the Master's will, its Members are at liberty to receive or decline such as seek their Fellowship," page 134, and all should be as manly and straightforward in opposing the admission of unsuitable persons, as cordial in welcoming those in "whose favour the tongue of good report has been heard," (Acts xvi. 2.)

All Members should vote, "for" or "against," and none remain neutral." "NEM CON" (*nemine contradicente*, no one speaking in opposition) is a phrase which should be unknown at Church Meetings. Voting by ballot, though not commendable, is preferable to none.

The Friends or Quakers never vote at their assemblies, but are careful to act in accordance with the "moral majority." The judgment of those who live in close communion with God, and possess a lengthened experience, though few, deserves respect and deference.

Church action, once determined on, should not afterwards be canvassed or criticised. If any Members have aught to say, "let them now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold their peace."

NOTE 5.—A member of a sister Church, if his Dismissal has been honourable and cordial, "should not be required to make a public profession of his experience and Faith." This, however, is not the Order of some Churches, which require oral testimony from all who join them. There is, however, no authority for twice exacting "the good Confession" (1 Tim. vi. 12; page 177), of any whose Christian conduct since their baptism has been consistent, and their Church Membership honourable. So to do is to offer a slight upon the judgment of the Church which honourably dismissed them.

Yet, what cannot be demanded as a right, may be craved as a favour; and it were well that strangers that join our Churches should, in their courtesy, "give a reason for the hope that is in them." 1 Pet. iii. 15), especially in these times of vacillation and indecision for the truth (2 Tim. iv. 3.)

The Amalgamation of Churches Unscriptural.

NOTE 6.—Should the continuance of a Church as such be impracticable, and its disbandment imperative, prompt steps

should be taken to secure the future welfare of its Members. To this end Amalgamation with another Church is sometimes adopted, which receives the Members *en bloc*, or as a body. The motive is good, but the act is inexpedient, for

(1) It lacks the authority of the New Testament.

(2) It has no valid precedent in the annals of the Denomination.

(3) It is contrary to the order of our Churches which receive none but accredited Strict and Particular Baptists as individuals. No reason exists why scriptural and well-considered rules should be broken in favour of any, simply because their present Church has to be disbanded.

(4) A person might thus be admitted to the Fellowship of a Church, whose character and conduct were dubious, though sufficient ground for his expulsion from his own assembly had been lacking, and prove a "root of bitterness," which "springing up" would trouble the united Churches, and "thereby many be defiled" (Heb. xii. 15).

(5) Were a Church as such received, its Officers must be received as officers, its Deacons as Deacons, its Pastor (if it has one) as a Pastor. The united Church would have Officers not chosen by the whole body, whose cordial co-operation with the others would be so uncertain as to render the experiment hazardous.

The observance of God's principles always conduces to prosperity. The Members of the Church whose dissolution is inevitable should individually seek fellowship with some other in a Scriptural manner. Their present Church should grant them *severally, honourable dismissions*, if such can in integrity be given.

God's Word, illuminated by His Spirit, will direct further proceedings, and blessing will come from Him who has said, "them that honour Me, I will honour." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

Article XXV.—Reception of Christians from other Churches. Page 12.

NOTE 1.—This deals with our conduct towards religious communities whose standing we, without questioning the personal godliness of their Members, cannot formally recognise as **sister Churches** (pages 135 and 204), and states how a Christian who has hitherto worshipped with such a community should be received into our Fellowship.

A letter prepared at the request of the Church he desires to join is first forwarded to the Minister or Secretary of the Chapel

he has attended, courteously and in a brotherly spirit asking for a confirmation of his statements and a testimonial to his moral and Christian character.

