

life, is either not understood, or disbelieved, and the sublime teachings of the Bible are supplanted by vapid declamation. To such a state of thought, doctrine is rather the harsh, dark, lines of an otherwise pleasant picture, than its brightest colourings, giving unity and attractiveness to the whole.

In the pulpit of to-day, doctrine does not always occupy the prominent position which it holds in the Bible; and hence divinely appointed ends are sought, not only in neglect of, but in opposition to divinely appointed means; too frequently the cheap, voluntary offering of the pulpit, not the demand of the pew. Doctrine is the church's message and power, in the hands of the Spirit, and God's revealed method of a world's regeneration. A church, in which it is undervalued, and its high relation misunderstood, or in which it is either curtailed or adulterated, fails to proclaim the glory of her Lord, and becomes unfitted for her high mission.

(3.) Purely of discipline, as a necessity of existence, and of vigorous church life, is inseparable from purity of doctrine. Where right views of the institution prevail, integrity will secure the supremacy of decency and order, and the church reflect her principles. But where views are not co-extensive with God's revealed purposes in the establishment of order and law,—where they reflect personal ambition, or timid time-serving, discipline is regarded as a hinderance to progress, hurtful to peace, and unsuited to the times. Tampering with, or unfaithfulness to truth, leads to unfaithfulness in its official application in order. Laxity and dead life are the results, and "the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, *the work of the potter.*" Is it deemed to-day any violation of christian duty or decency, to hail as a brother, or bid God-speed to him who cries Lord, Lord, while the poison of asps is under his lips? Does not the old apostolic curse upon the promulgator of false doctrine savor of an age destitute of charity, and which, happily, the church has outgrown? The teaching, or action, which lowers the standard of truth, is destructive of its administrative purity, and inconsistency is winked out of sight, to the dishonor of the church and injury of the souls of men. Who deems it wrong to eat with an excommunicated brother; and are not rules coolly ignored in the absence of all danger of official interference, and are not church courts often swayed by an unscriptural expediency? Such a course is an attempt to construct the household of faith without the conscientious enforcement of divine rule, and need we wonder, that there is the absence of that loving