

New Testament Studies.

NO. XXIII.

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE.
PART 3.

In urging the importance of maintaining a sound New Testament discipline, we would glance at the requirements of brotherly love. There is a great depth of meaning in the passage heretofore quoted, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbor." "Thou shalt not see him, that is, labouring under the burden of sin without aiming at his relief. So of that other passage, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sin." What a glorious, what a Christ-like reward is here proposed to a tender and loving faithfulness! But now here is a church that takes no heed to the claims of erring brethren for pity and help. They "wander out of the way of understanding," and their "feet stumble upon the dark mountains," and they "remain in the congregation of the dead." And yet, "dead" as they are, they are flattered with "a name to live." Alas! what love is there here? A passage already cited more than once reads thus in the margin:—"Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, that thou bear not sin for him." "Thou shalt not see him, that is, labouring under the burden of sin without aiming at his relief. So of that other passage, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sin." What a glorious, what a Christ-like reward is here proposed to a tender and loving faithfulness! But now here is a church that takes no heed to the claims of erring brethren for pity and help. They "wander out of the way of understanding," and their "feet stumble upon the dark mountains," and they "remain in the congregation of the dead." And yet, "dead" as they are, they are flattered with "a name to live." Alas! what love is there here? A passage already cited more than once reads thus in the margin:—"Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, that thou bear not sin for him." "Thou shalt not see him, that is, labouring under the burden of sin without aiming at his relief. So of that other passage, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sin." What a glorious, what a Christ-like reward is here proposed to a tender and loving faithfulness! But now here is a church that takes no heed to the claims of erring brethren for pity and help. They "wander out of the way of understanding," and their "feet stumble upon the dark mountains," and they "remain in the congregation of the dead." And yet, "dead" as they are, they are flattered with "a name to live." Alas! what love is there here? A passage already cited more than once reads thus in the margin:—"Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, that thou bear not sin for him."

Lastly, there is the aspect of the church upon the world. It is through the church that God seeks to convert the world. Still the great gospel commission, given at first to the church, remains in force. But an undisciplined and unlovely church cannot bring back an apostate world to its God. Itself is in an apostate condition. It takes sides with the enemy. It damns more souls than it saves. Besides, God will not work through such a church for the salvation of the world. Why, what sort of a conversion would the world then receive? It would be as if the church of Laodicea had spread itself out, and covered the world with the plague and curse of its own half-heartedness. And were that a state of things to satisfy the yearnings of the Bible, or to realize the indications of prophecy? Assuredly not. No doubt God does, notwithstanding the errors of those by whom the gospel is proclaimed, bless its proclamation to the salvation of souls. Yet surely it is not in vain that the purity of the church, to which the gospel is entrusted for the benefit of the world, is fenced and guarded, as we have seen, by Christ's laws for church-discipline. A large portion of the New Testament is devoted to the exposure of practical error as well as doctrinal. It is against the practical errors of the seven churches of Asia that much of our Lord's censure is directed. "Brethren!" says Paul, in one place, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. There is something that impedes the onward movement of that word, and checks its "free course." And this, in our days, is mainly the ungodliness of a mere nominal Christianity; which ungodliness, again, arises very largely from the false discipline of false churches, or the lax discipline of true ones. Here, then, is the bane of the world; and here its hope. What can the heathen themselves think of the atrocities of the baptized but unsanctified Christians, who prowl over land and sea, dishonoring the holy name by which they are called? What holy influence can any church exert upon the masses of men which admits men of all creeds, or no creeds to minister at its altars, and partake of its privileges? And what can any expect to accomplish, with loftier and purer pretensions, they nurse a moral corruption in their churches, out of all harmony with those pretensions, and robbing their beautiful theories of their practical power? For the sake of the world, therefore, it behooves us to give full play to a New Testament discipline in our churches; and to pray that Christian churches everywhere may be led, in this matter, to see light in God's light, and to conform to New Testament patterns; since it is only by a regenerate church that God will reach and regenerate our lost world.

Let us turn, ere we close, to that impressive Apocalyptic vision,—"And I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." We know who this was. As for "the seven candlesticks," they were the seven churches of Asia, in the midst of which the Son of man walked. This he did, to mark what was praiseworthy, and to commend it; what was wrong also, and to censure it. And does not this same "Son of man" still walk up and down amidst the churches that bear his name; inspecting, approving, or blaming? And what does he see in the churches of these Lower Provinces—among our Baptist churches, with their claims to the character of New Testament churches? What sort of an epistle would he address to you? Would it be like the one which he sent to Sardis?—"I have not found your works perfect before God."—And yet "ye have a few names that have not defiled their garments." Let us hope, however, that, whatever our faults, the Laodicean spirit has not obtained among us—the spirit which exclaims, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Let us rather hope, that there is something of that better spirit, which says, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord—Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain into the earth."

