

## CIRCULAR LETTER.

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FROM THE WESTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS TO THE CHURCHES  
COMPRISED IN THAT BODY.

*Dear Brethren,*

The subject of **DISCIPLINE** is that to which we would ask your attention on the present occasion, and, in doing so, claim your kind forbearance with any sentiments, should there be such, which may appear to be uncalled for, or deficient in Christian charity. We profess not to present any thing new or striking, but hope, by thus stirring up the subject and holding it under consideration, to elicit, at no very distant day, from some one of deeper experience, something more telling and worthy of regard.

It is evident from the word of God that the church has power given to it, in certain cases, to discipline its members. Paul says, in his 2nd Epistle to the Thes. 3rd chapter and 6th verse,—“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye have received of us.” Here, then, is not merely a permission granted but a positive duty enjoined in the name, that is by the authority, of the Saviour.

The object of discipline appears to be twofold. First, as regards the church. Secondly, as regards the disorderly brother. First to keep the body pure, and thus give beauty, strength, and glory to the church. How exquisitely delightful are some of the descriptions of the church as given in the word of God.