

well feel strong in its truth and happy in the anticipated fulfilment of its promises.

Success to its claims, and triumph to its behests throughout the world.

WILLIAM HUNTER.

DIFFICULTIES IN CHURCHES—No. 1.

BY A. CAMPBELL.

DIFFICULTIES in churches arise through want of discipline; and lack of discipline arises from inattention to the nature and necessity of it. The gospel dispensation, by its Author, is wisely compared to a drag-net, cast into the sea, which encloses fish clean and unclean, good and bad. The church may be pure in doctrine, pure in all theories, and pure in the aims and desires of the great majority of its members; but it has never been long pure of hypocrites, pretenders, and unrighteous persons. Among the twelve Apostles there was a Judas; in the church of Jerusalem there was an Ananias and Sapphira his wife; in the church of Samaria there was a Simon Magus; and in the churches of the Gentiles, planted by the Apostles, there were persons uncircumcised in heart and ears; and it is even so at the present hour, perhaps, in the best churches on earth. Hence the necessity of scriptural discipline, and hence the importance of correct views of it.

We have an adage of sage wisdom amongst the politicians of this world—"It is in the time of peace," say they, "that we ought to prepare for war." As the mariner, while in the harbor, or in a calm sea, prepares for storms and tempests, so ought the church in times of great peace and prosperity to prepare for times of trial, of difficulty and discipline. It is too late to debate about the law and the rules of discipline, when the case to which they ought to be applied is under consideration.

Some of our churches have passed through much tribulation from errors of this sort. The church in Richmond, the church in Baltimore, the church in Lexington, and the church in Louisville have been distracted, divided, and alienated by errors in discipline; and had it not been for the recuperative energies of a good constitution and the vigour of the apostolic doctrine, unimpaired by human creeds and formularies, these churches would doubtless have perished from the way. But through the grace of God, and the excellency of our constitution, the New-Testament Scriptures, all these difficulties have been healed, and these churches are now re-united, and in a state of comparative prosperity. And long may they be so!

I am pretty well acquainted with the history of all these troubles, for I have been accurately informed of them from the beginning, and do unhesitatingly ascribe them all to a culpable ignorance of Christian discipline; or, what is still worse, to a shameful neglect of the practice of it. No doctrine, no sentiment, no speculative dogmas—nothing of the species of sectarian alienations, has ever occurred among any of