There are thoughts here not without their encouragement. The one is, that it takes a great deal to unchurch a church. Christ threatens long before he fulfils his threats; and gives space for repentance ere he gives effect to his words. "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." We have remarked before, that Paul was not authorized to strip the churches of Corinth and Galatia of their character as churches, though, both in doctrine and practice, they both went far astray from their Lord. The thing was done at last; for where now are the churches planted in apostolic days? And yet it was not done speedily. Space for repentance was given, ere these primitive churches were swept away, or permitted more gradually to pass out of sight. Here, then, is "encouragement," which as churches, should "lead us to repentance" in as far as we have strayed from our Lord.

Then, further, we have a great desire to universalize our own professing bodies. The corruption which obtains among us does not spring so much from absolute error as from unfaithfulness to the

truth. Our baptismal theories are right, whatever mistakes we may make as to their application. So, too, our views on church-discipline, though they may require correction, are for the most part in agreement with inspired standards. Nor are we cramped, and hampered by creeds, and confessions, and books of discipline of human origin, as some other bodies are. Thus, if we would in any respect amend our doings, we have only to "stand in the ways, and see, and walk for the old paths, where is the good way?" and ask therein, and so find rest for our souls." Herein, indeed, lies our hope and strength as a denomination. We utterly repudiate all such theories of religious development as would send us to any fathers, ancient or modern, to learn the will of our Lord. That Lord places us at his feet, and bids us there abide, when he says, "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, who is in heaven." Christ's code of government, as his system of doctrine, is complete. It is given for all time, and adapted to all time. We have, then, but to return to this code, wherein we may have departed from it, and repent of our departure, and "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Our doing so, the waking up of our churches generally to a sense of short-coming in the matter of discipline, and a concern to do better for the time to come, would be no equivocal symptom of a revival—a token of the return of the good Spirit like that which, as we have seen, once so signally discovered itself in the history of the church at Corinth. And would not God approve of his own work, with its appropriate manifestations? And as sin and profanation were driven out of his temple, and holiness enthroned on its own altar, surely then were the time to look up. Surely then the Lord himself were at hand. Nay, were he not already come? "Then," in this time of inward, hearty, holy reformation,—"Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

J. D.

Denominational Schools.

It will be seen that the communication of "Baptist," on our first page, asserts that the acceptance of State aid for the support of denominational schools is opposed to "Baptist principles." Where is the proof that such is the fact? It is not to be found in the writings or in the acts of the Baptists of these Provinces. Our fathers, the Mannings, Hardings, Dimocks, and Crandalls, did not so expound "Baptist principles," and surely no one will charge these men with either ignorance of what Baptist principle is, or any lack of adherence to it through evil as well as through good report. True, they were not the originators of grants to denominational schools, but they were the defenders of such grants, may more, they were mainly instrumental in breaking up an unjust monopoly regarding this matter. The time was in the history of this country when one denomination monopolized nearly all the public money devoted to the Academic and Collegiate education of the people. The Episcopal institutions of Windsor and Fredericton, as they formerly existed, indubitably prove the truthfulness of this assertion. The Grammar schools of the country were also largely under the influence of Episcopal rule. As the Baptist people increased in numbers and intelligence in these Provinces, they naturally felt that this unequal appropriation of the public funds was wrong, and hence, led by the fathers of the denomination, they petitioned the Legislatures of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick for a just share of the public money. At first their petitions in both Provinces were treated with scorn, and the men in power in that day contemptuously enquired, "Who are these Baptists that they should presume to take part in the education of the country?" But year after year the petitions went up, and more and more numerous signed, until the pressure became too strong for resistance, and the monopoly gave way: and with that break up the principle of equal distribution of public funds for the support of denominational schools was recognized and virtually established. But more, the agitation of this question by our fathers gave a death blow to "family compacts," and opened the way for the introduction of "Responsible Government." For long years it was the question at the hustings, and the question in the halls of Legislature, "Did our fathers violate Baptist principle in this thing? Did they not rather assert and vindicate a just principle by demanding equal rights for their people?" The Baptists, through all the States of America, north and south, have in like manner claimed their fair proportion of the public funds. So it has been from the beginning. Were the Baptist fathers in these States all in the dark in relation to "Baptist principle"? True, a large portion of the Baptists and Independents of England are opposed to State aid for denominational schools; but why? Because they regard such aid a violation of religious principle? Not so. They are in the midst of a State church, with her schools, academies, colleges, and various institutions, living largely upon the National treasury. They see in this a prodigious monopoly that only can be broken up by separating the Church from the State, and in their efforts to do this they say, "We ask no support from the National treasury for our churches, our schools, or anything pertaining to us—we only ask to be let alone," and they demand that the National church shall be treated in like manner. Were we in their circumstances we might take the same position; but we are not. On this Continent we have no State church, and therefore have no prodigious power to oppose our claim to equal rights. This is all we ask, and if true to ourselves, this we must have. If the Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, and the other denominations withdraw all claims upon the Provincial treasury for the support of their schools, we are quite prepared to do likewise; but until this is done, we see no valid reason why we should refuse what is our right. Show us that it is a violation of any moral or religious principle to receive a legislative grant to aid us in diffusing general education amongst the people, then we should be the last to touch it. Our brother "Baptist" says it is a violation of "Baptist principle." Is it so? We have always understood that the New Testament is the Baptist law-book. Baptists as such recognize no creed as infallible that has not for its authority "thus saith the Lord," and we must confess, if any New Testament principle is violated by a fair distribution of public funds for denominational schools, having for their object the diffusion of an enlightened education amongst the people, we utterly fail to perceive it. Will our brother "Baptist" tell us, on what page of the inspired directory it is to be found?

