

## New Testament Studies.

NO. XXXI.

## CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE.

Part 2.

We have seen how the Lord would have us deal with private offences in the church, and how with public ones. Turning again to the New Testament, we find a class of passages applicable to yet another class of cases. These resemble what in law are termed misdemeanours. They have not yet ripened into serious offences, calling for prompt and vigorous action, although there is a danger that they may become such at last. There is the *disorderly walker*; such as Paul describes 2 Thes. iii. 11; who "worketh not at all, but is a busybody." The apostle proceeds to show vv. 12-14, how such a man is to be treated; and then concludes, "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." That is,—"Bear with thy brother as long as thou canst, and cast him not off until reformation seems to be hopeless. There is the *heretic*, as Paul calls him, Tit. iii. 10. We give here some New Testament illustrations of heresy. One tamples with the great doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, and by that alone; as some among the Galatians. Another tamples with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and denies in effect the resurrection of Christ; like "Hymenæus and Philetus," and some at Corinth; see 2 Tim. ii. 16-18. 1 Cor. xv. 12-19. A third tamples with the doctrine of "God manifest in the flesh," as some against whom John wrote, 1 John i. 2, 3; 2 John 9, 10. These, and such as these, are to be admonished, but not cast out of the church without having an opportunity to retract their errors. "The man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition," but not before, "reject." But then the man who walks disorderly, or who holds heresy, may prove *contumacious*. There is always a limit to forbearance somewhere. If, therefore, the man that "walketh disorderly" will persevere in his irregularities, and refuse to be admonished, here is the law for him.—"Withdraw yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly." And if the heretic will not be reclaimed after repeated admonitions, at least he is to be "rejected." It is thus that the Holy Spirit, in the cases here enumerated, teaches us to temper severity with love, and to hold the weapon of excommunication in reserve, using it only as the last resort.

We have yet another lesson on this matter of discipline. We hear much now-a-days of sanitary regulations: arrangements for the preservation of the public health, so that medical appliances, valuable as they are when really required, may become the less necessary. Now we speak here of *Christian* sanitary regulations for the preservation of the spiritual health of the church. That passage in the Mosaic law, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him," may illustrate our meaning here. There is also the kindred passage in the New Testament, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Christ's whole system of church-discipline is conceived in this spirit. It is not vindictive, aiming at the destruction of offenders; but brotherly, aiming at their salvation. At all points it tells of Him who "came to seek and to save that which was lost." Andrew Fuller thus excellently enlarges here:—"A watchful eye upon the state of the church, and of particular members, with a reasonable interposition, may do more towards the preservation of good order than all other things put together. Discourage whisperings, backbitings, and jealousies. Frown on talebearers, and give no ear to their tales. Put contentions in the bud. Adjust differences in civil matters amongst yourselves. . . . Be affectionately free with one another. Give tender and faithful hints where it appears to you that one of your brethren is in danger of being drawn aside from the principles or spirit of the Gospel. Let all be given, from their first entering into connection with you, to expect them. If any one take offence at such treatment, give him to understand that he who cannot endure a caution, or a reproof, is unfit for Christian society, and is in the utmost danger of falling into mischief."

The importance of maintaining a Scriptural discipline in our churches now claims our attention. Let us think of this in the light of the *revelated character of God*. The Bible lays great stress upon the holiness of the Divine nature. "That nature is entombed upon every page of the Sacred Volume. It is thus entombed in order that the people of God, in Peter's bold language, should become 'partakers of the Divine nature.' Hence the exhortation, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' Hence the statement, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' The Father hath 'chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' The Son 'gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' The Spirit of God also is 'the Holy Spirit,' whose special office it is to conduct believers to the 'sanctification of the Spirit.' There can be no Christianity without holiness; for 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.' There is no admission to glory without holiness; for 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' So too, 'except a man be born again—born from above—the birth of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' He has no right in the kingdom of God here. He can have no home in the kingdom of God hereafter. Now the discipline of the Christian church is conformed to these representations, and built up upon them. It is, therefore, indispensably important that that discipline should be maintained; since thus alone will the church be found in harmony with its God, and with the ends for which he is made known to us in his Word."

