

But beloved brethren, we need scarcely remind you, that the pastoral office is conversant about more than preaching the word. There is a visible organization of Christ's kingdom on earth, called the Church, which we, your pastors and elders, are called to maintain. To us, conjunctly, is entrusted the administration of the laws which respect admission into the Church, the conduct of its members as such, and the administration of the sacraments. And we now call on you to honour and support us, in the maintenance of the discipline of the Church.

Ah, we painfully feel that the discipline of the Church is not by many of us at least so zealously and vigorously maintained, as to give occasion for us to deprecate your displeasure for even apparent severity. The many infirmities that beset us, to say nothing of our liability to error, from a wish to judge charitably of those who are the subjects of discipline, do rather, we fear, expose us to the charge of lenity. Yet, there are too many members of the church, who are impatient of admonition, and reproof, however tenderly applied; and who seem to think, that their religious profession should subject them to no spiritual controul. But we would have such to consider, that if it is the occasional duty of all the followers of Christ to counsel and reprove each other, it is the proper duty of the rulers of the Church to do so, to those whose conduct openly contradicts the profession they have made of being a peculiar people 'redeemed from all iniquity.'—And that if it is with the rulers of the church, to declare the terms of admission into it, and to judge of the qualification of candidates for its privileges, so, they are also authorized, even to cast out of its communion, those who spurn at admonition, and reproof, or

continue in their evil courses after having been affectionately warned to forsake them.

This letter may come into the hands or be read in the hearing of some, who have been admitted into the Church by baptism in infancy, trained up to an attendance on its ordinances, and it may be even formally numbered with his people at the sacramental table; and who yet, for all this, have drawn back from us and well nigh abdicated all connexion with Christ and with his cause. Oh, that a word of expostulation and reproof might be effectual to the reclaiming of such to the way of peace and safety! Can such say that their own experience of the ways of religion and of irreligion justifies them for casting off the fear of God, and neglecting the Gospel and its ordinances?—that they have arrived at a well grounded assurance, that the word of God with its testimonies to the character of God, its promises of a present and everlasting salvation, and its threats of a second death to all who disobey it, is a cunningly devised fable? Will they pretend, that the world for which they are now living gives and promises them a satisfying and durable peace? Ah, we know that all backsliders are self-condemned, and as we would have them escape the condemnation of Him who is greater than conscience and knoweth all things, we beseech them, to return to that God whom they have forsaken. Let them bewail and confess their folly before him, embrace the overtures of reconciliation which he still holds out, and cast in their lot for time and eternity with his people.

There are not a few, whom we are formally addressing in this letter, who, alas, cannot ordinarily attend on the ordinances of the Church, from the want of the stated administration of these