True it is that we feel that our theological schools occupy a different position. They stand side by side with our churches and our ministry, and hence their support should be derived from the same source, viz., the voluntary contributions of the people. We should as soon ask for Government aid to build a Baptist church or to support a Baptist minister, as to seek it for the support of a Baptist Theological school. In this denominational peculiarities are distinctly taught, the same as in a church or a ministry, but in our academies denominationalism gives place to general education. Such being the fact, we cannot see why public money, devoted to educational purposes, should not be as wisely and as usefully applied by a Board appointed by a religious body as when appointed by a Provincial Government.

But "Baptist" asks, "what advantage do the Baptist people of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick

derive from their College at Horton, and the schools in connection with it, and their Academy at Fredericton?" We answer much every way. It is for the advantage of any individual or any people to be engaged in doing good. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The educational efforts of the Baptists in connection with these institutions have revolutionized the whole country on the subject of education, and given to it an impetus beyond any other agency that has been employed. The agitation on the subject of legislative grants; the efforts put forth for support from the people all tended to arouse the public mind to a sense of the need of education. This has led to a great improvement in the Common Schools of the country, and called into existence schools of a superior type in nearly all the centres of progress and influence; and then these institutions have qualified and sent out teachers both for the common and higher schools in large numbers, so that in this way, instead of their advantages being limited to their own localities, they have carried them out into all sections of the Provinces. Again you find the sons of our institutions filling most honorably and successfully prominent positions in the medical and legal professions, and in political life in various parts of the country. The Provincial Secretary of Nova Scotia is a son of Acadia, and the Superintendent of Education in that Province is a son of Acadia. A people without Education, such as the Baptists were comparatively before they had these institutions of learning, may make good hewers of wood and drawers of water, but they cannot expect to be placed in positions of trust and influence without those requirements which qualify for such positions. But the direct advantages to us as a denomination are manifold. They have raised the intellectual calibre of our people; they have greatly increased the mental power of our ministry, and by the blessing of God have greatly multiplied the number of intelligent Baptists all over these Provinces. May these institutions of faith and prayer go on and prosper yet more and more in our unceasing supplication.

Progress in our City Churches.

The new edifice of the Germain Street Church is going forward as speedily as circumstances will permit. The weather last week was unpropitious, consequently the walls did not rise as rapidly as was expected, but this week the work is progressing more satisfactorily, and the hope is cherished that the vestry will be ready for use by the opening of winter. In the mean time the services are held in the Marine Hall. We regret to state that the esteemed pastor is suffering severely, by reason of which he is unable at present to perform pastoral duties; but his pulpit has been acceptably filled by Rev. Mr. McKenzie, Rev. S. Robinson, and Dr. Wyckoff. May the Sabbath school of the church be under the superintendence of Deacon Bartheau, and is performing well its part. As we write the indications of returning health to the pastor are not so favorable as we could desire. He has no lack of medical skill, and earnest prayer is offered that the means employed may be blessed in his speedy restoration to health. May God in mercy hear and answer.