NOTE 2. This answered, the brother is required to make a Confession of his Experience, with special reference to the commencement of his religion and his views on matters of Doctrine and Practice. This the injunction to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" necessitates, (Eph. iv. 3.) We desire none to join whom we cannot wholly trust; and we cannot, in so important a matter, rely on the judgment of a Christian assembly whose Faith and Order are, as we think, unscriptural. Those who seek our Fellowship must be one with us, or they might prove intruders and interlopers. We must, therefore, be assured that their "hearts" are "sound in God's statutes" (Psa. cxix. 80), before receiving them.

NOTE 3. If, however, "they have been immersed as spiritual believers, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' we accept their Baptism as valid"—it having been performed on a proper person in a scriptural manner, and with all due formalities.

The religious sprinkling of infants we disallow. The rite as performed by Christadelphians, Campbellite Baptists and some of the Plymouth Brethren (pages 167 and 206) we cannot recognise as meeting the requirements of the case. True Baptism we, however, own, whatever were the views of those with whom the baptised person was then associated, if sound on essential and saving Truth.

Thus we are Baptists not Anabaptists (page 132), as this Article attests.

Article XXVI.—Lapsed Membership. Page 13.

NOTE 1. Membership with a Gospel Church can be terminated in one only of three ways—by Dismission, by Exclusion, or by Death.

Following the precedent of all other important Societies, our Churches act on the principle that the Individual cannot withdraw from the Body, but the Body must, if needful, withdraw from the Individual. Office may be resigned; Membership cannot. The dignity of a Church demands this.

Withdrawal for Absence.

(1) Members who by local removal pass wholly out of cognisance, and cannot be traced, are to be removed from the Roll of

the Church AUTOMATICALLY, as a matter of business only, without discussion or comment. John Hazelton humorously called this "weeding the garden."

(2) Others keep aloof from God's people for reasons so trivial as to claim no notice but condemnation for the sinful folly they thus manifest. Personal pique, fancied slights, imagined references to themselves in sermons and prayers, are made the occasion of continuous and cruel insults to their fellow-Members. Such cases are hard to deal with, but prompt withdrawal—after due remonstrance—is a Church's best course. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23.) Conduct so unlovely cannot be of faith. It is therefore sin; and as such must be visited by exclusion from Fellowship.

Backsliders.

(3) Others absent themselves from the means of grace for far sadder reasons, to which Holy Writ makes solemn reference.

Some repudiate their religious associates because the world has again drawn them into the vortex of its influence, and what pleasure they had in the solemnities of Zion, has ceased.

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," (2 Tim. iv. 10.) "Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (John vi. 66.) "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," (1 Jno. ii. 15.) "All that are in Asia be turned away from me," (2 Tim. i. 15.) "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is." (Heb. x. 25.)

Matt. xiii. 4—7, and 19—22, should also be studied.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.) "They were not all of us," a parallel expression to Horace's "Non omnis moriar,"*

*Odes iii. 30. Horace is anticipating the deathless fame of his writings. His body would be consigned to the grave; but his thoughts "a manifold part of" him, would escape the oblivion which ordinarily follows one's obsequies. "Non omnis moriar: multaque pars mei vitabit Lilitinam," (the goddess of funerals.)

"Not all that constitutes myself will die;
When years in long succession shall have passed,
A great, a nobler part of me will last,
And Lilitina and her rites defy."—W. J. S.

I shall not all die—the “all” in each instance representing character and capacity in their entirety. These never were in full and cordial fellowship with Christ and His Church. A manifold part of them was always in touch with the world. The law of attraction depends on affinity. Like draws like; and if the same power which brought a man into the Church does not continue to hold him, he will gravitate back to where he was at first.

If persons cannot first give their own selves—their persons, powers and possessions—to the Lord, and then to His people by His will, they had better let the Church alone. (2 Cor. viii. 5.) Half-hearted profession ends in certain collapse; and “if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,” saith the Lord. (Heb. x. 38.)

“These are they that separate themselves,” etc., (Jude 19). “They separate themselves from the Church, having no real sympathy with the spirit of the Gospel.”—ALFORD.

(4) Some have to be withdrawn from for holding unscriptural doctrines. This fruitful cause of religious aberration is also mentioned in God’s word.

