

He that is united to him has this life ; he that is not united to him, has not this life ; but the old sentence of death remains upon him.

But an apostacy from this union, as respects individuals, and from the engrafting word, from the whole Christian institution, was not only possible, but has actually taken place. Many branches have been broken off from the true vine ; for many who have tasted the powers of the new world have fallen away. " Because of unbelief they were broken off," for under this economy men " stand by faith," not by flesh. " Take heed, brethren, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

As the branch can bear no fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so no person can enjoy the life which is hid in Christ, who is our life, nor bring forth for the living fruits of that life, unless he adhere to him. Hence apostacy from him is death to the individual. This is a sin unto death. For him that wilfully and wittingly renounces Jesus as his Lord, there remains no sacrifice for sin, there remains nothing but the fearful expectation of certain and irremediable destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

But there is a declension or an apostacy from the institution of Jesus Christ, where there is acknowledgment of its divine authority, and no personal renunciation of Jesus. This falling off, this waxing lukewarm, this indifference to the excellency and purity of the Christian institution, is intolerable in the estimation of the King : " I will spue thee out of my mouth," is the promise of the Faithful and True Witness, to those who become cold in their attachment and lukewarm in their adherence to his person and cause. " Remember whence you are fallen, and reform, or else I will come to you quickly and will remove your candlestick out of its place unless you reform."

Concerning apostacies we may learn their nature and consequences from a strict regard to those leading apostacies to which we have alluded. Concerning reformations and returnings to God, we have abundant information in those preached in past ages ; indeed, in all reforms proclaimed in both the Testaments. But in these reformations the following characteristics deserve attention :—

*First.* They are all *personal*. Though the nation of the Jews, as such, apostatized ; yet reformation could not be effected by the government without the people, nor by the people without the government, nor by the people but in their individual character. Reformation of manners, of government, or of religion in its integral character, must necessarily be composed of units. When the persons composing a family, a congregation, or a nation, reform ; then there is a family, or congregational or a national reformation. But reformation is always, and must necessarily be, a *personal* thing.

*Second*—In every reformation there are promises tendered on condition of it. These are motives to obedience ; and there are also threatenings presented on condition of disobedience ; and these, too, serve as motives to enforce it. Something is always gained by reformation, and something is always lost in consequence of not reforming.