BRUSSELS STREET CHURCH was probably never in a more prosperous state. Congregation full, additions to the church frequent, and the largest Sabbath-school in the city. The superintendence is highly efficient, and the school is supplied with an excellent class of teachers, who are aided in their work by a very extensive library.

The beloved pastor baptized a young man last Sabbath, the son of a pious member of his church. In the waywardness of youth he left his home and entered the Confederate army; but he passed through the tempests of hard fought battles unscathed, and on his retirement from the army he tarried for a time in Canada. While there he experienced the power and sweetness of redeeming love, and then came home to tell his friends and neighbors what great things the Lord had done for him. As he came up from the baptismal waters on Sabbath morning last, the happy mother threw her arms about his neck and gave him the warm maternal kiss. It was a moment of solemn interest and tears came to many eyes, as the mother, in heart, exclaimed, rejoice with me, for this my son was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found. The truth is, a mother's prayers had followed the young man through the temptations of the war camp, and the dangers of the death field; and in due time the answer came in the grace which alone can save.

"Who that knows the word of prayer, But wishes to be often there."

The church has two missionary stations, viz., the Bethel and the Marsh Bridge. These have their Sabbath schools and their prayer meetings conducted by the gifted brethren of the church who, in this way are performing a good work for Zion.

THE LEINSTER STREET CHURCH

is much encouraged since opening the new house. The ministry of their new pastor, Rev. V. N. Garner, is highly acceptable, and the attendance is fully equal to their expectations. A number have been added by letter, some by baptism, and the hope is cherished that all this is but the dawning of a still brighter day. The Sabbath school is under able guidance, and numbers about 160 pupils. The teachers understand their business and are doing a good work. Money, we hear, is being raised by them to extend the benefits of the school to the poor. This is as it should be. The library is also in a healthy condition. All this is truly encouraging. We are thankful for these tokens for good in our city churches, but still there is ample room for a large increase of faith and hope, and prayer and love in them all. O for the Spirit's power to descend upon the entire membership of these churches, that they may all be filled with the holy impulses of a pure fellowship with Christ and with each other, that with one heart and with one soul they may come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord God against the mighty.

Correspondence from the Holy Land.

No. 10.

JERUSALEM, April 1864. The convent of Mar Saba is the most interesting one I have visited. It is situated amid the wastes of the Judean wilderness, and built upon the west side of the deep gorge of the Kidron, which at this point for wildness of scenery far surpasses anything I have ever seen. About an hour's ride before reaching this convent we descended a valley, through which the Kidron runs, and from which diverge two roads; one runs north-west to Jerusalem, the other south to Mar Saba, thence east to Bethlehem. From this valley on the south rises a high mountainous ridge, and through it as if driven by some sudden convulsion the Kidron finds its way in a tortuous serpentine course. The convent of Mar Saba is situated on the opposite hill, and followed for some distance the line of this ravine, which became still more picturesque as we advanced, because deeper and more winding. It was interesting to trace at the sharp turnings the well defined strata, rising one above the other, now standing boldly out in the shades of the evening. In a rugged nook of this ravine is built the convent of Mar Saba, founded in consequence of the vision of the Virgin Mary in the 5th century Saint Saba, dwelt in this wilderness at or near this place. This convent was at one time very rich—possibly it is now moderately so—and being situated in this lonely spot far from any human habitation, save the tents of wild Arabs, it has frequently been subjected to fierce attacks from these wild men who, it is said, have left the ruins of the convent in flames. The present inmates live in great dread of the Arabs, and consequently do not admit persons indiscriminately to the convent. Only those obtain admission who have received a letter of introduction from the Greek Patriarch at Jerusalem; this being produced at the convent is carefully read, after which the doors are thrown open, and you are hospitably entertained.