“Having condemnation because they have rejected their first Faith”—repudiating the Creed in accordance with which they once professed to be saved, (1 Tim. v. 12.)

“Holding [the doctrine of] Faith and a pure conscience, which some, having thrust from them, made shipwreck concerning the Faith (1 Tim. i. 19.) Giving up what in their hearts they knew to be the truth, they stultified their consciences, and went wholly wrong.

“ALEXANDER, THE COPPERSMITH,” is an example who appears as a zealous professor (Acts xix. 33); a renegade from the Faith (1 Tim. i. 20); and then as Paul’s unscrupulous and bitter enemy, for he “DID ME MUCH EVIL” (2 Tim. iv. 14.)*

Persons holding heretical opinions should, after admonition, be unhesitatingly withdrawn from and avoided, (Titus iii. 10, 11.)

In dealing with cases of Heresy, no discussion as to the scripturalness or otherwise of the disputed views should be permitted. When persons have “rejected their first faith,” (1 Tim.

*Literally, “showed many evil things against me.” This was a recognised phrase in Roman law, and meant bringing charges against a person before a judge. It might, therefore, be rendered, “preferred or advanced many evil things or accusations against me.”—CRITICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL COMMENTARY, Rev. A. R. Fausset, A.M., *in loco*.

v. 12,) the question is not whether Plymouth Brethrenism, or Christadelphianism, or Conditional Immortality, or Keswickism, or Perfectionism, are taught in the Bible; but whether these are in accord with the accepted “Articles of Faith” of this particular Church. If not, the question is settled. The person is no longer what he once professed to be, and the Body must repudiate him. He was received on the ground of his declared belief in the scripturality of the Church’s Faith and Order: he must be withdrawn from on the sole ground of his departure therefrom.

(5) **Immorality.** Considering the condition of Society, it is remarkable that we read so little respecting professors of religion falling into sin in the early days of the Church. Warnings against it are abundant, but no case of dishonesty, drunkenness or unchastity are named, save that of the influential man in 1 Cor. v. (Pages 201—202.)

NOTE 3. A Church is bound as we have seen (page 201) to withdraw from members for either of these three causes, and such have then “no Church standing,” nor has the Church any further jurisdiction over them.

Whether such will continue to “shrink back unto perdition,” (Heb. x. 39,) till death seals their doom, or repent, and return is awfully uncertain and must be left to God.

Religious Derelicts.

NOTE 4. **Derelicts** or abandoned ships, abound in the Atlantic Ocean, and **DERELICT CHRISTIANS**—once useful Members of our Churches, but now denominational lost—are numerous in Society, miseries to themselves, and the source of mischief to others.

NOTE 5. The restoration of such is, however, to be desired and attempted in faith and hope. “In meekness instructing (or correcting) those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth; and (that) they may recover* themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who were taken captive by him at his will,” (2 Tim. ii. 25.)

NOTE 6. Such efforts cannot, however, be made by Churches as such. These persons are now outside their pale and province.

*Recover—the word is *ana-nepho*—“to recover soberness” (S. G. GREEN, D.D.,) or “to awake sober” (ALFORD), perhaps implying that error and sin produce moral and spiritual intoxication.

"Do not ye judge them that are within (the Church)? Whereas them that are without, God judgeth," (1 Cor. v. 12, 13.)

These efforts are therefore to be acts of personal ministry. "If a man be overtaken in any trespass," spiritual men are meekly to seek his restoration "considering thyself (where note the individuality of the ministry), lest thou also be tempted," (Gal. vi. 1.) "If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know," etc. (James v. 19.) Prayer is also to be made for him, 1 John v. 16—but it is to be the petition of one person on behalf of another." "He shall ask, and God will give him life for," etc.

