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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXI, No. 19.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.
The Sunset.

There,—the last sweet notes of the music
Are fading into the night;
While slumber a web is weaving,
Gradually over my sight.
O sleep thou art very welcome,
I pray thee to tarry long,
And bring one dream to my spirit,
Of the sunset and the song.As long as I wander a pilgrim
Over this mortal shore,
My heart will treasure the picture
Of this calm and peaceful hour,
And when I get home to Heaven,
And gaze on its walls so bright,
I think I'll remember clearly
The sunset sky to-night.HARRIET COLE.
Milton, Queens.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.
Our Denomination.

II.

CHURCH POLITY.

(Continued.)

There is a great contrast between God's Book of the Church, and the books on the same subject which have been issued by men. The former is nobly spiritual, and breathes freedom in every part. You are saturated with principles, the application of which to the varying circumstances of human history, in the world and in the church, is left very much to your own discretion, within the limits of love and rightness. The latter are stiff—starched—dry and unbending. You must do this—you must do that—you have no choice of manner allowed you. It is "the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." Neither the power of love nor the authority of rightness is of any avail. It is the way of the church, and you must walk in it. There is much unwisdom in these arrangements. Some of them are useful enough in the management of human Societies, but sadly out of place when applied to Christian churches, which are Christ's societies, and must be governed by His rules, or in agreement with the manifestations of his will, as far as that is clearly made known. A Christian church should not bow to the dictates of a "Manual," "Directory," or "Guide." The object should always be to ascertain "the mind of Christ," or, at any rate, the course which may be considered as probably acceptable in His sight.

There are several topics which demand special consideration. Among them are the following:—

1. The number of church officers.

It has been already stated that in

apostolic churches there were but two kinds of officials—bishops and deacons. The gifts of the Spirit were manifold. They are thus enumerated by the apostle Paul (Ephes. iv. 11); "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers." Now it is evident that most of these were supernatural or temporary. The "apostles" had no successors. The "prophets" seem to have been men occasionally inspired. The "evangelists" were travelling preachers. "Pastors and teachers" remain, and we are safe, I think, in regarding these epithets as indicative of two branches of the same office, the "Pastors" being the shepherds of the spiritual flock, and the "teachers" being the instructors of the church, considered as a seminary of religious learning. In the Epistle to the Thessalonians they are designated "those who labour among you"; in Philippians, "the bishops"; in Peter, "the elders"; in Hebrews, "them that have the rule over you." It is observable, that they are always spoken of in the plural number.

The plurality of elders was evidently the rule at first. We find the beginnings of episcopacy at an early period. Probably the office of Chairman of the eldership became perpetual, as a matter of convenience, and the title "bishop" was in process of time exclusively applied to him. Thus the elders were drafted off into separate districts, such as are now called "parishes"; but it was still one church, which was at first a parish and then swelled into a diocese, while the bishop, who was originally a chairman of a body of equals, assumed lordship, and the elders, instead of being associates, sank into servants, the dioceses becoming larger and larger by the absorption of parishes, till they equalled provinces in size. In Italy, however, the dioceses were systematically kept small, that the bishop of Rome might have a body of ecclesiastical militia at hand, prepared to obey his orders whenever any aggression on the liberties of the people was contemplated. The Italian bishops gave him a pliant majority in the councils. It was so in the late Vatican Council.

The elders were the joint pastors of a church. The title has been lately assumed in some Baptist Churches in London (the Metropolitan Tabernacle and Regent's Park) and applied to brethren who are employed to direct and control the internal management and discipline of the churches, a new office being thus constituted, intermediate between the Pastors and the deacons. In Presbyterian churches the elders are not pastors, but rather assessors with the ministers, sitting with them in the Session, which consists of themselves and the ministers, and the church-work is delegated to it.

There were deaconesses in apostolic churches. Phoebe was a "servant" (deaconess) of the church at Cenchrea, near Corinth. Their duties were chiefly confined to the female members and the female candidates for baptism. I say "chiefly," because certain references to Christian sisters in the closing chapter of the Epistle to the Romans appear to be so expressed as to render it probable that those sisters were deaconesses. Is it not desirable that the order should be revived?

As there is no prescribed rule, the number of pastors or elders should probably be regulated by the number of members. One pastor may suffice for a small church; a dozen would not be too many for a large one. It is said that there are 125 preachers connected with the Metropolitan Tabernacle. They are reported as lay-preachers—the meaning being, that 125 members of the church are accustomed to spend part of the Lord's day in preaching the gospel. If a similar proportion of the members of other churches in London, of different denominations, were to use their talents in the same way, the difficulty of meeting the spiritual wants of the masses, sometimes despairingly spoken of, would be much more nearly provided for.

