

should walk in newness of life. What object can be purer or nobler? It touches a necessity of our religious life and the very fundamental elements of our Christian faith. Should we not, therefore, enter into the observance of this holy season in a spirit which is in harmony with the end in view? The advantage will be ours, and we shall succeed the more surely in this by earnest preparation now.

### 'WHICH IS MUCH TO BE DESIRED.'

The Church of England, in her Communion Service, laments her lost Discipline. The restoration thereof is, she declares, 'much to be wished.' The want of it is continually objected against her by her foes, and the lack of it is a weak point in her harness. Much has she recovered and restored in her latest half century. Is the restoration of godly discipline a thing past praying for? Not so. And we are bold also to declare that, if her officers are faithful and courageous, the thing is, even now, within her grasp. And for the need of it, let the scandals which do attend the indiscriminate reading of the Burial Service speak. And let them be confronted with the rubric which prefaces it, and it will be seen that the Church's exercise of her power of Excommunication is supposed; and that over notorious, and, therefore, excommunicate, sinners, the Office is not intended to be used. The proper use of her power of Discipline would remove this scandal from the Church.

There was a controversy, in the Early Church, as to the possibility of pardon for notorious sin after Baptism. In admitting sinners, even the most heinous, to penance and Absolution, the Church Catholic took care to bring home to their minds, and also to the minds of those who had not fallen, the exceeding sinfulness and the deadly defilement of sin. 'They did not,' says Bishop Harold Browne, 'indeed restore them readily and lightly as we do at present.' But, we must ask, reading these words—do we restore our lapsed at all in the Church of England? Where are our excommunicate members? What Priest has the boldness to present; what Bishop is asked to admonish, and, failing heed of this, to excommunicate, the impenitent offender? But, in the Early Church, sin was set before her members as a very serious matter indeed. 'For example, for fornication' (a sin so lightly thought of in our day) 'the offender was expelled three years from the public service of the Church, three years more he was in the station of hearer, three years more in the station of the prostrate, and then was received to full communion. The term was double for adultery, and three times as long for murder.' Some discretion was allowed to the Bishop, and the rules varied in dioceses and churches. 'But the diversity in the measure of penance only proves identity of principle.'

We would not advocate such great severity. We think that we detect a milder rule in the treatment by St. Paul of one guilty even of the dreadful crime of Incest. (See the Second Epistle to the Corinthians). But truly an excessive rigour is preferable to a laxity which leaves deadly sin unrebuked, unpunished, and scathless, in the Church. If it be required of his ministers (1 Tim. iii.) that they rule well their house, having their children in subjection, must not the Church, our Mother, be either blameworthy or contemptible if her children are under no restraint of discipline or chastening? Can she be, from the Apostle's point of view, fit to have the charge of a family? Is it kind to the offending, salutary to their brethren, to leave them unpunished, to make no difference between the rebellious and the dutiful? It is, surely, plain, that the res-

toration of Discipline to our Church is 'much to be wished.' In fact, that it is really a necessity.

What remedy is at hand, we then ask, for this disordered state of affairs?

Canon 113 sets before us a very plain and simple course of action. Are the more part of the clergy so much as aware of its existence? The Churchwardens, &c., are expected to 'take care for the suppressing of sin and wickedness in their several parishes—by admonition, reprehension, and denunciation, to their Ordinaries.' But if 'through fear of their superiors, or through negligence,' they forbear to discharge their duty, the Parson, Vicar, or Curate may join with them, or, if need be, himself present to the Ordinaries wheresoever it is necessary, who then will, after enquiry, take the necessary steps for admonishing, or, in the end, excommunicating the offender. And it is to be noted that this very Canon provides for the inviolability of the seal of Confession which (except with regard to a crime endangering his own life under the law, by concealment) the Minister is to keep sacred 'under pain of irregularity.' In the Act 53 Geo. III., c. 127, occurs this important section:—

'Nothing in this Act contained shall prevent any Ecclesiastical Court from pronouncing or declaring persons to be excommunicated in definite sentences, or in interlocutory decrees, having the force and effect of definite sentences, such sentences or decrees being pronounced as spiritual censures for offences of ecclesiastical cognisance, in the same manner as such Court might lawfully have pronounced or declared the same had this Act not been passed.'

