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CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

In the Presbyterian congregations of this country, the phrase 'admission to the Church,' is very often used to express the reception of adults for the first time to the communion of the Lord's Supper. Even ministers and elders conform to this usage, and seem to recognize communicants only, as members of the Christian Church. Sufficient authority for this we have never seen; and we are disposed to regard it as improper and in some respects injurious.

It must be confessed that the Presbyterian Churches of the Mother Country allow not only a too indiscriminate Church membership, but a too easy admission to communion. All baptized persons, unless they lose themselves in sheer recklessness, open sin, or gross heresy, grow up into the enjoyment of all Church privileges. Though desired, it is not positively required that they should give evidence of a renewed mind and spiritual character. The result is, that under the most evangelical ministrations and the most faithful 'fencing of the tables,' formalists 'press in' to the holy communion. The 'communion season,' recurring as it does only at long intervals of time, is not felt by such persons to be irksome; it rather soothes their consciences, and satisfies their sense of religious propriety.

In the Highlands of Scotland, the views and habits of ministers and people in regard to this subject differ greatly from those which prevail in the Scottish Lowlands, and in the province of Ulster. All baptized persons, indeed, are reckoned of the Church, objects of pastoral care, and amenable to sessional discipline; but only a proportion, often a small proportion, of the adult members are communicants. A high standard of personal piety is required of those who approach the table of the Lord; and young candidates for communion are examined not only in regard to their knowledge, but also in regard to their experience of the truth. This, however, has unfortunately been pushed to such an extreme, that young persons in general are afraid to present themselves as candidates for a Christian privilege, which is currently supposed to belong to those only who have a 'deep experience' and an assurance of hope in Christ.