There are other officers in most of our churches, who, however useful their

services may be, cannot be regarded as church officers, not being mentioned in the New Testament. Here again we find ourselves in difficulty for want of information. Christian churches as religious societies, may make use of any of their members for the duties which it may be deemed expedient to assign to them, but let none be called church-officers who are not so styled in our law-book. The reference is to Treasurers, Clerks, Sextons, and such like.

2. The administration of ordinances.

Here also we are in difficulty for want of information. It is nowhere stated that such and such persons, and those only, were authorised to administer baptism; but it is reasonable to suppose that the possessors of spiritual gifts would act on such occasions by common consent. When Peter commanded the converts at Caesarea to "be baptized in the name of the Lord," he probably selected brethren for that purpose whose standing in the church at Joppa, from which place they had travelled with him, warranted the appointment. Such is the ordinary course of affairs in all institutions: fitness for work leads to employment. The date of the restriction of the authority to baptize to the Christian ministry cannot be ascertained, but it seems likely that it was an early arrangement. The universal priesthood of believers was not long recognized: love of power soon crept into the churches, and the bishops or pastors engrossed all public duties; so that at length the administration of baptism by any but a bishop ceased to be regarded as correct unless in exceptional cases, such as sickness or danger of death. In those denominations which practise infant baptism this exception is still allowed. In Baptist churches on this continent ordained ministers only are recognized as proper administrators. In England, students for the ministry frequently officiate.

It is different, however, in the case of the Lord's Supper. That is the only feast of the Christian church. Then there is a meeting of the family, and it is natural that the pastor, as head of the family, should preside. When there is no pastor, the church is at liberty to make the best arrangement in its power, either by inviting another pastor to preach, or by requesting one of its own members (a senior deacon, for instance) to undertake the duty. Why should obedience to the Lord's command be neglected? The writer knew a worthy brother, a deacon of one of the London churches, whose services were often called into requisition on such occasions. Here and there a crotchettiness prevails, from which a church suffers loss. It is deemed unlawful for a Christian minister to preside at the Lord's table anywhere except in the church of which he is pastor. I heard of a church in the old country which was fourteen years destitute of a pastor, and during all that time there was no celebration of the Lord's Supper! Surely, that was being "wise above what is written."

3. The communion of churches.

There is no trace in the New Testament of any Christian organization but that of churches; and they were all independent of each other. Councils, Synods, and the application of the word "church" to provinces or kingdoms were unknown. We read of the "churches"—not "the church": of Galatia and of Asia (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 19). There were no national churches in those days. The use of the word "church" as including the whole body of Christians, living and dead, embracing all who had gone before and those who would follow after, even to the end of the world (Ephes. v. 25-27), is peculiar, and the meaning is sufficiently clear. The meeting at Jerusalem (Acts xv) has been improperly called a Council, whereas it was a special meeting of the church at Jerusalem, convened for the purpose of considering an application for advice from the church at Antioch. A Council is a meeting of several churches, represented by their delegates: the

assembly at Jerusalem was the meeting of one church to receive a message from another.

But though the churches were independent of each other, and each possessed separate powers of government, they recognized a common fellowship, under their Divine Head, and communicated with each other, on equal terms, by letters, or by personal visits. (See 2 Cor. iii. 1; Col. iv. 15, 16.) Hence sprung up, in after years meetings of churches in districts, occasional or stated, which in these modern times are known among us as "Associations". They are convened for religious exercises—for consultation—or for the management of institutions in which they are jointly interested; but they have no corporate power. Care is taken to prevent the assumption of authority.

There is a great difference in this matter between the practice of the churches in England and that of those in this continent. Here, the union with an Association is the next step after the formation of a church; but in England, out of two thousand churches, about six hundred are reported as "not in Association." This probably results from the jealousy of power which extremely prevails among Baptist churches.

J. M. C.

For the Christian Messenger.
To the Mediterranean and Back.

THE BOSPHORUS.

Leaving Constantinople, we cross the beautiful Golden Horn and enter the Bosphorus. This is a narrow strait by which the Black Sea and Sea of Marmora communicate. It is 17 miles long and a mile wide. The scenery throughout far surpasses that of the Dardanelles, and rivals the best river scenery in the world. Two ranges of hills, rising almost perpendicularly on either side of the strait, extend from sea to sea. A succession of white marble palaces repose in the shade of the overhanging hills. These are the residences of the Pashas and Turkish nobility. Their grandeur and magnificence is in strange contrast with the poverty met with in the city. Gardens with all the beauty of a most luxuriant vegetation, surround these mansions. Iron fences run along the waters edge; and behind them are rows of blossoming plants, filling the air with sweetest odors. Gates open, and boats row directly beneath the porticoes of the stately buildings. Each sudden turn, for several miles, brings into view a new palace gleaming among the groves, or an odd looking Turkish villa, with roof of tile, embowered in some lovely retreat.

