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“ PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”

SCRIPTURAL ORDER OF CHURCHES, IN CONNECTION WITH THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

THE means pursued at present for the spread of the Gospel, do not appear to be quite scriptural, or well adapted for their intended purpose. Our exertions are made to depend too exclusively on the erection of places of worship; and on the education of Preachers. Do we read of the Apostles or the Churches, being restrained in their exertions for want of such means? or that when they visited a place and so preached that some believed, there was then a great struggle made in the first instance, to build a large house, and then to bring pastors from a distance? We read of no difficulties in the Bible on these heads. By adopting an opposite course, from the Apostles—we form a kind of union between the world and the church—and having incurred a debt to build a house, and having undertaken prematurely to maintain a preacher, the aid of the world is required to support our establishment; thus a temptation is held out to the preacher, and to the church, to be unfaithful in various ways. But to be more particular, the first, and frequent error appears to be, that after disciples are found in any place, they delay to unite together as a church of Christ. They wait perhaps until their numbers are so considerable, as to give respectability to the cause, and then, until they can obtain a preacher from a distance and can provide for his support, often also until they can obtain means to build a meeting house. During the interval of delay to their union, arising from these, or the like difficulties, they form themselves, into some kind of association of human devising which is too often the source of many subsequent difficulties. These are of different kinds, arising sometimes for instance from a more loose plan of admitting members than afterwards, sometimes from premature; and undigested discussions of their future duty, in an abstract, rather