

twisted themselves around the trellis. I look at it for a while, and say to my gardener—"See here; which is the cheapest, to take that vine up, and burn it, and plant a new vine there, or undertake to trim this up, and give it a new start, and endeavor to train it right?" He would say that it was about "six of one, and about half a dozen of the other." On the whole, it is better to plant a new root, than to seek to change the old vine. Is not this true in regard to a great many men? To undertake to untwist and unlock those gnarled branches which are twirled around their life, is it not like taking the very root out of them? How many are here who know this from experience! Conceive yourself as being again in the state of a child, and your whole life as conforming to the wish of your Father who is in heaven; what a mighty change would that be!—*Beecher.*

For the Christian Messenger.

The Scriptural Principle of Church Government.

No. 7.

We are now launched upon the stream of the Church's history; and shall endeavor to note as we pass along the events, intimations, examples and teachings from which the government designed for the Christian church may be definitely and conclusively learned.

Christ is no longer with his disciples and apostles. The three years and a half of active public life which He shared with them have come to an end. They closed where He cried upon the cross "It is finished and gave up the ghost." At the end of forty days after the resurrection He took his final leave of them at Bethany and ascended to "his Father and their Father and to his God and their God." It was between this point and the occasion of Pentecost that the election, treated of in our last, of one to fill the place of Judas took place. The apostolic staff is now full and efficient; but the numbers, who sympathize with the rising interest, are not given. One hundred and twenty took part in the election of Matthias, but these doubtless were only a small fraction of the entire body of those who were interested in the new and rising institution.

The period of their darkness has come to an end. Light flashes from heaven. The minds of the apostles and disciples are illumined and their hearts are stirred. To the permanent residents of Palestine are now added the dispersed among the Gentiles. Jerusalem is thronged with Jews and Jewish proselytes from Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Lybia, Cyrene, Rome, Crete and Arabia. These all came under the mighty influences of the Spirit. Thousands turned unto the Lord and were baptized. The apostles, and the old and the new converts were drawn together into a distinct society, and arrangements were made for continuing the work of the Lord, and for meeting the wants of the new community.

At this stage of the development and success of the kingdom of Christ, we should expect directions to be sent from the divine Head, through some channel, for the immediate and perfect organization of this large accumulation of unorganized materials. Order and regularity characterize in an emphatic degree every department of God's works and government; and inferentially it might be expected to appear early in the external formation of the Church. The followers of Christ, both apostles and disciples, while they followed their Master in his public life, were both unorganized and unofficered. The presence of their Master superseded the necessity of this. But after He had passed away an external structure became a *sine qua non*, if the new society was to grow and flourish in conformity to the great principles established by the Creator, by which all communities in the human family have taken form, or have continued their existence and operations. "All things were created for Him." The relations and laws given to the family of man came from God, who is the author of the plan of redemption, and hence they must have been in harmony with it. To none of the primeval and normal relations of society, was it necessary that violence should be done in the rise and establishment of the new church. They had been in existence from the beginning of the race, as agents to stretch forth their willing hands, and help raise the walls and complete the external structure of the Church of Christ.

In this we find the secret of our disappointment, in not learning that, subsequently to the Ascension, orders and specific direc-

tions were given to complete at once the organization of the church. If the necessity was not pressing at the time when Matthias was chosen, as the number mentioned is only one hundred and twenty men, it certainly would appear to be so after the Holy Spirit had been poured out, and an addition of three thousand made to the original company. The increase did not even cease here. The inspired declarations and appeals of the apostles went to the hearts of the people, and "the Lord added to the number daily such as should be saved." The tide was turned against the opposers. The Sanhedrim and bigoted Jews quailed before the power of the gospel. The streets of Jerusalem were lined with the sick, those possessed of demons and the afflicted of all classes; and health and soundness followed in the path of the gliding shadow of Peter, which passed over the pallets of the infirm, as the inspired apostle walked through the excited metropolis. The doors of prisons refused to confine the followers of Christ who were filling Jerusalem with their doctrine. So great is the sympathy, so great is the success, that the number of the adherents to the new cause is proclaimed in a short time to be five thousand. But still there is no organization. A great community in a great city, but regulated under no external system. How are they to be shaped into a well ordered and systematic society? By submitting to baptism, they announced themselves the followers of the crucified Nazarene.

Let us observe the ways of the Lord in giving organization and government to his Church. There are no deacons, bishops, or priests as yet in the new community, known as an order. Here is the place to ascertain how God gave a government to his visible church; what the character of that government is; and what are the powers of the officers who appear at this period.

