

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Christian Visitor.

ON THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

LETTER VI.

In the preceding letters I noticed the various kinds of offences which occur in the Church of Christ. I reduced them to five classes:—First *Minor*, the smaller offences such as should be borne. The distinctive feature of this class is, they are infirmities *natural or acquired*, the rule "We then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

The second *private*, or such as cannot be proved. The distinctive feature of this class, is *lack of evidence*; the rule, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone," or, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself, and discover not a secret to another."

The third, *personal*, as when one brother injures another in his person, reputation, or property, and there is proof of the fact. The distinctive feature of this class, is *personal injury and proof of it*; the rule, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and a publican."

The fourth class of offences is *public*, or such as equally injure all the members of the church, and for which all require an equal satisfaction. The distinctive feature of this class, is *equal injury of all, and equal satisfaction to all the members*.

The fifth and last class of offences we will notice in this letter which is *insufferable*. The distinctive feature of this class of offences, is *such enormity of guilt as requires prompt exclusion for the honor of the cause*; the rule, Cor. v. 13, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." For example, such offences as *perjury, forgery, grand larceny, reckless disregard to promises, habitual licentiousness*, and such like gross violations of moral, civil, and criminal law.—The decision and action of a church in all such cases of notorious sin must be prompt, for the honour of the cause which is bleeding at every pore, and threatens the life of the body. And, as in the case of a gangrene member which threatens death and makes amputation necessary, so such sins call for the immediate removal of the offender from the fellowship of the Church of Christ. The Apostle in referring to one of the above sins in 1 Cor. v. 4-5, gives directions how the Church should proceed, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together in my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

In attending to the above directions, we must ever distinguish between a brother falling under certain temptations into one of the above sins; and a brother deliberately or habitually being guilty of one of them. The discipline of such insufferable offenders must be attended to with a view to their repentance and final salvation. The whole is to be done in the *Spirit of Christ*, and to be done that his spirit may be "saved in the day of our Lord Jesus." And thus the honour of God, the purity of the church, and the good of the offender is to be the prevailing motive in the whole. You will see in 2 Cor. ii. 6, 9, the blessed results of the Church at Corinth, obeying the Apostle's commands, in the above precept, both as it respects the unhappy individual himself, and as it regards the shame stricken church.

Having in a series of letters, directed the attention of the readers of the *Visitor*, to the discipline of the Church of Christ, I would close my remarks on the subject by impressing on the minds of our church members, who are favoured with the weekly visits of that excellent periodical (and I wish that every member in our churches enjoyed that privilege) the importance of Bible discipline.

It is as necessary to a prosperous Church to understand the law of Christ on this subject, as it is for an active arithmetician to understand

the multiplication table, or for a sick family to have a good physician.

The Saviour's provision for the correction of offences has a most instructive simplicity. He knew that "offences must needs come," and of fences too, of various type; and that they must be corrected. And yet, all that he himself has said, and all that his inspired servants have said, is embraced in a few brief, simple sentences.—The direction has meaning enough for the tallest intellect, and plainness sufficient for the weakest understanding.

The essence of all divine principles and rules of discipline are plain, and easy to be understood.—Why then are individuals and churches so often overwhelmed in the deepest difficulty, in correcting the wrongs of an offender? We answer: plainly, because simple as are the principles of discipline, and easy as the classification of offences are, and plain as are the methods of treatment, few have so accurate knowledge of these things, as to know what to do in any given case. Zion's sorest troubles have arisen from the bad treatment of offences, rather than from the offences themselves, simply considered. Let us all study Christ's law on this subject. Let us not only attend to Christ's government, but let us attend to it at the right time, when no other case is on hand to bias the judgment.—We must ever unite truth and mercy in the government of Christ's house. Truth secures the right application of law; mercy, its kind and right application. The one consults the honour of God; the other, the good of the offender. Truth without mercy would lead to an unfeeling and crushing severity; mercy without truth, to a criminal and ruinous laxness in our discipline.

The sin of a member will become the sin of the church, if the discipline of Christ's house be neglected. God, in addressing the seven churches of Asia, charges some of them with sin, for holding in their communion those who held false doctrines, or who were disorderly in their lives. See Rev. ii. 14, 20.