NOTE 7. Our Article states what should be our attitude and action towards those who have erred and strayed, yet by God's mercy have been restored. They are not to be permitted to slink back into Fellowship; but must, as honest men, avow their sorrow for their conduct, relate their experience, and the means of their recovery, and confess their belief in the truths and practices of the Church they wish to join, "as when they first connected themselves with the Lord's people." They went back into the world, and must now be received as from the world.

If, however, we are assured, in spite of their subsequent aberrations, that they were immersed as true believers, their Baptism—for the reasons given in the Notes to Article XXV.—is to be recognised as valid. Otherwise, their immersion was not Baptism, and they should now be baptised before joining the Church.

Article XXVII.—Obligations of Church Members. Page 13.

NOTE 1. Church Membership is either an earnest reality, or one of the greatest shams under heaven. It was designed not only to promote God's declarative glory, but the common benefit of all concerned, and each should minister to the general good. Failure here is, however, too prevalent. Many devoted converts have had their zeal discouraged, and the fire of their "first love" damped, by the demeanour and conduct of those into whose fellowship they had entered. It is a solemn thing to "cause one of these little ones who believe on" Christ "to stumble," (R.V. Matt. xviii. 6.)

NOTE 2. "The sons of this world are for their own generation (with a view, that is, to the interests and advantages of their chosen associates) wiser than the sons of the light" (R.V. Luke

xvi. 8.) Foresters, Freemasons, and Odd-fellows put Christians to shame by their endeavours to make their Lodges effective for their mutual benefit.

NOTE 3. Churches, being founded on the great law of association, embody the social principle in its highest, because its Spiritual form. Hence ideal Church Members are said to be "looking (or having regard) not to his own things (exclusively), but each to the things of others also," (Phil. ii. 4; see R.V., and page 158.) They are "not to set their mind on high things, but to condescend to (or, *perhaps*, better to "be carried away with," through the generous impulse of love) men of low estate" (Rom. xii. 16.) They are to "be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love (not natural fondness or partiality), in honour preferring one another," or, as happily paraphrased by J. N. Darby, "as to honour, each taking the lead in paying it to another," (Rom. xii. 10.) "Through love, they are to serve one another," (Gal. v. 3.)

If our Church association does not conduce to these practical results, it were better to give it up as a wild and impracticable fancy.

NOTE 4. An obligation is a consideration which binds or obliges one to perform or abstain from something. Its derivation is suggestive (*ob* before, and *ligare* to bind), showing that it implies a previous act, from which it springs.

Duty, or "that which is due," arises out of obligation, and indicates what is due to others, in consequence of our relation to them.

Joining a Church is a voluntary act out of which proceeds the obligation to respect and conform to its principles. The practices which these involve constitute the duties of Church Members.

Many of these are not originated by Church fellowship, but are incumbent on Believers, as such. They, however, receive additional importance from the fact that, by joining a Church, a Christian binds himself to their performance by further considerations (page 134, note 6 and 7.)

Article xxvii. is devoted to the obligations of Church Members. Such are bound:—

(1) To lead holy and consistent lives. On proof texts it were needless to comment. Without sanctification *no man* shall see the Lord, (R.V. Heb. xii. 14), and "holiness becometh His house" (Psa. xciii. 5). The well-being of every Church demands that all that belong to it should "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called" (Eph. iv. 1.)

Our principles, the World cannot gainsay ; but it may despise our practices. Personal ignorance and oddity may be ridiculed ; but inconsistency meets with universal contempt—a contempt which is extended to the whole Body.

(2) Members of a Church are bound, when practicable, to attend all its meetings. Many imagine that they remain in the Fellowship of a Church in virtue of their occasionally taking the Lord's Supper, though they rarely attend prayer-meetings, are never present at Church meetings, and show no interest in Church work.—From Dr. DALE. (See Note, page 213.)

Convenience, rather than duty, dictates their attendance at the means of grace. They come, or absent themselves, without regard to principle. At a time of peril and persecution the Hebrew saints were enjoined not to “ forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the custom of some (then *was*, and still) *is*,” (Heb. x. 25, R.V.)

