

that God himself has established a ministry in the Church for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ." In our discipline we have nine articles upon the ministry, in which mention is made of elders or bishops and deacons; of the manner of electing and establishing them, and of the obligation of the Church to provide for the maintenance of her ministers.

Your correspondent was in ignorance of all these things, and his only fault may have been believed to be true. Now, if he be a Christian, as I doubt not he is, although I do not know him, he will be glad to find that he has fallen into an error in this case.

These few observations I submit to you, my dear friend and brother in Jesus Christ, begging you to have the courtesy to publish them in an early number of your journal.

Believe me, yours very faithfully,

DE SANCTIS.

(From Evangelical Christendom)

### CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AT TURIN.

DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me the use of your columns to correct an error which has been circulated through many channels in England, relative to a small congregation of Evangelical Christians in Turin. I feel more bound to correct this error because I have myself unwittingly assisted to give it currency, and because I am now able, from personal conversation with Dr. De Sanctis in Paris, and from possessing a printed copy of the "Principles of Faith and of Discipline, extracted from the Word of God, to serve as a basis for the Evangelical Italian Church at Turin," to state the facts as they are.

The congregation of the Vaudois at Turin has, within the last few years, been augmented by some hundreds of Italian converts from the Roman Church; and over the Italian portion of the people, there were two evangelists or pastors, M. Meille and Dr. De Sanctis, both appointed by the executive of the Vaudois Church, called the *Table*. M. Meille is a man of great excellence and zeal, and an eloquent writer and preacher. Dr. De Sanctis was formerly a Roman Catholic priest at Rome, and is a man of learning and power, very zealous for the pure form of Christian truth which he has now for some years maintained.

A secession from the congregation at Turin, including a considerable portion of the Italian converts, took place towards the close of the last year, arising in part out of the removal of Dr. De Sanctis from his office as evangelist by the Vaudois *Table*, and in part out of the views held by the seceders, unfavourable to the Presbyterian form of Church Government which exists among the Vaudois. The cause of the removal of Dr. De Sanctis has not been very clearly explained; but, as far as I can understand, it arose, mainly from the want of entire harmony between him and M. Meille. It certainly arose from nothing worthy of blame in the moral or religious character of Dr. De Sanctis; because he received, at the time of his removal, the office of the Professorship of Theology in the Vaudois College at La Tour; and as late as at the Vaudois Synod in May last, that offer was renewed. It was not accepted by Dr. De Sanctis, who continues to minister to his small congregation at Turin, there appearing to be much attachment between the people and their minister. Unhappily, as was too natural under such circumstances, the Vaudois authorities and the seceders blamed each other for the rupture, and there was some warm controver-

sy; but I cannot discover that there was any serious blame justly attaching to either, beyond what may arise from want of perfect temper among good men, together with the difference of views on Church government which existed between them. I believe the controversy has ceased. From conversation with M. Meille and Dr. De Sanctis, I am convinced that they respect each other's Christian character. In an admirable report on the religious state of Italy, read by M. Meille at the late Conference of Evangelical Christians at Paris, he spoke in high and generous terms of Dr. De Sanctis, and the latter, in giving an account of his infant congregation, threw no imputation on the Vaudois pastors. No great cordiality can be expected to exist between parties who have so recently separated; but there seems reason to hope that on each side Christian principle will subdue any feeling of offence, and that they may ere long act together as sister Churches, holding the same pure faith, though with some differences of Church government.

Now, the error which I am desirous to correct is, that the seceding Italian converts hold the views of the Plymouth Brethren. This has been asserted in several quarters; and in my narrative of "A Visit to the Vaudois," just published, I have stated (p. 114), that Dr. De Sanctis, in a letter to the Vaudois *Table*, "explained the views of his people on Church government, which seem to correspond with those of the Plymouth Brethren in England." I believe Mr. Darby has adherents in that quarter, which he has personally visited; and there were expressions in Dr. De Sanctis's letter which seemed to me to bear out the statement frequently made, that he and his people sympathized with the views of the Plymouth Brethren.—But Dr. De Sanctis assured me, that "their views were as far from Plymouthism as from Ecclesiasticism." The printed document, of which he gave me a copy, "Principles of Faith and of Discipline," lays down the bases of a Congregational Church on the principles (in all essential points) of the English Independents. It declares the priesthood of all believers; and adds:—

"Besides this priesthood, common to all the faithful, the Church acknowledges a special ministry, instituted by God Himself in His Church, for the perfect uniting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, which ministry is manifested to the Church by the gifts which God bestows on the individuals whom He chooses. Consequently, the Evangelical Church of Turin has elders and deacons.

"The elders (called also, in the New Testament, 'presbyters' and 'bishops') are distinguished among themselves, and are recognised as distinct by the Church, according to the distinction of the gifts of God, and not by any hierarchical distinction.

"The elders ought to be chosen by the Church, which, after much prayer, divesting itself of all human regards, shall choose those who have given undoubted proofs that they have received from God the gift of the ministry, and that they possess the qualifications required by the Word."

The Church at Turin has chosen three elders (of whom Dr. De Sanctis is one), and three deacons. It admits members in nearly the same way as Congregational Churches, allows either infant or adult (believers') baptism, and celebrates the Lord's Supper weekly.

In the narrative which I have published, I have expressed regret at the secession of the Italians from the Vaudois Church, though without blaming the seceders; but I think it right to say, that I see no reason whatever why the Evangelical Christians of England, in or out of the Establishment, should withhold their fraternal regard from this new Evangelical and