Let us think, again, of the *nature of the Church of God*. It is not a mob, but an organized body. Like other organizations, it is formed with a view to some special object. Its Author and its object are both brought before us in the passage, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Thus there is a holy peculiarity about the church. Is not this the thought in Cant. iv. 12?—"A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." Such emblematically is the Christian church. It is a glorious advance upon the Jewish church. That was at once too narrow, and too wide. It was too narrow, as it was limited to the descendants of Abraham, and to Judaizing Gentiles. It was too wide, as it comprehended all, whether renewed in their hearts or not, who were in conformity with its outward requirements. But now the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile is "broken down," and "in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him," and admitted to all the immunities of the heavenly kingdom. Thus were ritual qualifications for church membership are gone, and are succeeded by spiritual; and if the spiritual should seem to be wanting, the ritual cannot supply their place. The discipline of the church presupposes these things, and cannot be maintained without them. Hence, again, it is so important that the church should be kept in its holiness; and no church that does not maintain its holiness can claim to be a New Testament church.

Moreover the *honour of our great Founder* is concerned in the maintenance of a Scriptural church discipline. We are reminded here of what God said to the ancient Jews,—"Ye are my witnesses," and how he reproaches them because they had borne false witness for God. "My name," says he, "is continually every day blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." Now what a fearful thing is this, when God's avowed friends turn traitors, and misrepresent him to his enemies, and "give them occasion to blaspheme!" Yet this is constantly done by the professed churches of God. Their membership is avowedly a mixed membership; and that makes the Christian church no better than the Jewish. Or, where a purer theory is professed, the practice is not in harmony with the theory; and that makes the church no better than the world. And the world marks this, and forms its own perverse, though plausible conclusions. For what is the world's Bible? Not our book—the Bible. There is another book which the children of this world study far more than God's book. We refer here to the lives of God's avowed people—the practice of his professed churches. Where these are consistent—and men are far better judges of Christian consistency than they are sometimes supposed to be—God is honoured, whether men own his authority or not. In that case, they will be struck with awe, though they may not be subdued by love; since "the beauties of holiness" are severe even while they are attractive. But let the case be otherwise, and then mark the consequence. The men of the world take note of the fact, and draw their own inference. "These are religious men, and such and such is their religion." So they read. And then they reason, "Why, what is the difference between them and us? What do they better than we do? Our irreligion is surely as good as their religion. And we may as well be as we are, if religion is to do for us no more than it has done for them." And so "the way of truth is evil spoken of," and ungodly men are hardened; and the cause of Satan is not weakened; and God is robbed of his glory. Yes! the inconsistencies of professors, and the neglects of Christian churches, these are the great soul murderers. Nay, while infidelity has slain its thousands, inconsistency has slain its tens of thousands. The latter, indeed, is the parent of the former; and so it is answerable for the mischiefs of the other, as well as for all the evils which it has directly wrought. Nor will our God get from his churches the glory due unto him name until those churches are purged by a godly discipline, and so clothed with an influence which shall sweetly compel the utterance, "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you."

## The Seminary.

A school depends for its prosperity as much upon its reputation as a bank upon its credit. If the former be robbed of its good name it must be injured just as surely as the notes of the latter are regarded with suspicion when its credit is shaken. The Seminary has, for the last six years, been passing through this ordeal and so perturbation has been the attack upon it, that even its best friends naturally begin to think that there must be some cause for it, though they cannot discover that cause.

What has made it the more difficult to deal with this state of things is the fact, that the charges brought against the Seminary are of the most vague and general kind. I pass over the personal remarks levelled at myself. I have received from my brethren so much respect and honor beyond my deserts, that it would ill become me to resent a few personalities, which can only produce a prejudice in little envious minds.

But as touching the institution under my care it has been objected that it is a mere child's school; and that it is nothing more than a school for Frederickton and its vicinity. With regard to the number over the age of twelve years, as I have already stated in the *Visitor*, there were 39 out of 70 who entered last year above that age. And in addition I may state, that out of forty, the average number that attended each week, during the year a fraction over twenty or full half were above twelve years of age. There is of course a junior department in the institution, and no experienced teacher would disparage the attendance at it; the training received between 8 and 12 years of age has an important bearing upon a lad's future progress; and such lads specially attain the age and advancement which qualify them for the senior department.—A gardener does not neglect his seedlings because they have not yet flowered, neither does a shepherd despise the lambs, because they are not yet sheep.

With regard to the other objection that the Seminary is only a school for Frederickton and its vicinity, if by the vicinity of Frederickton is understood, Woodstock on one side, Westville on another, and Moncton on another, it is certainly true that last year the Seminary was a school for Frederickton and its vicinity; but this fact is fatal to the oft repeated insinuation of inefficiency.

