

and to backsliders wishing to return to the communion of the church. It must not be forgotten that this power of binding and loosing is not confined to Peter. On another occasion, our Lord applies the same remark to the disciples, saying, "Whatever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* But we must notice, Secondly, The confirmation of this power when exercised. As to the declarative part of it, no doubt can for a moment be entertained, but that he that believeth, experiences the commencement, and looks for the completion of Salvation; while he that believeth not, is condemned already, and shall hereafter be damned. As to the absolute part of this power, no one who examines the New Testament will deny that Communion with the visible Church, is of prime importance, and that excommunication, exclusion from such communion, WHEN PROPERLY PERFORMED ACCORDING TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL, is more awful than is perhaps generally imagined. God confirms the exercise of the

* Mat. 18—18.