We shall see that as it has been up to this point, so it is now. Another crisis comes and gives birth to an order of officers, in whose election the polity of the Christian church can be clearly discovered. In the temporal administrations, the widows of the Jews who had come from other countries, and who spoke the Greek language were neglected. Attention was called to this by the complaints that were made; and the necessity at once became apparent for the appointment of men who should have charge of these temporal matters, and leave the apostles free to exercise themselves in prayer and the ministry of the word.

Here were twelve apostles fully commissioned and inspired. The question now arises why did they not make the appointment of these men? If the government of the church was to be committed to the ministry, the Apostles, at this stage when there was so much ignorance, would not have given the appointment into the hands of the whole body of the disciples. This would have been unnatural and unaccountable upon the hypothesis that the power of guiding and controlling the church was to be committed to those invested with the functions of the ministry. There is no rational way of accounting for the election of the seven by the whole community, and their solemn induction into office by the Apostles, only upon the supposition that it was designed as an emphatic lesson in the series, given to afford early instruction to the apostolic churches in self-government. Try an explanation upon any other ground, and the facts and circumstances are unyielding. Here is a rare opportunity to give instruction, and it is embraced. This instruction is given in the most effectual way. A crisis has come, which can only be passed safely by appointing an order of officers for the church. The thousands present will soon disperse and return to their homes in the cities, towns and countries of the Gentile world. There they will be called upon to co-operate with others of like faith and sympathies in organizing and working churches. They would naturally follow the example set them at Jerusalem. What they saw there would be taken as precedents in guiding them in the work of organizing and managing new churches. The apostles appreciated their position. Placed as they were in the centre of the rising church, endowed and inspired so as to produce wonder and reverence in the hearts of all who beheld them, they nevertheless refrained from arrogating to themselves any power in the exercise of which any ill would arise to the church at Jerusalem, or in any other part of the world.

The apostles assembled the multitude of the disciples, and requested them to look out seven men from among them of honest

report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, who might take charge of the temporal affairs of the community. The multitude was pleased, and they chose Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas. These were placed before the apostles, who laid their hands on them, and inducted them into office. Acts vi. 1-6. It does not appear that the great company of disciples at Jerusalem were yet formed into a church, nor does it appear that these seven men were named deacons. But an advance in the development of two ideas is apparent. The one idea is that the responsibility of government is placed upon the entire company, so as to initiate a congregational polity, and the other idea is that officers are a necessity.

In our next article we shall endeavor to trace from this appointment of seven men, to look after the less spiritual welfare of the company of believers, the beginning of that order of men, known in the church as deacons.

EDWARD MANNING.

P. S.—In the last article, "No. 6," line 7, "Disappointed and dejected," should be, "Disappointed yet joyful." E. M.

For the Christian Messenger.

Eastern New Brunswick Association.

July 9. Though some mishaps that befel us on the way from Amherst to Sackville, we did not reach the latter place till noon on Thursday, and lost the pleasure of attending the morning session. We were informed that the time was very profitably spent in conference.

In the afternoon the Association was organized, and brother W. A. Coleman was chosen Moderator. At that time the number of delegates in attendance was somewhat small. But there was a great influx of Nova Scotians: I counted *seventeen* of our ministers, besides licentiates. Only one-half (*twelve*) of the ministers of the Association were present. Whether this had any influence on the discussion that followed, I will not venture to determine: it is certain, however, that when a motion was made to invite brethren to seats, there was a lengthy debate on the degree of privilege and power that should be enjoyed by them. Hitherto, visiting brethren have enjoyed "all the privileges of delegates;" but it was now resolved to alter the "Rules of Order," so as to give them "all the privileges of members of the Association, *except that of voting.*" You will observe, therefore, that it will not be necessary for our Associations, in future, to send *delegates* to New Brunswick.

In the evening, brother Normonday presented the claims of the French Mission in a very interesting manner, and a collection for that object was taken up. Addresses were given by the brethren Bill, Walker, Francis, and Dr. Cramp. I was very glad to meet brother Francis again. He is now settled at St. Francisco. He is as stout and hearty as ever.

July 10. The Introductory Sermon was preached by Brother W. A. Corey, from Isaiah xliii. 21. It was a good sermon—brimfull of sound doctrine—with no admixture of the bitter or the sour. The lovers of truth were edified: those who differ from us in sentiment could not be offended.

