

Many members of a church whenever any thing occurs in the conduct of their brethren to offend them, think themselves at liberty to quit the communion of the church till their difficulties real or imagined, be removed; and to excuse this most unscriptural conduct, as contrary to express precept, as it is to the general spirit of religion, they urge that passage in Matt. 5. 23 “‘Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembereth, that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.’”—In this passage, it is evident that our Lord could not be speaking of the commemorative supper, for it had not then been instituted—But admitting that the case may by analogy, apply to this ordinance, the meaning which is attached to it by the persons of whom we are at present speaking, is directly the reverse of what it contains; the import of the leading clause being quite overlooked—for it is not said, and there rememberest, that *thou* hast ought against thy brother; but that “thy brother hath ought against thee”—It points out the propriety, not of the offended party abstaining from the communion of the church; but of one who has himself done an unkindness, or an injury to his brother losing no time in giving him satisfaction—otherwise, not to consider the ordinance as satisfying his conscience while this plain duty is neglected, and if he does not, the guilt lies with himself. Acting on these benevolent and scriptural principles would prevent much of that irregularity and disregard to all order so dishonouring to religion, and injurious to the brethren. In this way, the passage very much corresponds with the apostolic admonition to the Corinthians, 1. Cor. v. 8. “‘Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’”