Those who are close to an institution, and cognizant of its operations are the best judges of its quality, and if they patronize it, no stronger proof can be afforded that it is worthy of the support of those who are at a distance.

According to the testimony of the assailants of the Seminary, therefore, the verdict of those who are near, and have the best means of judging, is in its favor. C. S. S. S. S.

FREDERICTON, Aug. 18th, 1864.

## Rev. Duncan Dunbar.

This aged servant of the Lord was so well known in this Province, and his memory is held so dear by many, that we thought it advisable to pen the following brief sketch of his life, given us mainly by himself.

Duncan Dunbar was born in Granton, Scotland, in the year 1791. At a very tender age he had strong convictions of sin; burdened with a sense of grief, he went to his Parish minister to be shown the way of salvation. The minister told him to play on his fiddle, mingle in gay society, and banish all serious thoughts. Strange advice, thought young Dunbar, for a minister of the Gospel to give a penitent sinner. And, instead of giving him relief, this advice only increased his weight of wretchedness. Hearing, provisionally, of an aged couple amid the hills, who held peculiar views about religion, he applied at once to them for instruction. The way of salvation, by the cross of Christ was made so plain by these aged Christians, that he immediately believed there was mercy for him. Soon he found peace in believing, and rejoiced in God his Saviour. Not long after this period he felt it his duty to preach the Gospel, and he commenced at once the work of the ministry. As his early efforts were much blessed, it was soon thought advisable to set him apart publicly to the great work he had chosen. His ordination took place when he was about 24 years of age, in connection with the Presbyterian body. About three years subsequently, he was sent out as a Missionary to New Brunswick, by the London Missionary Society. In the year 1818 he landed in New Brunswick, and soon commenced preaching with great earnestness and zeal in the Congregational Church in Sheffield, and in surrounding districts. A great revival of religion followed; many were born into the kingdom of God through Mr. Dunbar's faithful labors. While he was preaching in Sheffield he changed his views, and became a Baptist. He then had many interviews with the Rev. Elijah Estabrook, who was then settled in the

congregation, and when his mind was settled as to the path of duty, he was baptized and received into the fellowship of the Baptist church in St. John. Soon after this he went home to Scotland for his family, and without much delay returned to New Brunswick. He then moved to St. George. There he preached with great acceptance, and there was a large gathering of souls into the church of Christ. From St. George he passed over into the State of Maine, and labored very successfully for some time in Eastport, Berwick, and Damariscotta. He was then called to the pastorate of the Baptist churches in Chester and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Here his labors were abundantly blessed. From Chester he was called to the pastorate of the McDougal St. Baptist church, New York, which, with the interval of a few years while he was in Boston, Trenton and Philadelphia, he held for about 35 years. On Saturday, July 8th, after a few days illness of dysentery, he breathed his happy spirit away into the paradise of God, aged 73 years. Blessed with a vigorous constitution, he felt few of the infirmities of age, and up to the last of his life he preached three times on the Sabbath.

As a man, he was exceedingly kind and affectionate, and generous, so would say, even to a fault. He has been known to give away the last dollar he had to a needy brother. As a Christian, he was very devoted. He had strong faith in God, and a firm reliance upon Divine Providence. In speaking of God's goodness to him by providential dealings, we have often heard him refer to the kindness of old Mrs. Jeremiah Burpee, of Sheffield, who still lives; at the advanced age of 98 years, and of Mrs. Seelye, of St. George, who a few years ago entered into rest. As a preacher, he was earnest, clear, forcible. The doctrines of Divine Sovereignty, election, total depravity, and salvation alone through Christ, were his favorite themes; and these were illustrated with such freshness and vigor that they could not fail to interest the hearer, however frequently they may have been discussed. It seemed to be his highest aim to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. As a pastor, he was one of the most faithful and tender we ever knew. Wherever the sick was, whether connected with his congregation or not, if possible, he was there. If any was in trouble, he was ready to comfort, and to point the mourner to the land where sorrow is unknown. In the youth he took a very lively interest, and by his instrumentality hundreds were brought into the church. These were not left to their own guidance, as is too often the case, but over them he watched with jealous care, even to the close of his labors.

Such was Duncan Dunbar. In many respects, we think it will be long before we shall look upon his like again. He was a faithful sentinel, and died at his post. Of him it might have been truly sung:

"Servant of God, well done:  
Rest from thy loved employ;  
The battle fought, the victory won,  
Enter thy Master's joy!"