The affairs of Churches of the Congregational Order are regulated by the voices and votes of all their Members (page 134) ; yet many of these never avail themselves of the only opportunity of exercising this privilege, and Church Meetings become the least important and interesting of all the gatherings in our Chapels.

(3) Members of Churches should be courteous, conciliatory, and forgiving towards the rest. The genius of Evangelical Dissent is its cultivation and exhibition of mutual kindness. Christian courtesy (1 Pet. iii. 8) costs little, but effects much. Proud reserve and uncouthness ill become the followers of Him who was “ meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. xi. 29.)

Conciliation is an art difficult of attainment. Allaying personal and often groundless irritation : explaining and putting in its true light what has given offence : and humbling *ourselves* when our words and conduct have given umbrage, are, however, acts of essential service in God's cause, and incumbent upon all in Church Fellowship.

All Church Members should exhibit readiness to forgive real or fancied wrongs, “ forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any ; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” (Col. iii. 13.) Many Church troubles arise from the irritable and implacable spirit of one person. “ A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city,” (Prov. xviii. 19.) The evil should be arrested at an early stage. Anger often grows with time, therefore “ let not the sun go down on your wrath.” (Eph. iv. 26.) We should be as slow to take offence as unwilling to give it, and even if valid

reasons exist for thinking ourselves slighted or wronged, should be the first to extend the outstretched hand of forgiving love.

(4) Members of a Church are under obligation to contribute to its Funds. Money, the circulating medium, is required for many other purposes connected with God's cause on earth, but (which is often overlooked) the expenses incidental to our own Church should always be first considered. Money so bestowed is a return to God of a portion of His bounty to us. “ Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee,” (Gen. xxviii. 22). The widow's two mites were “ cast in unto the offerings of God ” for the maintenance of the Temple, (Luke xxi. 4.)

It is the duty of all Church Members to do their utmost to enable their Deacons to act promptly and generously in pecuniary matters. Chapels must be maintained, Pastors remunerated, (page 144, note 6,) and Chapel-keepers liberally paid for their important services.

Specially should Members be “ forward ” to assist their poorer brethren. The collection after the Lord's Supper is ordinarily and with propriety devoted to this purpose ; but “ blessed is he that considereth the poor, (Psa. xli. 1; Gal. ii. 10) making their cares his own by thoughtful personal investigation. “ Alms ” and “ doles ” are hateful things. He that assists the *cause* with money should do so “ with singleness (of motive) ” (or liberality, ALFORD ; Rom. xii. 8), while every gift to a poorer brother “ should be perfumed with the aroma of the Master's love.” (1 Cor. xiii. 3.)

Giving should be on principle, not from transient impulse ; its rule should be “ according as the Lord has prospered us,” and the befitting sum should be laid aside each Lord's-day. (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) Ostentation is forbidden, (Matt. vi. 3, 4.) As far as possible our contributions should be known only to the Lord.

(5) Our Members are bound to aid other Churches and the needy members of God's family in all places.

We are not PRESBYTERIANS, but INDEPENDENTS, (pages 137 and 134,) and own no ecclesiastical authority save His “ who is our Master, even Christ,” (Matt. xxiii. 10.)

The evils of Presbyterianism are manifold, as John Milton (1608—1674) was quick to perceive ;* and though this section of

*See his well-known poem “ On the New Forces of Conscience Under the Long Parliament,” which ends “ New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large.” Also his prose writings.

the one Church has no longer political ascendancy, we believe these evils to be radical and essential to the system. It were a sorry thing if the prevailing admiration for Unions and Associations should lead the Free Churches of England into a modified form of Presbyterian policy.

Independency is, however, not isolation. Our sister Churches claim our co-operation and help. All that can, should contribute to the relief of other less wealthy communities, especially in times of emergency. This practice was common in the Apostolic age, and Article xxvii. appositely insists upon it as an obligation upon all Church Members. (Acts xi. 29; Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 2 Cor. viii. 1-24.)