And in the case of *Randall v. Vowles* and *Vowles* (1856)—a case of incestuous cohabitation—the Judge of the Arches Court gave a judgment in which the question of penance is referred to, and excommunication threatened. (Phillimore's *Eccles. Law*, vol. ii. pp. 1374-5). It would seem, then, that it does but require faithfulness and courage in the ministry of the Church of England to recover for her the Discipline, which recovery her formularies speak of as 'much to be wished.'

The objection might be made that the exercise of discipline would be 'inexpedient,' that the lay folk would not endure it, and that they would be alienated from the Church if she revived the exercise of this discipline.

The argument of 'Expediency' is one that we are not careful to answer.

'Because Right is Right, to follow Right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

And Expediency is often—even for this world—inexpedient. It often defeats its own ends. 'It is expedient that one man should die,' lest 'the Romans should come and take away our place and nation.' Well, the Caiaphas policy of 'Expediency' prevailed, and greatly, by means of it, the dreaded catastrophe was brought about!

Let a story of old times, less known than that of Ambrose and Theodosius (which is, of course, equally to the point), show how the fearless carrying out of Principle v. Expediency will sometimes triumph, even here and now:—

'Sweyn, king of Denmark, was a man of a fierce, lawless temper; he made an unlawful marriage in spite of all the Bishop's entreaties, and when he heard that some of his earls had made jests upon him he had them put to death without form of law. When the next day he came to church Bishop William stood, like Ambrose, at the door, barring the way with his pastoral staff, and calling him not a king but murderer. Some of the attendants rushed forward with their swords and threatened the Bishop. He bent his head for the stroke, and said he would die in the cause of God. Sweyn's heart was touched; he called them away, bade the Bishop appoint his penance, and give up his sin. He was absolved, and ever after loved

the Bishop, and greatly aided the work of the Church in Denmark. In 1080 he died, and so did Bishop William, who had prayed not to be long separated from him, and they were both buried at the same time.'

Here Principle proved to be expedient, even for time. But was not the good Bishop prepared to face whatsoever consequence of his (from a worldly point of view) inexpedient action? And ought men, in our day, to be held back by the fear of consequences from doing their duty?—I. R. V. in *Church Bells*.

### DIOCESE OF MONTREAL.

Quio.—A Pre-Lenten Conference of Clergy of the Rural Deanery of Clarendon was held here to day. It began with celebration of Holy Communion in St. John's Church, which was well attended by the parishioners. The distance of some of the clergy prevented their attendance. The Rev. J. F. Snowden, of the Diocese of Ontario was heartily welcomed. Papers on the subject of Lenten Fasting were read by the Rev. T. E. Cunningham, F. R. Smith, and Geo. A. Smith, and an interesting discussion followed. The visiting clergy were most hospitably entertained by the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Given.

CLARENDON.—The recent Advent Mission conducted by the Rev. Dr. Norton continues to bear fruit. A ladies Missionary Association has been organized and is creating much interest in the parish in the Algoma work. The Rev. H. Beer, of St. Joseph's Island, Algoma, was present at one of the meetings and gave an interesting address. Another result of the Mission is the organization of a Young Men's Association on the plan of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

[The name of Correspondent must in all cases be enclosed with letter, but will not be published unless desired. The Editor will not hold himself responsible, however, for any opinions expressed by Correspondents.]

### CHELSEA MISSION—NEW PARSONAGE.

To the Editor of the CHURCH GUARDIAN:

SIR,—I desire through your journal to thank those friends who have so cheerfully assisted me in my parsonage enterprise. If I had 75 or 80 more \$5 notes, however, I could accomplish my purpose. My earnest desire is to put up the building this spring. The little Mission has done well and deserves encouragement. Further help is most respectfully solicited. Again I ask, who will help me carry out this much needed work?

GEORGE JOHNSON,  
Chelsea, Feb. 9th, 1888. Incumbent.

"His Compassions fail not, they are true every morning."—*Lam. iii.*, 22-3.

Thou art with me, O, My Father,  
At early dawn of day:  
It is Thy Glory brighteneth  
The upward streaming ray.  
It calls me by its beauty  
To rise and worship Thee,—  
I feel Thy Glorious presence,  
Thy face I may not see.

Thou art with me, O, my Father,  
In changing scenes of life,  
In loneliness of spirit,  
In weariness of strife.  
My comfortings, my chastenings,  
Alternate at Thy will,—  
I trust Thee, O, my Father!  
I trust Thee, and am still.

—Saxby.