How is the peace, purity, and prosperity of the Christian church to be brought back to its apostolic state. And when will our beloved Mount Zion become a praise in the whole earth? When her discipline, like the skilful pruning process, will vastly improve the fairness, and the flavour of her fruit, as well as her general beauty, by the removal of what is struggling and redundant, and by the rearing up of those branches, which by their erectness and position, constitute the growth, extremely fine in its proportions, and attractive in its aspects. She will then be seen by all as no place for the concealment of crime, in either the rich or the learned, but reflecting the purity of that "fountain" which cleanses from sin and uncleanness. She will "look forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Nothing is now withering our churches so much as the want of the stated administration of the ordinances of Christ, and the want of gospel discipline. And unless a redeeming spirit is kindled, and burns with consuming strength, and visits with purifying influence, our churches in different parts of our Province, "Ichabod, the glory departed" will soon be written as with a pen of steel on the once prosperous branches of the Zion of our God.

I would, closing, ask my brethren, shall the application of the simple laws of the Saviour be made in every required case in our churches? Does not the good of every offending brother require it? Does not the health of the church require it? Does the honour of God require it? And does not our preparation to meet our coming Lord urge us to it? "Brethren, consider what we say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

Yours truly in the gospel of Christ.

May 20, 1848. ROBERT SAMUEL ROBINSON.

For the Christian Visitor.

VISITATION TO THE CHURCHES.

MR. EDITOR.—An account of our labours in behalf of the Union Society, shall commence with Springfield. We were guided to this place in consequence of an appointment previously made by one of our number for advocating the subject of temperance, and that of the benevolent objects embraced by our people in this Province. On our arrival at the place appointed, we found ourselves soon surrounded by a respectable congregation of willing listeners. At the close of the temperance lecture, it was thought advisable by those who were best acquainted with the circumstances of the people, and the uncertainty of obtaining so favourable an opportunity of presenting the claims of our institutions, that we should then make known the object of our visitation. Although the list of contributors to the Union objects was not greatly swelled at the meeting, we were however encouraged with the conviction produced at the time, that

those who had already contributed would adhere to their former pledges. Bro. King whose exertion and interest in behalf of the cause has been coeval with its existence in the Province, is surrounded by an active company of intelligent brethren who are willing to throw their time and influence into the support of the cause.

The respectable number of Sabbath School books and their circulating library, together with the weekly intelligence communicated through the *Visitor* (which is well supported by this community) cannot fail to enhance the intelligence, liberality, and piety of this church and congregation. Every Baptist church in the country should for their own instruction and that of their rising generation, procure a circulating library of a religious and literary character, and especially of Baptist literature. Is there not too much false delicacy existing on this subject amongst us? If our views are scriptural, and those opposed to them anti-scriptural, and hence injurious to the souls of men, are we not guilty in not giving currency to the truth? The Colporteur committee in St. John have now on hand a suitable selection from Baptist authors, and can supply any community with the short notice of one week. By adopting a plan of this description, every member in connexion with our churches or congregation, could have access at very little expense to a large share of scriptural information, in the absence of which no Christian or church can be either useful or happy.

Our interview with Elders, Ring, Crandall and Spragg, was of an entertaining character. These brethren are in every way identifying themselves with the interests of our churches.

Brother Crandall is exerting himself in a praiseworthy manner in behalf of the Union in the churches under his pastoral care, as well as in other places in his vicinity. Should we have time after our return from the Eastern counties, we shall make every effort to visit Queen's, though from our present convictions respecting the most effectual way of accomplishing the object of our agency, it is not at all likely that we will have it in our power, as nearly our whole time between this and the Association will be consumed to the east. No great injury however will be sustained by our benevolent objects in that quarter, from our inability to extend our excursion to them.

Our next rallying point was Saint Martin, where we arrived on Saturday at a late hour. The road from Hampton to this place, though settled nearly all the way through, should claim the attention of the Road Commissioner for the District. We occupied nearly four hours in travelling 9 miles. We held four religious services on Lord's day in connexion with the brethren in this place. At these meetings we had an opportunity of giving information respecting the object of our mission, and the embarrassed circumstances of the Missionary funds. Our main strength in this department was reserved for Monday evening, when a short discourse was delivered on the progression of the Kingdom of Christ, followed by warm and thrilling addresses from several brethren. The large assembly and fixed attention of the auditors were too forcibly not to rebuke any doubts that might have previously existed in the minds of any, respecting the interest felt by this community in behalf of the Union. While here we obtained 19 additional subscribers to the Union Society, already composing a respectable number of contributors, and ten pledges towards the Foreign Mission.

Brothers Jackson and Newcomb rendered us every assistance in the prosecution of our work. The united advocacy of these brethren in every department of truth, cannot fail to be attended with good results to every class in this interesting district. Few places in this Province present a more inviting field of labour than this, whether we regard the extent of the community and their almost universal preference to Baptist principles, or the present aspect of things in connexion with the church. Three hopeful converts made a profession of faith in Christ previous to our leaving, and from appearances we should judge that more willing believers would soon follow.

