

ed with Acts ii. 33, 'Repent and be baptized,' 'for the promise is unto you and to your *children*.' See, also, Matt. xix. 14. 'Suffer *little children*, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' 1 Cor. vii. 14. 'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your *children* unclean; but now are they *holy*.' Acts xvi. 15. 'She was baptized and her *household*.' 1 Cor. i. 16. 'I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas.' Acts xvi. 33. 'Was baptized, he and *all his*, straightway.'

VI. When is a person to be regarded as making a *credible* profession?

That man is to be viewed as making a credible profession of religion, who manifests an acquaintance with the leading doctrines of the Gospel, who declares himself a believer in these doctrines, who professes that his heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, and who maintains a conduct and conversation becoming the Gospel. Rom. x. 10. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' Acts xvi. 33. 'And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized.' Luke iii. 8. 'Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance.'

VII. But did not the Apostles receive persons unto the Church by baptism, without waiting for any evidence of the *credibility* of their profession?

All who then joined the Church, did so at the risk of liberty, property, and life; and this of itself was a most satisfactory evidence of their sincerity in making such profession.

VIII. Do the members of the Church, after their admission, continue subject to the authority of the Rulers?

Yes. Such authority on the one part, and obedience on the other, are most plainly sanctioned by the law of Christ. 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. 'Do not ye judge them that are within?' 'But them that are without, God judgeth.' Heb. xiii. 17. 'Obey them that have the rule over you.'

IX. For what offences are members liable to trial, and Church censure?

It would be wrong to subject a member to Church censure, or even trial, for every misdemeanour; but they are to be so subjected, for—

1. *Errors in doctrine.* Rom. xvi. 17. 'Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the *doctrine* which ye have learned, and avoid them.' Tit. iii. 10. 'A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.'

2. *Immorality in practice.* 2 Chron. xxiii. 19. 'He set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in.' Eph. v. 11. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' See, also, Rev. ii. 20.

3. *Despising the authority, or order, or ordinances, of the Church.* 1 Cor. xi. 2. 'Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.' 2 Thes. iii. 6. 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.'

4. *Neglecting the public, domestic, or secret duties of religion.* Heb. x. 25. 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.' Jer. x. 25. 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the *families that call not on thy name*.' Matt. vi. 6. 'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.'

X. Do all offences subject the person to the same censure?

No. For as the degrees of guilt are different, so should be the punishment. (See Matt. v. xxiii.) Hence some are to be *rebuked*. Tit. i. 13. 'Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.' Others *suspended* from the privileges of the Church. 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15. 'If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.' Others *'cut off* from connection with the Church.' 1 Cor. v. 13. 'Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.' Gal. v. 12. 'I would they were even *cut off* which trouble you.'

XI. Does not Scripture attach a solemn importance to the censures of the Church?

Yes. For the sentence, when pronounced according to Christ's law, is ratified in heaven; and if the individual be wholly 'cut off' from the Church, he is delivered up to Satan, the god of this world, as a subject of his visible kingdom.' Matt. xviii. 18. 'Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.' 1 Cor. v. 5. 'To deliver such an one unto Satan.' 1 Tim. i. 20. 'Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.'

XII. What is the duty of those who have been judged worthy of censure?

To humble themselves under it,—to submit to it,—to repent, and do their first works. 1 Pet. v. 6. 'Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.' Heb. xiii. 17. 'Submit yourselves.' Rev. ii. 5. 'Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.'

XIII. Is it lawful ever to restore to the communion of the Church one who has been suspended, or cut off?

Yes, it is. Whenever sufficient evidence has been afforded of repentance and reformation, he may be restored. Gal. vi. 1. 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness.' John xx. 23. 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.'

XIV. Are any censures to be made public?

Yes, such as are occasioned by offences which, from their magnitude and publicity, are calculated to bring scandal on the Church. 2 Cor. ii. 6. 'Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.' 1 Tim. v. 20. 'Them that sin rebuke *before all*, that others also may fear.'

XV. Does any sentence of the Church exclude an individual from hearing the Gospel preached?

No. It is to be preached to the guiltiest, (see 1 Cor. xiv. 25.); and it is especially the duty of such to attend on the ministrations of the Word.

XVI. Is injury done to the people of God, by the neglect of discipline in the Church?

Yes. When the Church is not kept pure, godly persons will be deterred from joining it. 1 Cor. v. 11. 'But now I have written unto you not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no one is to eat.' 1 Cor. x. 20. 'I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.' And those in the Church who are, or may become, pious, will be obliged to separate from it. Rev. xviii. 4. 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.'

XVII. Is injury done to the sinner by such neglect?