No lady is ever admitted within these convent walls; applications are often made by travellers for the admission in cases where they are obliged to spend the night in the vicinity, but they are as often refused, and must necessarily seek shelter elsewhere. We were shown the various curiosities of the convent, and among other things, lots of trinkets in wood, shells, etc.—the workmanship of the Monks—were displayed for our inspection, and for sale. We were also conducted through several caverns, and in each of them, was obliged to listen to some wonderful legend which the devoted Monks would gravely relate. The tomb of Saint Saba is also pointed out, and held in great veneration. It is a vault, said to contain the bones of thousands of skulls of martyred Monks. Some of these skulls are left in an exposed position easily accessible to the inmates of the convent, who repair thither to reverend and kiss them. There are also to be seen several neat chapels, glittering with gold and silver lamps; pictures hanging upon the wall; and numerous Greek inscriptions everywhere to be seen. This convent is kept scrupulously clean; the Monks, about sixty in number, appeared very civil, and this night in the convent of Mar Saba was one of the most comfortable and pleasant I spent in the East. We had passed over a most fatiguing journey of eleven hours; and if we ever appreciated rest, it was on this night. Early on the following morning, we were on the road to Bethlehem and Hebron; the former distant about three hours, and the latter about six hours; so we ended the hills from Mar Saba, we got the benefit of the cool breezes coming from the West, which we were glad to receive in exchange for the scorching heat of the depressed country on the East, through which we had been passing on the two previous days. The appearance of the country was also changing; the valleys were greener, and the sterility of the mountains was giving way to life and vegetation. We were now all full of anxious expectation, for when we reached the summit of the hill we were ascending, our eyes were to behold the most interesting sights they had ever seen; the birth-place of the Son of God on the south, and on the north, the place of his burial. Bethlehem and Jerusalem were to be in full view. Soon these noble sights met our eyes, and filled us with the deepest interest, and awakened our thoughts to the fact that the Son of God, whose name was carried back some 19 centuries when these hills were touched with the visible glory of God, and when they reverberated with the angelic song, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good-will to men." It was delightful to know that we were on the ground where was announced by angel's tongue to the Bethlehem shepherds, "good tidings of great joy." For unto you is born this day the Son of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Bethlehem may have changed since then, but these mountains and hills are the same, and today shepherds watch their flocks in the same fields as were occupied when the angel announced the Saviour's birth. The city is built upon an eminence, overlooking a fine valley of vineyards and orchards of pomegranate and olive. Through this valley our pathway led us, and here our attention was particularly attracted by the numerous ruins of watch-towers, which spread in every direction. They were no doubt used for watching the orchards and vineyards which lined this valley, and probably were more abundant then than now. In the appearance of Bethlehem there is an air of neatness and modern symmetry that contrasts widely with the rude appearance of most Eastern Cities. This is probably owing to the fact that the population is Christian, being composed entirely of Latins, Greeks and Armenians. They number in all about 3,000 souls. As soon as we had reached the City we were guided to the Church of the Nativity, which stands on the eastern side, and is connected with a number of other ecclesiastical buildings. We were first conducted through the chapels, in which we saw but little to attract special attention, afterward (with tapers in hand) we descended a steep hill which brought us into a cave. This cave is said to be the place where Jesus was born. It consists of a small recess containing two altars; one above the other. On the lower one, let into the altar, was a silver star surrounded with the following inscription, apparently in letters of gold:—"Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus Natus est." Opposite this was another small recess, said to be the site of the manger where our Saviour was laid. Between these recesses the place where the infant Jesus was laid, the place where the Magi came to worship the infant Jesus. Such, in a few words, is the "cave of the nativity" at Bethlehem; where we are told Jesus Christ was born. The tradition that points out this cave as the birth-place of our Saviour can be traced back to the middle of the second century: since then many ancient writers, speaking of Bethlehem, refer to the Saviour's birth as having occurred in a grotto, or near the cave, and it is possible that this tradition may contain truth. Those who hold the opposite view contend that, from the narration of Scripture, it does not follow that our Saviour was born in a cave, but in a "manger," which simply means a place where cattle or camels are lodged—a stable. Then follows the question, was it customary in those days to lodge cattle in caverns? One thing is certain, that the so-called "cave of the nativity," from its cramped dimensions, does not appear ever to have been a suitable place for the above purpose. Helena built a church here in honor of the Saviour's birth, and it is thought that this structure and the present Church of the nativity are identical. A Convent is also connected with the Church of the nativity, and the Monks profess to show you the very cell where Jerome lived and prepared his version of the Bible. There are two other places worthy of a visit at Bethlehem, viz., "David's well" and "Rachel's tomb." The former is on the north-west side of the town, and is thought to be the same well whose waters David longed for, when in a hold of the neighboring hills he cried, "O that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate." The account given in Scripture appears to agree with this locality, and it would appear that it could not have been far from this well. We drank of its waters, which are still sweet and pleasant. The tomb of Rachel lies on the north-east of this, a little way out of the city. By referring to Genesis xxxv. 16-20, also xlii. 7, we find that Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died in the land of Canaan, near to Ephraim, and says the Patriarch, "I buried her in the way to Ephraim, the said Beth-el." It is not possible that the place where Rachel was buried should have been so near this locality, and the fact that the pillar which Jacob erected over her grave being there when Moses wrote, it is not at all unlikely that the site of Rachel's tomb has been handed down to posterity, and that this is the spot where her remains were entombed. The building that now covers the site is of modern date, and is the property of the Jews, having been purchased for them by Sir Moses Montefiore.

