

spoke, was now set up before the eyes of men. It was no insubstantial city, such as we fancy in the clouds, no invisible pattern such as Plato thought might be laid up in heaven, but a visible corporation, whose members met together to eat bread and drink wine, and into which they were initiated by bodily immersion in water. Here the Gentile met the Jew whom he had been accustomed to regard as an enemy of the human race; the Roman met the lying Greek sophist, the Syrian slave the gladiator born beside the Danube. In brotherhood they met, the natural birth and kindred of each forgotten, the baptism alone remembered in which they had been born again to God and to each other.

Selfishness. The selfishness of modern times exists in defiance of morality; in ancient times it was approved, sheltered, and even in part enjoined by morality.

The Lord's day and the Pulpit. To protect the lives of men from sinking into a routine of narrow-minded drudgery, the Christian Church has introduced the invaluable institution of the *Sunday*. Following the example of the old Jewish Church, it proclaims a truce once in seven days to all personal anxieties and degrading thoughts about the means of subsistence and success in life, and bids us meet together to indulge in larger thoughts, to give ourselves time to taste Heaven's bounty, and to drink together out of 'the chalice of the grapes of God.' In countries where life is a hard struggle, what more precious, more priceless public benefit can be imagined than this breathing-time, this recurring armistice between man and the hostile powers that beset his life, this solemn Sabbath festival?—Connected with the Sunday is the institution of *preaching*, or, as it is called in the New Testament *prophesying*. The power of impassioned rhetoric over those whose occupations do not leave them much time for reading is very great, and when the preacher speaks out of the overflowing of a genuine Christian enthusiasm, his words will echo in the memories of many until the Sunday comes round again. In periods when the pulpits of a country are occupied by the foremost men of their time for genius and wisdom this institution may sway and form the whole mind of a nation.

The missionary character of Christianity. Christianity would sacrifice its divinity if it abandoned its missionary character and became a mere educational institution. Surely this Article of Conversion is the true *articulus stantis ant cadentis ecclesie*. When the power of reclaiming the lost dies out of the Church, it ceases to be the church. It may remain a useful institution, though it is most likely to become an immoral and mischievous one. Where the power remains, there, whatever is wanting, it may still be said that 'the tabernacle of God is with men.'

Christianity and Science. To assist us in arranging the physical conditions of our well-being another mighty revelation has been made to us, for the most part in these latter ages: We live under the blessed light of science, a light yet far from its meridian, and dispersing every day some noxious superstition, some cowardice of the human spirit. These two revelations stand side by side. The points in which they have been supposed to come into collision do not belong to our present subject; they concern the theology and not the morality of the Christian church. The moral revelation which we have been considering has never been supposed to jar with science. Both are true and both are essential to human happiness. * * * The Christian morality, if somewhat less safe and exempt from perversion than science, is more directly and vitally beneficial to mankind. The scientific life is less noble than the Christian, it is better, so to speak, to be a citizen in the New Jerusalem than in the New Athens; it is better, surely, to find everywhere a brother and friend, like the Christian, than, like the philosopher, to disregard your relative and friend so completely as to be ignorant not only how he gets on, but almost whether he is a human being or some other sort of creature' (Plato, Theæt. p. 80.)

Christ's wonderful achievement. The achievement of Christ, in founding by his single will and power a structure so durable and so universal; is like no other achievement which history records. The masterpieces of the men of action are coarse and common in comparison with it, and the masterpieces of speculation flimsy and insubstantial. When we speak of it the commonplaces of admiration fail us altogether. Shall we speak of the originality of the design, of the skill displayed in the execution? All such terms are inadequate. Originality and contriving skill operated indeed, but, as it were, implicitly. The creative effort which produced that against which, it is said, the gates of hell shall not prevail, cannot be analyzed. No

architects, designs were furnished for the New Jerusalem, no committee drew up rules for the Universal Commonwealth. If in the works of Nature we can trace the indications of calculation, of a struggle with difficulties, of precaution, of ingenuity, then in Christ's work it may be that the same indications occur. But these inferior and secondary powers were not consciously exercised; they were implicitly present in the manifold yet single creative act. The inconceivable work was done in calmness; before the eyes of men it was noiselessly accomplished, attracting little attention. Who can describe that which unites men? Who has entered into the formation of speech which is the symbol of their union? Who can describe exhaustively the origin of civil society? He who can do these things can explain the origin of the Christian Church. For others it must be enough to say, 'the Holy Ghost fell on those that believed.' No man saw the building of the New Jerusalem; the workmen crowded together, the unfinished walls and unpaved streets; no man heard the clink of trowel and pickaxe; it descended out of heaven from God.