G. E. D. A.

## For the Christian Visitor.

## The Unsettled State of the Pastorate.

Ma. Editor—I was struck with the interesting and truthful article, copied into your columns from the *Christian Era* last week, containing strictures on the abuses which have crept into our churches, with respect to their treatment of ministers. While reading the humiliating truths so faithfully set forth by the writer I felt sad, and the question involuntarily arose, Why are these things so? Why is the sacred and endearing relationship which should exist between a faithful pastor and the "book of God," over which the Holy Spirit has made him an overseer, so wantonly violated? Surely there is cause of sorrow to all who desire the prosperity of Zion in view of this unsettled state of things.

It is painful to hear "those who are without" remark, in reference to the treatment of some faithful pastor, by those for whom he has labored and prayed; it may be for years, that no honorable man of the 'world' would discharge a hired servant for so trivial a cause as that for which the servant of God has been coolly set aside (it may be with a portion of his salary unpaid), by the church of Christ for whom he has labored. I have heard of a minister who has been dismissed from his pastorate, and who has been told, "You are not wanted here any more." Behold, how these Christians love one another! Sinners do not take knowledge of you that ye have been with Jesus and glorify your Father who is in Heaven. But while confessing with shame and sorrow the guilt resting on too many of our churches in this matter, may we not inquire—Are not the ministers themselves blameable?

"I know that is a delicate matter to be treated by one of the 'laity.' Yet I think that if we are really desirous to find a remedy for what is becoming an almost universal evil, we should endeavor to look at all the causes which aid in producing it. Let us then look at the reverse of the picture drawn by the writer in the *Era*. A minister is at liberty, and of course desirous to secure a field of labor. He visits a church where he is 'in need of a pastor,' preaches two, or three carefully studied sermons, visits from house to house for a few days, talks of the things pertaining to the Kingdom, prays and comforts, leaving a favorable impression on the minds of all. The church thinks that the right man has presented himself. "A call" is extended to him and accepted, and for a time all goes well. Soon, however, the charm of novelty wears off; the pastor becomes remiss in visiting; or if he does continue to visit it is only at the houses of a few chosen friends, and on such occasions the subject of religion is seldom mentioned. Politics, the news of the day, literature, are all freely discussed, with an occasional joke, and a sprinkling of gossip; and the pastor departs without so much as a word of prayer. The study is neglected, and as a matter of course, the pulpit proclaims the fact to the listening congregation. In short, the church discovers that their minister having struck himself during his trial visit, has only to ring the changes on the lesser numbers during the rest of the time.

Meanwhile, "a brother is overtaken in a fault." The pastor does not go near him, but the next Sabbath the poor sinner is not much more than a burdened from the pulpit. Or some (occasional) deacon (it may be) has expressed an opinion that the sermons of his minister are not quite so interesting as they were at first; and in the course of conversation some one informs the pastor. The next Sabbath, in all the dignity of offended majesty, he rebukes, from the sacred desk, those who speak lightly of God's ministers; and so the breach is made, and goes on to widen and deepen. The pastor doing his part in the pulpit, and the people annoyed and disappointed, going from bad to worse, till matters come to a crisis. The minister leaves, having his mind completely soured with his brethren, and too often willing to publish all their faults, forgetting their virtues entirely.

Brothers and sisters, is not this sometimes so? Is it right? Is it what your Master requires at your hands? C. S. S. S. S.

Union Society, Sarnia.—Collected by Mrs. E. J. Pickle.—Deacon C. Barnett, \$1; Joseph Pickle, \$6; Mrs. Joseph Pickle, \$1; Thos. Gannon, \$5; J. R. Pickle, \$2; J. N. Pickle, \$3; Albert Barnett, \$6; Elijah A. Baxter, \$5; J. R. Jackson, \$1; Miss Sarah D. Baxter, \$5; John Elliott, \$5; Henry Baxter, \$5; Mrs. E. J. Pickle, \$1. Total amount, \$51. St. John, August 18th.

## Missionary Colportage by the American Tract Society.

We are glad to learn that the work of missionary colportage has been introduced, and is now being successfully prosecuted in these Provinces. It is especially adapted to reach and supply the wants of those not reached by other agencies. Colportage as carried forward by the American Tract Society has been well described as, "an aggressive, outgoing, missionary effort in behalf of those too poor, or too indolent, to purchase the printed truth and too widely scattered to be seen gathered into churches. It seeks the destitute, follows the wandering, and finds the neglected. In its spirit and aim it is a Christ-like, 'going about to do good,' and it ever urges upon Christ's followers personal engagement for him. The extent to which this aggressive agency has stimulated local churches and individual Christians to greater zeal and consecration is incalculable and most blessed. The day comes on every when every one who professes faith in Christ, must be virtually a missionary colporteur."

