

of the truth through the Spirit were unwilling to purify their soul in obeying the same, or to put on Christ publicly, would we not have reason to fear that Zion in connection with us as a denomination, would become desolate? Then, my brethren, as we love to see peace and harmony prevailing, and can truly say, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," Do we not see the necessity, not only of the additions of the faithful, but also our duty to withdraw fellowship "from every brother that walketh disorderly?" Many in times of religious excitement profess faith in Christ, whose passions were aroused, and whose feelings were wrought up to a high pitch of excitement; and yet, when we see them run but a short distance, endure but a little time, have we not reason to fear that their hearts were not right in the sight of God? Many members may be found in the Churches who do not attend the public means of grace, who are unwilling to support the Gospel, or to give of their substances as the Lord hath prospered them, and fail to perform the vows and covenant engagements entered into when professing to enjoy the communion of Saints, and the fellowship of the Spirit. And if persons who are thus negligent of the duties enjoined on them to remain in the Church of God, can we expect to prosper? It is not left to our discretion, nor to depend upon a temporizing policy to which men are so strongly tempted to conform, whether they will retain or reject unworthy members. The fear of incurring the displeasure of influential men, or of family connections would often, and indeed does often prevent a faithful discipline; but to dissipate such fears and to relieve the churches of the responsibility of consequences, the Lord employed the language of command: "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 hath received of us." The Lord leaves us now with this command to choose between offending men, by faithfulness to His cause and their souls, or of offending Him by denying his prerogative to be King and give laws to his own Zion. Look at a time when Israel had to turn their back before their enemies; there was an Achan in the camp; he had to be cast out. Paul says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Doubtless he had been a church member, but they had withdrawn fellowship from him. And if the disorderly, the indifferent, the negligent, the immoral members of the Baptist Churches were dealt with according to the law of Christ, would not our number be greatly diminished? True, if all who might be accused as Paul accused Demas, and justly too, who keep up the appearance of religion and yet follow and love the ways of the world; if such were brought to the law and to the testimony, we might indeed see our number greatly diminished. But as was said to Gideon, it may doubtless often be said to Churches, "The people that are with thee are too many for me."

Numbers are very uncertain indication of strength; and if in our number there are those who offend against God and bring upon us his displeasure, we are surely weakened by their presence, and will be strengthened by exchanging their presence for that of the Lord,

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