We left Bethlehem, and turning to the south, started the road which leads to Hebron. About three quarters of an hour's ride on this road brought us to the "Pools of Solomon." They consist of three large reservoirs, each gradually rising back of the other, their respective lengths beginning with the largest one, are 522, 423 and 380 feet. The depth of the first pool at the lower end is given by Dr. Robinson as 50 feet; the second 30 feet, and the third 20 feet. The average width of the pools is about 200 feet. They still have water in them, which is supplied as formerly from the neighboring hills. The pools appear to be of great antiquity, as also does an old castle which stands to the North of them. The style of the masonry of the pools is thought to belong to the reign of Solomon. Through a conduit the water was carried from these reservoirs to Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and to this day through the same conduit the water is still conducted to the former place, and to the vicinity of the latter. In passing along the road from Bethlehem to these pools, our attention was drawn to a rich and highly cultivated valley which stretched away beneath us: it is called the "Gardens of Solomon." In Ecclesiastes ii. 5-9 we read: "I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted palm-trees, and date-trees, and fig-trees, and olive-trees. I also made me a pool of water, wherein to bring forth trees. This was more than that the gardens and pools here referred to by Solomon are the very same that we have been describing. We left this very interesting place, and continued our journey towards Hebron. The country through which we passed, though not a fertile one, presented some fine pastures and many small villages. About four hours' ride from the pools of Solomon brought us to the ruins of Ramleh. These ruins extend over many acres, and bear marks of ancient greatness; but to what particular place they may be assigned still remains a question. The most remarkable of these remains are of an oblong building, about 200 feet long by about 100 wide. Some of the stones comprising this building are of the size of a man's head. It is said that the Hebrew Jews consider this place to be the plain of Mamre, where Abraham's tent stood. If this be the fact, Dr. Robinson thinks this latter may be the remains of the Basilica or Church erected here by Constantine to prevent the idolatrous worship of the Christians, as well as the Gentiles, who then considered Abraham's oak an object of worship. Here

is also to be seen a fine large well, the masonry of which, though very ancient, is still in a good state of preservation. An hour's ride from these ruins brought us to Hebron. As we approached the City our road was lined with orchards and vineyards. The soil appeared fertile, and for the most part in a good state of cultivation. We found our way through the valley of Rachel, over a wretchedly rough road, to a grassy plot opposite the city, where our tents were pitched. Night was now upon us, and our visit to the city was, of necessity, deferred until morning. All that is of interest at Hebron can soon be seen. It is prettily situated on a side hill, and so far from the plain of our encampment below, it looked well. On the following morning we made our tour of the town. The principal object of interest here is the "Cave of Machpelah." This cave is one of great interest, because, unlike many places in Palestine, it has not been a subject of dispute. It is alike acknowledged by Christian, Jew and Mohammedan, to be the cave of Machpelah. It is covered with a Mosque, and none but Mussulmans are admitted. The Prince of Wales, having in his recent visit to Palestine previously obtained an order from the Sultan, was attended with a strong guard, and allowed to pass through this Mosque, and he is about the only modern traveller who has. The Mohammedans held it in great veneration, second only to the one at Mecca. In this cave are the remains of Abraham at Sarah, Isaac at Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. We, of course, were not permitted to even look into the cave, and had to content ourselves with walking around it. While this, we suppose, answered every purpose, except to gratify our curiosity, we could but desire that the time might soon come when not only the Mohammedans, but the Christian, and also the Jew, will have equal right of access to this interesting place. The hour being early business had not commenced. We were conducted through the empty bazaars and then, hastened back to the place of our tents. These had been removed in our absence, our horses were ready for us, so we mounted and away for Jerusalem. The present population of Hebron is about 10,000. In about three quarters of an hour's ride along a road a little to the West of the one we had reached Hebron, we came to a noble old oak, pointed out as Abraham's oak. It is no doubt the same kind of tree as the terebinth and several centuries old, still in a good state of preservation, but more than this cannot in truth be said of it. We now struck off into the road we had taken to Hebron, and made our way back to Solomon's pools and Bethlehem, and finally reached Jerusalem in the afternoon of the same day that we left Hebron.

