

hide a multitude of sins. If, however, his efforts do not succeed, he must report the offender, that the church may labor with him, and, if he continue obstinate, expel him. Eph. 5. 11. *A. I have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.*

But when it is known, and can be clearly proved, that a member has been guilty of immoral conduct, such as *unchastity, railing, drunkenness, extortion*, or any offence of a heinous nature, the church to which he belongs should forthwith exclude him. Should any suppose that he ought first to be visited and admonished, we reply, that we can find no Scripture to sanction such a course. What says Paul of the incestuous person, 1 Cor. ch. 5, with whose crime he classes the others above-mentioned, verse 11? Does he give directions to reprove him, and wait for his amendment? No. He says, (verse 13.) *Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* The offender should be admonished after his exclusion; and, if he manifest repentance, he should be restored. Paul, speaking of the same person, after he had become penitent, says, *Wherefore I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love toward him.* 2 Cor. 2, 8, see also, 2 Thess. 3, 14, 15.

Mere flying reports against brethren are not to be regarded. Moreover, an accused person should be held innocent until he is proved to be guilty; and must not be kept back from the Lord's supper upon suspicion only. That would be prejudging, and condemning without proof or trial.

4th. *Error in Sentiment.*—Some diversity of opinion in matters of minor importance may be tolerated in a church, as is manifest from Rom. ch. 14. Great tenderness and forbearance should be exercised also toward the weak. Rom. 15, 1. *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* But when a member introduces sentiments subversive of the simplicity of the gospel, or denies plain scriptural doctrine, he should be admonished once and again; and, if he persist in his error, he must then be rejected. Titus 3. 10. *A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject.* Rom. 16. 17. *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

From the statements now made, and the texts of Scripture adduced in confirmation of them, it appears, that in all cases, save that of public immorality admonition must be used previous to exclusion. Discipline should, however, in every instance, be executed with punctuality and dispatch. If it be delayed, the fellowship, harmony, and comfort of the church will unavoidably be interrupted. Is it not extremely painful to hear church members, when expressing their freedom toward their brethren, making reserves and qualifications? Must it not exceedingly damp the joys and grieve the hearts of communicants at the Lord's supper, to see brethren standing back from that ordinance, especially if the cause be unknown? *Brethren, these things ought not to be so.* No brother should ever be guilty of either of these pernicious practices. If his mind be hurt on account of any church member, he should exercise admonition, or if necessary, give notice to the church, and so have all hindrances to fellowship immediately removed.

It does indeed belong to the Pastor peculiarly to take care of the church of God (1 Tim. 3. 5.) and to reprove, rebuke, exhort, (2 Tim. 4. 2.) but every individual must fill his place, and discharge the duties devolving upon him, as the Scriptures direct. In excluding a member the church is to act as a body. See 1 Cor. 5, 13. 2. Thes. 3, 6. Great care should