

them, pray for them, and seek to reclaim them. In all cases of unchristian conduct; as when a baptized young person neglects public worship habitually, falls into the habit of swearing, or using indecent language or is guilty of the sin of drunkenness, or fornication, or wilful dishonesty, it is the duty of the Church in which such person has been baptized, immediately to take cognizance of such conduct.

It may be said, "the young will not submit." No man has a right to say the laws of God will prove ineffectual when properly applied. The result could be no worse than at present, where numbers of young men and women seem bound to destruction. Who will undertake to say that if the Church had done its duty by such persons, their character and position would not be very different from what they are to-day?

As parents are the natural guardians of their families, and responsible for their children; if the person is still under the inspection and authority of his parents, it is proper in the first instance to approach him through his parents, who have solemnly vowed to teach and restrain their children; but if they will not do so, then I hold the Church has a right to deal with such parents for a violation of their baptismal vows. Should however the parents fail to do their duty, that is an additional reason why the Church should do its duty. As duty will always vary with circumstances, the age of a person, and the nature of the offence, it is impossible to state beforehand the course to be pursued. As a general principle it is evidently the duty of those in authority, viz: ministers and elders, to confer with the offender in private, and by every christian motive, but especially his covenant relation to God, to bring him to repentance. Should they succeed, a soul may be saved, and their labours will redound to the glory of God.

If by employing all proper means in an affectionate manner, no good impression can be made, and no penitence manifested, but the offender continues to pursue a course of open, flagrant sinning; which amounts to a renunciation of the authority of the Church, and no hope of amendment remains; it is then the clear duty of the Church, in its authoritative capacity, to remove such an one from all connection with the Church, that others may fear. Such is the law as laid down by Paul. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruc-

tion of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, I Cor. v. 4-5.

Some imagine, that as society is now constituted, if those who are baptized fall into sin irreclaimably, and renounce their baptismal covenant, it would be better to allow them silently to withdraw from the Church, than by an act of the Church to exclude them. It is greatly to be lamented that this practice, which is at variance with the law of Christ, prevails so extensively. The Apostle Paul tells us, there are many things which are lawful, but which are not expedient—things, which may be done, but which may not be wise nor proper, in some cases to do. But then we have no right to substitute expediency. Where there is a positive law requiring a thing to be done, God, the great law giver has settled it, and man's opinion cannot alter it. Now the end of discipline is the reformation of the offender, and the purity of the Church. These ends cannot be as well obtained by allowing persons to withdraw from the Church, when, and how, they please; as by public rephension. It is by acting in this way—neglecting to apply the law of Christ's house—that so many of the young in our Churches have come to regard themselves as not being long to the Church, or subject to its authority. They believe they are at liberty to act as they please. The line by which God designs to discriminate, between the Church and the world is blotted out, and baptism becomes an unmeaning ceremony.

Let no one suppose I advocate the necessity of hasty exclusion. No, but what I do advocate is, hasty application of means to reclaim; and slow expulsion. There may be, and doubtless are, many cases, where the Church must wait for years for indications of repentance; using prayer, the preaching of the Gospel, visitation, and all other means to secure it; and even then allow death to remove the individual. But these persons are not such as are guilty of flagrant sins, ruinous to the morals of the young. They are to be looked upon as wanderers from the fold of Christ, of whose return strong hopes should be cherished, and for whom unwearied intercession to the Great Shepherd, should be made.

One, and perhaps the chief cause of difficulty in the way of the Church dealing with its young members, is the neglect of parents to instruct, and restrain them. When we look into the history of the Church under the first dispensation, we find that not only were the parents