We learn that during the past year fifteen colporteurs have labored in the Provinces—five of them in New Brunswick, eight in Nova Scotia, and two in Prince Edward Island. In connection with their labors about twenty thousand volumes of good religious publications have been circulated by sales and gifts. The colporteurs have attended and addressed two hundred and fifty religious meetings, have conversed or prayed with five thousand families, and have made visits to more than double that number.

It must be gratifying to every Christian heart to know that the Society intends to continue, and if possible, increase and extend these evangelizing efforts, and we doubt not that all who love our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, will most cheerfully cooperate in all practical ways, to help forward this great and good work.

## Correspondence from the Holy Land.

JERUSALEM, April 1864.

We spent a comfortable night in Jericho; after the inhabitants of the neighboring village had finished their rejoicing in commemoration of the last night of Ramadan. Ramadan is the Mohammedan Lent. During this time the adult population abstain from eating and drinking between the hours of sunrise and sunset. It is quite remarkable how strictly they adhere to this custom. Through the long hours of Ramadan the faithful Moslems will toil as hard as ever, and necessarily will suffer much from thirst; yet not a drop of water will pass their lips until the sun has sunk below the horizon. Then there is a time of rest, and a general assembling around the wells. (When travelling in the desert or upon a long journey, they are exempt from keeping Ramadan.) This night they congregated in front of our tents, and gave expression to their wild joy in singing and dancing; the latter performance consisting as much in bowing their heads and clapping their hands, as in the movement of their feet; while the former was a solo by a female, expressed in a low guttural warble, at a certain pitch of which the other Arabs, who had formed a circle around our tents, joined in a loud chorus. Thus they passed the time until shortly before midnight, when they dispersed. Early next morning, before the sun peered over the mountains of Moab, we were seated around our rough tables enjoying the fresh air in the cool open air. The clear sky indicated that we were to have another scorching day, and it was now our business to get away from this place as soon as possible. By the time breakfast was over, our white tents, that on the previous evening looked so comfortably and had assumed an air of permanency, had entirely disappeared, and there was no trace of their previous existence, save the little heap of trash that had grown up in the preparation of evening and morning meals. How emblematical of human life!—here to-day in the full vigor of manhood, enjoying the life that now is as though it lasted forever, to-morrow we have passed away, and of ourselves nothing is left to show that we have ever lived, save our ashes that repose beneath some monumental stone. Our tent equipment and baggage having been packed upon the backs of our camels, we mounted our horses, and were soon cantering away in the first beams of the rising sun for the banks of the river Jordan. The plain on which we rode gradually descended until it reached the river's brink, and was quite destitute of vegetation after we left the streams that flowed from the 'fountain of Elisha.' Just before reaching the Jordan, we descended what appeared to be a second bank of that river, and were told by one of our guides, who had been here some few weeks previous, that this space was formerly a lake, and was now a dry lake bed. One hour's ride from the place of our encampment on the previous night, brought us to the Jordan, whose banks we found covered with a strip of luxuriant verdure, and lined with numerous trees, mostly of small growth. This beautiful river, with its green banks and swift waters, presented a striking contrast with the sterile, death-like plain over which we had this morning passed. This point that we struck on the river is the landing-place of the Greek pilgrims, who after Eastern festivities at Jerusalem, resort hither in great numbers. The present Arabic name for the Jordan is 'el-Sheriah,'—the watering-place; and the Greek Valley through which it flows, from the lakes of Tiberias to the Dead Sea, is called 'El-Ghor,' signifying a depressed plain. The river here is about seventy feet wide, as nearly as we could judge—though wider, we were led to believe, after the falling of the winter rains, and the mud that had grown up in the preparation of our journey, and were soon cantering away in the first beams of the rising sun for the banks of the river Jordan. The plain on which we rode gradually descended until it reached the river's brink, and was quite destitute of vegetation after we left the streams that flowed from the 'fountain of Elisha.' Just before reaching the Jordan, we descended what appeared to be a second bank of that river, and were told by one of our guides, who had been here some few weeks previous, that this space was formerly a lake, and was now a dry lake bed. One hour's ride from the place of our encampment on the previous night, brought us to the Jordan, whose banks we found covered with a strip of luxuriant verdure, and lined with numerous trees, mostly of small growth. 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