The surface of the hills is diversified by deep ravines and fertile valleys. Numerous villages are dotted along the shore. Gardens, groves and vineyards, cover the slopes. Moss-covered Genoese forts crown the summits. Mosques, with dome and minaret, rise above the surrounding houses. In one place the walls of an American College stand out conspicuously upon the heights. A single carriage-way follows the windings of the stream, and narrow paths lead up the hill-sides. Low earth-forts, mounted with heavy guns, guard the way.

Tents of Turkish soldiers, now in training, whiten the shores. The strait now widens into a small bay, and now contracts into a narrow channel, where the water rushes towards the Mediterranean at the rate of from five to seven knots.

We glide by fishing and passenger boats, Turkish craft and foreign merchantmen, red lightships and various colored buoys, steamers, and iron-clads belonging to the fine fleet of the Turks. The last village passed, the last point doubled, and we sail out upon the Euxine or Black Sea.

Northward, we direct our course across the brackish waters of this great inland basin. We coast Roumelia and Bulgaria, provinces in Turkey; pass between Serpent's Island and the mouths of the Danube; and arrive at the termination of our passage from New York to Odessa.

ODESSA

is situated on the North-west shores of the Black Sea, between the mouths of two great rivers, the Dneister and Don. It is built on a narrow strip of fertile land that extends along the coast between the shore and the barren steppes in the South of Russia. Catherine the Great selected the present site of the city in 1793, as a suitable place to erect a grand emporium, which, when properly fortified, would secure to Russia, not only a commercial, but also a military pre-eminence upon the Black Sea. The prosperity of Odessa is, however, chiefly due to the talent and zeal of a French emigrant, the Duke of Richelieu, who was made the first governor, in 1830, by her successor, the Emperor Alexander. The principal streets were then laid out and lighted; public buildings were erected; and the harbor was much improved by the commencement of a splendid mole, which is now over a mile in length. With every opportunity to enrich himself, the Duke is said to have left Odessa with only a small portmanteau of clothes. Taxes were suspended for a number of years, and goods of every kind allowed to enter free of duty. A great impetus was thus given to its advancement, and a large number of persons were induced to settle here. The population increased in ten years from 9,000 to 25,000, and in twenty years to 50,000. It is now 170,000.

The city stands upon the level summit of a limestone cliff, about 200 feet above the sea, and overlooks a spacious bay. Only the first row of buildings facing the water can be seen on entering the harbor. But these are all palatial residences or public edifices, and present a fine appearance. The Boulevards are laid out in front, and the side of the cliff is terraced and covered with acacias. One hundred and ninety-four broad stone steps lead from the sea up to the city. In a lower town on the shore are the custom houses, coal depots, and the terminus of the railroad from the interior.

The town is of comparatively recent date, and has the most American aspect of any Russian city.

It is regularly built. The streets are all wide and straight, crossing each other at right angles. They are but fairly paved, as stone for this purpose has to be brought from Malta; and the clouds of dust in dry weather are in consequence insufferable. The houses are mostly built of stone, two and three stories high. A stone wall encircles the city. This is not of much use, except in a financial point of view, as the place is defended by a strong citadel and by the forts that surround the harbor.

Odessa has a large number of fine private and public buildings. There are thirteen Russo-Greek Churches and twenty Cathedrals. Jews, Catholics and Lutherans have their respective places of worship. There is also a Presbyterian Church for the English speaking residents. The finest edifice is an elegant cathedral in the centre of the town. It is in the shape of a Greek Cross, with steeple at one end and dome at the other. There are two facades, each with portico and row of columns. In the public museum are to be found many objects of antiquity from ancient Greek colonies. A japanned flat candlestick is here shown once owned by the philanthropist Howard; who, it will be remembered, was buried on the Russian steppes not far from Kherson, in compliance with his last wish expressed to Priestman, "Let no monument or monumental inscription mark the spot where I am buried: lay me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial over my grave and let me be forgotten." The city is rich in schools. High rates, however, place them within reach of only the richer class. For the education of the poor a few public institutions are provided. There is a public reading-room, large hospital, Exchange, Assembly-room, and a University.

As the natural result of the means taken to promote the rapid growth of this city, there was a large influx of