

ward things which had been just mentioned, will be evident to any one who will take the trouble of looking at the passages of scripture by which they prove their doctrine. These passages are Acts ii. 44, 45. 1 John iii. 17. 2 Cor viii. ix. Acts xi. 29, 30. 3. That the *direct* and evident object of this section is, not to tell the office bearers of the Church to whom it is that they are to dispense her sealing ordinances, but to show how *individuals* must act so as to discharge the duties, and to be entitled to the privileges, connected with the profession of saints. These things being considered, it will be seen, 4. that *indirectly* this does throw a very clear light on the question of Church-communion; for it indicates that it is where parties are found acting according to this rule, that the office-bearers of the Church have a scriptural warrant for admitting them to this privilege. Some credible appearance of godliness, as the foundation of a charitable opinion that the person is a Christian, is necessary to entitle him to the visible communion of the Church in her sealing ordinances; but this, even should it be an appearance that has been produced by the reality of grace in the heart, is not enough. "Saints, by profession, are," not merely upon sacramental occasions, but in the ordinary duties of ecclesiastical communion, "bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God." Church-communion formed by the mutual agreement of its members to adhere, as in Christ their head and under his authority, to one system of faith; to join in the same acts of worship; and to submit themselves to the same order of discipline and church-government:—Eph. iv. 4-6 "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." A departure from the line of conduct that accords with these principles, lays a foundation for ecclesiastical dealing with the individual, and may render it necessary to exclude him from church-privileges. The doctrine of the bible is: 1 Cor xi. 2. "Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." 2 Thess. ii. 15. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." Rom. xvi. 17. "Now, I beseech you, brethren,

mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." 2 Thess. iii. 6. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." In the case of those who, as ministers, are called upon officially to feed the people with knowledge, there ought to be both soundness in the faith, and an intelligent and cordial adherence to the principles of the Church as to worship, discipline, and church-government. According to the principles of the Westminster Standards, therefore, they are required to make a profession corresponding with the responsibility of the office which they are to fill. The case is different with respect to the members of the flock; but still even they must be willing to receive the teaching of the Church. If need be, they must be rebuked "sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" Tit. i. 13. If they show no respect for the authority of the Church, but forsake its ordinances, condemn its discipline, and follow divisive courses; they must be withdrawn from, and treated as heathen men and as publicans.

The Relief body did not, like the Seceders, publish any Testimony, or authoritative statement of their distinctive principles. From the first, however, they seem to have acted on the principle of "open communion," dispensing even the Lord's Supper to all and sundry of whom they thought that they were warranted to entertain the opinion that they were Christians; and several ministers of their communion published their defence of the practice, particularly as against the Seceders. Smith's "Historical Sketches of the Relief," formerly quoted, and Hutchison's "Compendious view of the Religious System, maintained by the Synod of Relief," published in 1779, may be referred to as instances of this. On the other hand, the Relief were very strenuously opposed and testified against both by the Burgher and by the Antiburgher branches of the Secession.

In their Re-exhibition of the Secession Testimony, the Burgher Synod having (p. 177) stated that "The several articles in the Judicial Testimony assertory of a particular form of church-government under the New Testament, and of the Divine Right of Presbytery, are a