Education was discussed in the afternoon. The report of the Committee was presented by Dr. Spurden. I copy the portion relating to Acadia College:

Acadia College continues to enjoy a good degree of prosperity. There was a fair attendance of students during the past year. Ten graduated at the recent Anniversary. Their places will be more than supplied by new students, as thirteen have already matriculated, and six or seven more are expected. Four of the graduates contemplate the Christian ministry as their life-work.

It has pleased God to bless the Institutions with a revival of religion. Some remarkable conversions have taken place within the last three months, and the College, the Academy, and the Female Seminary have all shared in the blessing.

The attendance at the Academy and Seminary has been somewhat affected by the improved state of education in the province, and the numerous schools and Academies that have sprung up in every quarter. But this is only a temporary reaction. The ultimate results will be highly beneficial in all respects.

There have been ninety-seven pupils in the Seminary during the year. Eight of the Students matriculated in the University of New Brunswick, and six more are now prepared to do so. Mrs. Alfred Chipman is about to take charge of the Female Department.

The Association suspended business, that the Education Society might hold a meeting. The sum of three thousand dollars is wanted, to pay off existing incumbrances and put the

Seminary premises in good repair. After considerable discussion, a plan of operations was agreed upon, and the money will be raised, it may be hoped, without difficulty.

When the Association resumed, some observations were offered by Dr. Cramp, who pleaded for sympathy and aid to Acadia College, and expressed regret that the Students of Fredericton Seminary connect themselves with the University there. Professor Higgins followed on the same side, arguing that Baptist young men should be educated, if possible, in a Baptist College; by a contrary course their sympathies are likely to be diverted from denominational objects and associations.

Professor Hopper explained. He observed that the University of New Brunswick is close at hand, while Acadia College is far off, and little known; that there are strong inducements held out, in the shape of prizes and scholarships; and that the College Course there being but three years in length, while that of Acadia extends to four years, the shorter period is preferred.

This is much to be regretted. A three years' Course is entirely insufficient, in the present state of knowledge. There are many young men who would find it highly advantageous to extend the time to five years.

The Report on Periodicals was presented by Brother Todd. It was extremely laudatory of the *Christian Visitor*.

Some discussion took place and the debate was adjourned.

In the evening Brother Francis preached to as closely packed an audience as I ever saw, and in a stifling state of the atmosphere. His discourse was a running commentary on Psalm 138, interspersed with reminiscences and anecdotes, and was heard with profound attention and deep interest.

July 11. The report on the *Christian Visitor* was amended and passed.

Reports on Finance, Departed Brethren, and Temperance, were presented and adopted with little or no comment.

The remaining business of the Association was transacted in the afternoon. In the evening there was a public meeting on behalf of the Home Mission Society.

The attendance, with the exception of ministers, was very large.

On Lord's day the 12th, all the places of worship in Sackville and vicinity, Amherst included, were supplied by the ministers attending the Association. C.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JULY 15, 1868.

Our Religious Anniversaries.

THE N. S. EASTERN ASSOCIATION.

After returning from the extreme West of Nova Scotia we proceed, with but little intermission, on towards the extreme Northern part of the province, about 112 miles, for the purpose of meeting with the brethren from the Baptist churches in all the eastern and northern parts, including Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. By rail to Truro is now so common that it ceases to be an incident in a trip to the country. Since the connection formed by railway with Pictou, the company travelling has become much more miscellaneous. On Thursday afternoon we found a number of the members of the Presbyterian Synod returning to their several homes and fields of labor, the matters that had there been under consideration supplied topics of interesting conversation. Before reaching Truro, many of these friends had left, and their places were supplied by Baptist ministers and delegates on their way to the gathering at Pugwash.

TRURO

appears now in all its natural beauty, and, with the taste and neatness of its handsome, comfortable residences, possesses an attractiveness that few of our provincial towns can boast. After a refreshing night's rest we proceed by a less direct road, but by speed not far inferior, over the Tatmagouche mountains. Here is one of the most lovely drives one can desire—along the banks of the North River by way of New Annapolis. Around the bays all along the Northern shore are fine farms, with a rich alluvial soil, that has long been under cultivation, and has brought wealth to many of its owners. At the latter place is a large ship in process of building giving employment to quite a number of workmen. Towards evening as we approach to

PUGWASH

we hear the bell of the Baptist church sending forth its invitation to the people to attend. We soon find that, as a number of brethren have arrived, a preliminary religious service is to be held.