It is of such contributions that Paul writes, "Every man, according as he hath purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. ix. 7.)

Churches now give effect to this principle by supporting Benevolent Societies which are worked on religious lines. "The Aged Pilgrim's Friend Society" grants pensions to Christians of advanced years: "The Society for the Relief of Necessitous Protestant Ministers, their Widows, and Orphans," makes small but prompt grants of money to *truthful* preachers of all denominations, whether settled Pastors or otherwise, and their widows, if persons of good moral character; "The Society for the Relief of Aged and Infirm Protestant Dissenting Ministers" votes pensions to its beneficiaries; and "The Society for the Relief of Necessitous Widows and Children of Protestant Dissenting Ministers," generally denominated "The Widows' Fund," also gives annual sums. These are, within certain limits, undenominational. "The Particular Baptist Fund" aids Baptist ministers only, by adding to their salaries, if small, granting annual or occasional sums to aged and infirm Pastors, and presenting young Pastors with suitable books on their settlement.

All claim the support of Strict and Particular Baptist Churches, as such, as well as of individual Christians.

Article XXVIII.—Churches should Conserve and Circulate the Truth. Page 14.

NOTE 1.—Strict and Particular Baptists are often ridiculed for speaking much of "THE TRUTH," as if it were a cant phrase originated by them. It is, however, largely used in the Bible to express the doctrines of the Gospel, (Gal. iii. 1)—the sum of the teachings of Holy Writ as embodied and exemplified in the

person, character, and work of Him who is "the Truth," (Jno. xiv. 6; Eph. iv. 21.)

God's people "seek the Truth," (Jer. v. 1,) and "buy the Truth," (Prov. xxiii. 23.) The Holy Spirit guides them "into all *the* Truth," (R.V. Jno. xvi. 13.) Hence they "know the Truth," (Jno. viii. 32, and 1 Jno. ii. 21.) They love it, in contrast to them that "perish, because (having heard the Gospel) they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved," (2 Thess. ii. 10.)

Hence, "they can do nothing against the Truth, but [are anxious to do all in their power] for the Truth," (2 Cor. xiii. 8.) The grace of love inspires them to "rejoice with the Truth," (R.V. 1 Cor. xiii. 6.) "For the Truth's sake" (2 Jno. 2) was the watchword of martyrs, confessors, reformers, and the ejected Two Thousand of 1662. For "the Truth's sake" compels Strict and Particular Baptists to maintain their position of isolation from other sections of the Church.

The Truth to be Conserved by the Churches.

NOTE 2.—"The Truth" is assailed by many, and from many quarters. Godless men "resist" it, (2 Tim. iii. 8.) Infidels hate it. The "Higher Critics" so tamper with the Bible as to induce doubt as to its authenticity. Arminians subtly explain away many explicit texts.

Backsliders "err from [the profession and practice of] the Truth," (Jas. v. 19.) Apostates "sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the Truth," (Heb. x. 26.)

Christian Churches therefore should "conserve the Truth."

A Pillar and a Ground of the Truth. 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15. An Exposition.

"These things write I,.....that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to conduct thyself* in a (not *the*) House of God, which is a (not *the*) Church of the living God." The original expresses by "a house" and "a Church" a local assembly, and not all the Christians on earth collectively considered, elsewhere called "the Church of God," as distinguished from Jews and unconverted Gentiles. (1 Cor. x. 32.)

"A Church of the living God" is "a (not *the*) pillar of and a (not *the*) ground (base or foundation) of the Truth."

The conduct of Timothy in relation to His own Church was therefore to be regulated by three considerations:

*Or "How [Christian] men ought to behave [or conduct] themselves," etc., R.V.—which would strengthen our position—but the emendation is doubtful.

