

tion with her. A question sometimes arises in Kirk-sessions, 'Who are properly amenable to discipline?' The obvious answer is, 'Members only,' but it cannot be correct to say, 'Communicants only.' Sessions have always exercised control or discipline over individuals in the flock, young or old, who for one reason or other, had not yet partaken of the Lord's Supper. In what character? Surely as members, for the Church knows nothing of adherents. The latter term has come into common use; but according to Scripture the Church has no adherents; she has members within, and aliens or enemies without.

Great is the embarrassment of Presbyterian ministers and kirk-sessions in Canada in regard to the administration of baptism. We believe that there are congregations in which all difficulty is obviated by neglecting all discipline, requiring no standard of qualification, and baptizing the children of all applicants. Such unfaithfulness we consider a disgrace to any branch of the Presbyterian Church that permits it: we have not a word to say in its defence. On the other hand, we honour the high motives of those Sessions which rule, that the children of communicants only shall be baptized. At the same time, we doubt the wisdom and justice of making this rule rigid and absolute. Among Scottish and Irish Presbyterians it is a new and rather high-handed measure. Appeal is commonly made to the doctrine of the Shorter Catechism, that 'the children of such as are members of the Visible Church are to be baptized.' But it remains to be shown that the venerable compilers of the Catechism intended by 'members' those only who are actual communicants at the Lord's Supper. It is doubtful if such an idea was ever entertained and acted on in the Presbyterian churches of Europe. We can easily imagine the existence of men of certain Christian attainments and of exemplary character, who hesitate to come to the Lord's table, and yet ought not to be treated as aliens from the Church, or sternly refused the privilege of baptism for their children. By all means let such persons be instructed in the true nature of sacramental communion, and pressed to observe the Saviour's command to keep the feast in remembrance of Him; but a rigid rule, such as some apply, does not meet their case; it may unduly coerce the consciences of some, and occasion in others presumption and pretence. However proper the theory that none but observers of the one sacrament should be allowed to obtain the other, it ought not to be carried into practice with such inconsiderate rigour as to press parents into a participation of the Holy Supper as a condition of and step towards the baptism of their children. What minister of any experience has not felt uneasy in watching the practical operation of this—in young couples coming forward to 'join the Church,' about the time of the birth of their first child, scarce concealing that the chief motive is a desire to found thereon a claim to baptism? The elevation of the standard of qualification in the matter of baptism is dearly bought by the degradation of the Lord's Supper.

We may here add the remark, that the diversities among Christian Churches in regard to the administration of infant baptism are very detrimental to the interests of religion and perplexing to the minds of the people. Some Churches acquire a certain popularity by baptizing the children of all comers; others, at