For the Christian Messenger.

Scriptural Church Polity.

Dear Sir,—

Several objections lie justly, I think, against the observations under the heading Church Polity, and signed J. M. C., which appeared in your number of April 8.

First: I beg to suggest to J. M. C., that when he undertakes to answer a statement, it is better to refer to the original publication, than to take the matter he professes to answer, at second hand. He is doubtless aware that the context has something to do in interpretation.

Secondly: Had J. M. C., done this, he would have perceived, that the remark on which he comments, has respect, not to the mode of admission (by baptism) to the universal church, but to the mode, that is the form, of admission into a particular church.

The argument was, that it would be unreasonable for any particular, that is individual, Baptist Church, to object to employing the aid, in a difficult case, of members of neighbouring Baptist Churches, when they would not object to employing those persons so soon as their names were on their record, and then occur the words on which the comment is made, "and yet there is no mention made in scripture of a church record or of any particular mode of instituting church membership." The context, you see, requires the remark to be understood of membership in a particular church.

Thirdly: If J. M. C., means to shew from the passage in the Acts, "then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls," that we have here a statement of the scriptural mode by which Christians were admitted to a particular church, then, I cannot think he ought to be "quite sure," that his view is received by the Baptists of Nova Scotia, or to hope for its adoption in New Brunswick, for ever since Baptists have had a footing in these provinces, the mode of admission to a particular church has been the extension of the right hand to the person admitted, with some accompanying words, and also, an entry of the name on a record.

Fourthly: I sincerely respond to the sentiment, that discussions should be carried on "in a christian spirit;" but I beg kindly to suggest, that it does not seem promotive of that spirit, to insinuate against one of the oldest Baptists and ministers in either Province, that because, the Provincial Wesleyan italicises the words quoted, therefore those words indicate any departure of the writer from Baptist views; still less, to attempt to throw discredit on the writer, by representing his words as; "not such as ordinarily fall from Baptist lips, or are written by a Baptist pen," and to follow this up with the caution to the Wesleyan, and the endeavour to make it appear, that these are only "the private views of the Editors of the Visitor," and so to bring the said Editors, or one of them, into disfavor with their brethren in Nova Scotia.

Insinuations and attempts of this sort, calculated to injure a brother, must, I object, tend to wound charity, and this all the more, that your correspondent J. M. C., as I have now shewn, has entirely missed his mark, by not knowing what, in effect, he was opposing.

Yours &c.,

E. A. C.

The American Board of Foreign Missions have determined to send sixty men to China.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Scriptural Principle of Church Government.

No. IV.

Biblical scholars, not belonging to those bodies holding the congregational views of Church government, make full and frank admissions which go to confirm the opinions of denominations exercising that polity.—Of Matt. xviii. 15, Dean Alford says: "Church does not mean Jewish Synagogue, but the congregation of Christians. * * * That it cannot mean the church as represented by her rulers, appears by v. v. 19, 20, where any collection of believers is gifted with the power of deciding in such cases. Nothing can be further from the Spirit of our Lord's command than proceedings in what are oddly enough called "Ecclesiastical courts." Alf. G. T. and Com.

Olshausen says: "For the external church has relapsed, since the fourth century, into the Old Testament form;" but of this passage in Matt. xviii. he further says: "This instance however, is conceived in terms so general, that it at once stands forth as a precept for the whole church, and it rests on the spiritual character of the disciples of Jesus and the everlasting presence of Christ in his church." The explanations of Matt. xviii., volunteered by these distinguished scholars—one of Great Britain and the other of Germany—are adduced to show that the adherents of the congregational polity, have not combined, for the purpose of supporting their peculiar views, to force an exposition which finds no support beyond their own ranks. These able Christian scholars come to the aid of those who sustain the form of church government in which the laity participate.