(1) A Church is a house or dwelling-place of the living God, and

(2) A pillar and ground of the Truth. The Bible mentions two kinds of pillars, *supporting* and *testifying*. The former sustained the roofs of edifices, and hence the term is metaphorically applied to persons of influence and eminence, (Jud. xvi. 25; Jer. i. 18; Gal. ii. 9.) The latter were columns raised and maintained in memory of distinguished persons or events. The word "monuments" or "obelisks" might better represent them to English readers. (Gen. xxviii. 18, and xxxv. 20; Josh. xxiv. 26; 2 Sam. xvii. 18;) and see Article "Pillar" in *Eadie's BIBLICAL CYCLOPEDIA*.*

The reference here is to a Pillar of Witness. Every "Church of the living God" was originated and is perpetuated to conserve and display Evangelical truth, (Isa. xlvi. 10, 12, and xliv. 8.)

A Gospel Church is also a ground (or basis) of the Truth. This refers to the underground foundation on which a pillar or obelisk rests. On such bases or stays inscriptions were also engraved, (2 Tim. ii. 19, where for "seal" *sfragida*, read "inscription.") This corresponded with what was displayed on the column, and was designed to preserve the record should the obelisk itself be mutilated.

William Palmer's Corroboration.

"A Gospel Church is therefore called a 'pillar and ground of the Truth'—not that it gives authority to the Truth, or forms the foundation on which it rests; but the Churches are appointed to maintain and exhibit it. To them the Oracles of God have been committed, and by their means the existence of the Scriptures has been preserved, their purity protected, and their circulation promoted. Among Christians this precious gift of Heaven is lodged, like the Ark in the Temple, as its consecrated depository; and to guard and defend it, with all that

*The obelisks in London, the monuments to Gray at Stoke Pogis, and Beckford at Bath, and Cleopatra's Needle, are instances of the columns of which Paul thought when he penned the word "pillar" (*stulos*) above.

Gen. xix. 26. Lot's wife "became a pillar of salt," "*stèle halos*," Septuagint. Not only was she punished for her sin by death, but her body was encrusted with bitumen, and became a perpetual and conspicuous monument of God's displeasure with her sin.

jealous watchfulness exercised by the Jews over the Ark of God, is the high imperative duty of every Church. If the oracles of Christ, comprehending the whole of His Laws and Ordinances, are to be exhibited by each Church like INSCRIPTIONS ON A MONUMENTAL PILLAR, the Ordinances as well as the Doctrines, the precepts as well as the promises, must be held up to observation."—FREE COMMUNION EXAMINED, page 52.

The Mission of the Churches.

This, though differing from the popular interpretation, strictly accords with the tenor of the New Testament. The expositions of some Protestants dangerously resemble the Romish doctrine that "the complete rule of Faith and Practice consists of Scripture and Tradition (or the oral teaching of Christ and His apostles) handed down through the Church, which is the divinely constituted depository of saving truth and the Judge of the meaning of Scripture and the validity of tradition."

So far from Churches being supporting pillars or sustaining bases to the Truth, the opposite is the fact. They depend on the being and the nature of God; His saving actions towards His chosen, blood-bought and heaven-born people, and the revelations He has made of these; not on the characters and conduct of those that receive it. The doctrines of grace would have been true though Augustine and Calvin had not lived; and Popery a lie had Luther never resisted it. Churches have to testify to unalterable facts and irrevocable laws, and to denounce God-dishonouring errors.

Churches should Conserve the Truth.

An obelisk by the way-side preserves the inscription which long since was engraved in the stone, and which abides as a record of what it was designed to perpetuate. So a Church contains and retains the truth of God, not in letter only, as in the Bible, but in the living experience of those who feel its power and preciousness.

This it does by admitting none but sound preachers to the pulpit, (Rev. ii. 6, 15;) by listening with reverence to their messages (2 Cor. vii. 13, 15;) by duly keeping the Ordinances (1 Cor. xi. 2;) by displaying mutual love and benevolence, (Jno. xiii. 35); by walking "in wisdom towards them that are without," (Col. iv. 5;) and by their visible union in the things and ways of God, (Jno. xvii. 23.)