To the Editor of the Christian Visitor.

Sir—Perceiving by the report sent you by the Rev. B. F. Ratray, respecting the building of the Baptist Meeting House at Freetownville, that he had been misinformed in some particulars, we have thought proper to send you the following, with a request that you would be so kind as to give it a place in your columns.

Mr. T. W. Longstaff was the sole architect of the house, who drew the whole of the plans gratuitously, for which we tender him grateful acknowledgments, and Mr. James W. Drysdale was the contractor, who, by his skill and completion of the house. The whole being performed under the superintendence of a Building Committee, whose names are annexed to this report. The probable cost of the house, as stated by Rev. B. F. Ratray, was about \$1,400, in the building of which we were assisted by a number of persons who do not belong to our denomination, for which they will please accept our warmest expression of thankfulness. After the house had been completed a public meeting was called to aid in completing it, and from a generous public the handsome sum of \$175 was realized.

JOHN H. ESTEY,
JOHN ROYCE,
EDWARD SAUNDERS, Building Committee.
JOHN MCALIN,
G. W. WHEELER.

Miscellaneous.

The Tremont Temple Boston is in debt to the amount of \$155,000. The Baptists who have the noble edifice in charge are about making an effort to remove this obstacle to progress. It is regarded by them as a missionary enterprise of prodigious power.

PRECEDENT FOR PRAYER.—The National Preacher gives an instance of Divine interposition in answer to national prayer occurring in the history of this country. In 1746 a French fleet was fitted out under the Duke d'Anville, of forty ships of war, destined for the invasion of New England. This fleet was of sufficient force to render that destruction, in the ordinary progress of things certain; and it sailed from Chebucto, in Nova-Scotia, for that purpose; but was entirely destroyed by a terrible tempest on the night following a day of general fasting and prayer throughout New England.—*Watchman and Reflector.*

One man, Jacob Strawn, an Illinois farmer, offered to give \$10,000 for the Christian Commission, if a like sum should be raised in Morgan county. William Reynolds, Esq., of Peoria, and Chaplain Meigs, undertook to raise the amount, and the result was \$11,000. Mr. Strawn at once paid over the \$10,000 offered; making \$21,000 in a single prairie county of the West.—*Id.*

INCREASE OF IMPRISONMENT.—The Christian Era of Boston says:—

We have more than once alluded to this matter, particularly as witnessed in this city; and the same is correspondingly true of other cities and towns. Imprisonment and kindred vices were so widely open as they are at this moment. According to the report of the chief of Police, there were committed for drunkenness in the year 186, 17,967; and yet the Police say that they did not arrest more than one in ten of those whom they saw drunk. They only arrested the disorderly ones; and yet they arrested nearly sixty per cent, on an average, during the entire year. It is true, many of these persons were not in the country; they got drunk here, and Boston is responsible for it. Is it not time that the friends of temperance were bestirring themselves?

Rev. Dr. Kennard, of the Tenth Baptist Church in Boston, has preached ten thousand sermons, baptized two thousand and thirty-three persons, married four thousand and eighty-nine couples, and attended three thousand nine hundred funerals, in forty-six years.—*Canadian Baptist.*

APPEAL TO THE PIETY OF THE CHURCHES.—At the late meeting of the English Baptist Union in London, Rev. Baptist W. Noel made a searching appeal on the state of the churches, in which he insisted that they and their ministers were responsible for this small increase, and among other things he said, "I am sure that if the churches were to be more earnest for them as we ought to be? Do you think that if we give ourselves up to this sort of work we ought to pray and preach with a good deal of hope? I am quite conscious, not only of a defect as to the amount of labor, but also of a defect in this matter of hoping and believing in God."

BAPTIST PROGRESS IN SWEDEN.—The annual report of the Baptist American Publication Society contains an interesting review of the work in Sweden—the mission child of this society. The report is very favorable. The most interesting part of the field during the year has been in the northern part of the kingdom. One parish (Hersjö) has experienced a revival, and from fifty to sixty conversions are reported. But persecution here creeps in, and those engaged in the work have been forbidden to preach in that parish, and will probably be obliged to leave. In the region around Sandvalla, a blessing seems to have followed the ordinary means of grace, and a gentle but steady revival is plainly to be seen. We published last February an interesting account of the work of Per Lind in the region of Umea. The beginning which he described as so successful has continued so up to the latest information. The people flock together in hundreds from great distances to hear the Gospel, and hopeful converts are counted in tens, not to say scores, in nearly all the villages some thirty miles up to the Arctic River. But here also persecution has followed, and Per Lind will probably be robbed of all his property or be subject to some month's imprisonment.