We can stand in the calmness and light which eighteen centuries have brought in, and note the beginning and intimations of the government which was introduced with the Christian dispensation. There does not appear to have been any dogmatic teaching on this subject. The change was brought about gradually, both by example and precept; and this was done through a series of events and occasions, the nature of which commended the directions that were given; and at the same time it was not possible for the disciples to discern the radical changes that must result from the introduction and perpetuation of those principles, involved in the directions given by their Lord and Master. In all transition periods darkness of some degree envelops the actors. Of all the changes which have ever been known in the political and religious relations of mankind, none are more important and interesting than that from the Jewish to the Christian economy. The ignorance of whether they were going, the conflicting opinions, the tenacious grasp with which they held on to what was old, dear, and venerable, and the eager reaching out after something new, the great confidence, and the despondency, the startling ambition, and the great humility which characterized the disciples of Christ, during the development period, into which we look through the accounts of the evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles, are sufficient to convince any enquiring mind, that the wisest among them could not, in the nature of things have been supposed to see clearly the comparatively unimportant subject of the new polity. Their whole system was upheaving from its ancient foundations, changes the most radical and startling were in process of development, and the minds of those who were the spectators and actors in this revolution, were in no state to look deliberately and philosophically upon what was transpiring around them. It is not necessary for us, therefore, to determine the beginning, in the minds of the disciples of our Lord, of the knowledge of the new form of government, and follow that along the stages of its growth, till it arrives at maturity; but we must rather take the suggestions and intimations which are found in the gospels, and interpret them according to the light which is now enjoyed; and from this advanced stage, pass on through the Acts of the Apostles, and then through the Epistles and Revelation, gleaning in all the way, whatever can be found that will elucidate and settle the polity of this dispensation.

At Matt. xvi. 18, and Matt. xviii. 15, we take our stand to make, not a comparison, but a contrast between the old government, perfected and distinct and the new which seems to have made its first appearance on these two occasions. We say we must make a contrast and not a comparison.—The correctness or incorrectness of this will appear in the result.

The outlines of the polity of the dispensations, previous to the time of Christ, have been sketched in a former article, and the following points of contrast with the new polity are observable.

1st. The Mosaic polity was a unit in its operations and it had a local centralization. The Christian polity multiplies into as many distinct governments and admits of as many centers as the exigencies of the occasions require. Within the same geographical limits which bounded the old government, it was soon found that there were several separate and independent churches.

2nd. The old was partly religious and partly political; the New is pre-eminently and only religious. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Paul applied to the civil power of Rome for his rights as a citizen, but he never referred the settlement of any religious question to an earthly tribunal.

3rd. Under the old economy God appointed priests and judges to direct and control the government; but under the New the direction and control were put into the hands of the entire body. "Tell it to the Church." "If he will not hear the church." Jehovah was the theocratic Head of the old dispensation, ruling through officials, Christ is the theocratic Head of the new dispensation, ruling through the members of the Church.

This radical change is not unaccountable; there is an apparent and rational cause for it.

The apology for the worst despotism, and for a limited franchise under any government, is invariably this: The people are not sufficiently enlightened to give their suffrages intelligently. This certainly would apply to the ancient Jews. When the Mosaic government was first constructed in the desert, those three millions could not have been better prepared for such responsibilities, than the four millions of Africans, lately emancipated, are prepared for enfranchisement under a government solely political. Of the principles of the ecclesiastical and civil polity then developed, of the typical character of the ritualistic service, that horde of ignorant and capricious descendants of Abraham, committed to the care of Moses and his coadjutor, must have been profoundly ignorant.

Under the present Christian economy, there is not only an enfranchisement of all the members of the new community, but they are qualified for their important relations and duties. It is provided that every individual shall be a baptized believer. He is taught by the divine Spirit. His heart is purified and his conscience enlightened. Truth and morals are the special subjects of which he is expected to have knowledge in his ecclesiastical connection. "He knows the truth," for it is the truth that "made him free." Having his own heart cleansed, he is able to "approve the things that are most excellent, that he may be pure, and without offense unto the day of Christ." Phil. i. 10. It betrays an inexcusable ignorance in writers on this subject, to assail the principle of the government, by saying that a church can do this or that, "whether composed of good men or bad men." A society may be called a church, and may be made up, in whole, or in part, of bad men, but such a society is not a church upon the New Testament basis. And it is unfair to argue against a form of government, assuming membership, for which the constitution makes no provision. A New Testament church must be composed of believers, and believers are not "bad men," they are saints.

EDWARD MANNING.

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Review of Books.

THEOLOGICAL INDEX OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE BY HOWARD MALCOM, D. D.; L. L. D. Gould & Lincoln, Boston. pp. 488.

The full title of this new work is—"Theological Index. References to the Principal Works in every department of Religious Lit.