A Church is also a base (or ground) of the Truth. In times of persecution Christians are not able to give public testimony

to their convictions. Then, like the underlying foundation, they preserve the truth, which is kept in memory by their worship and testimony, until they can again witness before men.

It may also refer to that inner and secret experience of all true Church Members, which is the essential basis of their open testimony. What they have been taught in their souls is the foundation of their profession. "BEWARE," said J. N. Darby, the Plymouth Brother, "OF UNFELT TRUTH." "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord," (Prov. xvi. 1.) John Hazelton was wont, once a year, and in a most solemn and impressive manner, to read to the Members "The Articles of Faith" which the Church had adopted—thus bringing their distinctive principles to the recollection of all present.

Churches should Display the Truth.

The inscription on a pillar or obelisk was designed to be seen by all. So the great mission of every Church is to extend the Truth, for the purposes stated in this Article.

In the true spirit of Protestantism, it should testify to the Truth; in the true spirit of Evangelicism, it should carry the Truth abroad and vocalise it with clearness and urgency, "whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear," (Ezek. ii. 5.)

Hence "we are not only to *guard* the Gospel, but to *give* it: not only to *define*, but to *diffuse* it: not only to *protect* it, but to *propagate* it. We must *sow* as well as *sift*, and *distribute* as well as *divide*."....."We are to be *rivers* as well as *reservoirs*, and should *fertilise* as well as *fence*."—WILLIAM PALMER.

Churches should Extend the Circulation of the Bible.

NOTE 3.—This needs no proof; but the obligation should be more fully realised. It is a boon in every household, and certain to prove a pioneer of blessing. Popular tracts are often unreliable; religious magazines, not unfrequently, worse. The Bible is God's own instrument for God's own work, and Gospel Churches should devote money and energy towards placing it in the hands of all.

"The [British and Foreign] Bible Society"—with all my heart (and with a hundred hearts if I had them)—I bid it 'God-speed.' I think it one of the best existing Societies—its

*A Protestant is *really* one who publicly witnesses—for, or against. From *pro* "before," and *testis*, "a witness."

object being to send this unspeakably precious Book, the word of the Lord Jesus Christ, into all the world."—JOHN HAZELTON.

Churches holding the Truth should give Religious Instruction to Children.

NOTE 4.—An important branch of Church duty is the maintenance of Sunday Schools.

These are not, indeed, essential to the existence or validity of Churches,—or assemblies that had none, would not be Churches. The Church is, however, essential to the School,* which should be the outgrowth of the spiritual life, intelligence and zeal of its Members, whose sanction should be obtained for all its proceedings. Schism between Churches and their Schools has led to untold mischief.

Sunday Schools are Authorised by the Bible.

NOTE 5.—God's Ancient People were enjoined to instruct their children in the meaning of the Pascal service, (Ex. xii. 26, 27,) and to warn them not to serve other gods, (Deut. xi. 19.)

David, when in the Cave Adullam, summoned the children of his heterogeneous company to "hearken unto him," that he

*Guard against such expressions as "the School is the nursery of the Church." A nursery is a room devoted to the children of the family, and is part of the parental home. A Sunday School is designed to instruct the young—irrespectively of their religious condition—in the truths of God's Word.

We cannot, in this connection, quote Gal. vi. 6: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things," or, *perhaps literally*, "Let the Catechumen communicate to the Catechist in all good things." A Catechumen was a person recently converted, but ignorant of some of the leading doctrines of the Gospel; a Catechist was a Christian teacher specially appointed to instruct him, in order that he might grasp what was expressed and involved in the rite of Baptism, and in Church Fellowship. Such a ministry is still practised in heathen lands, and is most important.

Sunday School teachers are Evangelists to the young—their object being to carry out the first of the three branches of the Master's commission, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; and see pages 151 and 197,) and with God's blessing to "make disciples" of those under their care.