Elder Jackson the pastor, is much encouraged in his new field of labour, and his expectations with the assistance of our valued brother Newcomb, (whose past labours in connexion with this church and rising generation cannot be too highly appreciated) will be realized. Nothing but the commanding character of our work at this crisis of our pecuniary affairs could have influenced us to leave the people so soon. Every individual however, who has given a moment's reflection to the extent of our labour, and the imperative importance of prompt efforts in behalf of the benevolent objects under our consideration, will we think justify our conclusion. Who can undertake to calculate the result of our missionary efforts, whether Foreign or Domestic? It is the very means by which our

border is to be enlarged, and the reign of the Lord to be extended from shore to shore. If the Union Society is not universally adopted, however well adapted to meet our wants and the circumstances of almost every cheerful giver, we shall fail to meet our engagements, as all former channels are closed up by the introduction of this appropriate system of benevolence. The supplanting of our former mode of constitution would be indeed destructive to our present institutions; but the response given to our appeal in behalf of the cause in the few places already visited, will suppress any fears entertained by the executive committees. The Baptist churches in New Brunswick have given frequent proof of their readiness to do their duty in the support of Christian institutions.

In Upham, 3 meetings were held, and a whole day occupied in visiting from house to house. A Union Society was formed in this place two years since; although through some misunderstanding but little was transmitted. We were encouraged to learn that there is a determination on the part of this people to redeem their former pledges with promptness. We doubt not but their offerings will be equal, if not surpassing any former year. Four new subscribers were obtained for the Union, and nine pledges for the Foreign Mission. The absence of their Pastor from home was a matter of regret to us, yet the feelings manifested at the meetings and the growing attachment of the Church to the cause of Christian liberality, will, through the co-operation of their Minister, secure the work.

The Congregation at Hampton, [Little River,] embraced the Union system from its commencement and worked well for one year. The friends in this place came up nobly to our help—former subscribers confirmed their attachment to the cause. Five more were added to the Union list, and nine pledges obtained to the Foreign mission. A good degree of willingness was apparent on the part of the people here, and only for the present pecuniary depression, many of them would increase their amount of contributions.

We shall endeavour to visit as many places before the first of July as possible; and as we cannot necessarily from the extent of our route, tarry long in one place, we therefore, request the co-operation and preliminary arrangement of the Pastors and the brethren in general.

Money received in Saint Martin's from 25. d.
the Union Society, 10. 4. 14. 2
Do. Collections, 2. 0. 0
Do. 2 Donations, 1. 10. 0
Upham, per Union Society, 1. 3. 8
Do. per Foreign Missions, 0. 13. 9
Hampton (Little river) U. Society, 0. 0. 6
Do. Foreign Missions, 0. 8. 0

ALEXANDER McDONALD,
JOHN FRANCIS.

PROVINCIAL APPOINTMENT.—His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to make the following appointments, provisionally, until Her Majesty's pleasure be known:—
The Honourable Lemuel A. Wilnot to be Attorney General, and a member of Her Majesty's Executive Council.

John R. Partelow, Esquire, Charles Fisher, Esquire, and the Honourable William B. Kinneer, (Her Majesty's Solicitor General,) to be Members of Her Majesty's Executive Council for this Province.

By His Excellency's Command,
JOHN S. SAUNDERS,
Secretary's Office, 23d May, 1848.

FIRE.—We regret to learn that the steam Saw Mills, owned by Messrs. Hawkins & Bart, in the Parish of King's Clear, about nine miles above this City were last night entirely consumed by fire. We understand the fire was purely accidental. The proprietors had no insurance, and the loss in Mill and Deal is said to be upwards of £1000.—*Head Quarters.*

We understand that the first of the new Cunard steamers for the Colonial mails, may be expected here about the 1st July, on her voyage to Halifax, being intended for the Halifax and Bermuda mail service, the contract for which commences on the 1st August. The second steamer, for the Halifax and Newfoundland service, will follow a month after the first; Mr. Whitney will, however, in terms of his contract, continue to convey the mails for the present season.—*Newfoundland Courier.*

The *Bermudian* of the 5th April states that the Colonial Parliament of Bermuda will assemble at Hamilton on the 30th of May next. It is expected that it will, during its session, make very important reforms in the fiscal arrangements of the Government, and among the propositions to be submitted is one for direct taxation, instead of the indirect system now practised. Should this proposition fail, it is determined to introduce a bill to repeal the Colonial Act of 1792, which restricts trade to Hamilton and St. George's, and throw open all the Bermuda to the shipping of the world, declaring the islands to be the Port of Bermuda.