In the middle of Sweden, the work of the Lord continues to progress steadily. In the city of Stockholm, the present meeting-room of the Baptist church is unaccountably crowded, even at 9 o'clock services. Sabbath morning, the "Lighthouse" before the pastor, Rev. A. Wierberg, is about to leave America to collect funds for the erection of a place of worship. Sixty-eight new members were added to the church during the past year.

The south of the kingdom is the especially destitute portion. If a competent brother could be found to minister to a cluster of churches, the people are willing even to make sacrifices for his support. The

great want is the raising up by the Lord of more laborers for his plentiful harvest.

The persecution in "Hersjö," being carried on under two paragraphs of the "Concordance Law," as follows:—1st. The one empowering the church councils to forbid any one they think dangerous to the State church system, from holding religious meetings in their respective parishes. On this ground the persecution against Per Lind in the region of Umea has been carried on. For offences against the same law Mr. King, in the region of Hudiksvall, has been fined 50 riksdalers. The other paragraph of the law forbids any one to hold religious meetings during the time of the State church services. For holding such a meeting, a Sabbath morning in August last, in Wimmerby, Mr. Holmgren has been fined 100 riksdalers. In all these cases the friends who have opened their houses for the holding of meetings are fined too. A commissioned officer in the army has been dismissed from the service recently, only because he would not quit holding religious meetings. His captain, who appreciated him as a good soldier, tried to gain him, by saying that he would lose his salary; but the gallant soldier of the cross answered, that "He would much less lose the great reward received in heaven," and he cheerfully left all and followed in Christ.

During the year 1863, eight hundred and forty persons were baptized. At the beginning of January, 1864, there were in Sweden seven associations, one hundred and seventy churches, with 6191 members.

The home missionary work of the Swedish Baptists shows an earnest, working spirit. The Stockholm Missionary Union, during the past year, supported seven colporteurs; a branch society in Sundsvall, light; and the seven associations of the United churches, for the year 1863, sent out during the year 8,568,000 pages of books and tracts; and by the Executive Committee, 2000 copies of *Prerequisites to Communion*, by A. N. Arnold.

Christ blessing little Children.

Among the many and varied incidents in the wonderful life of Jesus, none more touching than the one recorded in Mark 10: "And they brought young children to him that he should touch them." &c. This impressive scene so replete with heavenly instruction is brought before us by a splendid engraving, copied from the renowned painting of Henry Le Jeune, of Paris. It is engraved on steel in line and little, by George E. Perine, of New York, who is said to be one of the best artists in America. This picture reflects the highest credit upon the genius and talent of its author. Here is Jesus standing in graceful majesty, surrounded by beautiful Jewish mothers presenting their loved ones to him that they may receive his blessing. His countenance beams with yearning love and sympathy; theirs with adoring gratitude and admiration. The charming little boys and girls receive the touch of his gentle hand, and their little faces are upturned with expressions of unbounded delight. Peter and James seem awe-struck as they hear their master saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." The whole picture in fact is one of unrivalled beauty, and well adapted to refine the taste and elevate the affections.

Many of our readers will probably be called upon shortly by those who have this beautiful engraving in charge, when they will have an opportunity of testing the truthfulness of our remarks for themselves, and of purchasing it upon reasonable terms if they think proper so to do.

Missionary Meeting.

We are requested to state that a Missionary Meeting will be held in the Baptist Church, Orléans, on Tuesday evening next. A number of talented speakers are expected to take part in the exercises of the occasion, and to make it one of unusual interest.

We are glad that the pastor, Rev. Mr. Sealey, is moving in this direction. Would it not be well for our pastors generally to adopt a similar course. The Association will soon be on hand, and unless energetic measures are adopted at once, there is too much reason to fear that the Collections for the "Union Society" will fall far short of what they ought to be. "A word to the wise is sufficient."

Dr. Wyckoff and Rev. Mr. Buckbee, Deputation of the "American Bible Union," left the City on Tuesday morning by railway en route for Halifax. They