

TREATISE.

CHAPTER XL.

THE CHURCH.

A Christian Church is an assembly of persons who believe in Christ and worship the true God, agreeably to his word *a*. In a more general sense, it signifies the whole body of real Christians throughout the world *b*. The church being the body of Christ *c*, none but the regenerate, who obey the gospel, are its real members *d*. Believers are received into a particular church, on their giving evidence of repentance and faith, and being baptized *e*.

SECTION I.—OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

The Officers in the primitive church were apostles, bishops, and deacons *f*. The apostles were the especial witnesses of the works and sayings of Christ *g*; and of course this office ceased when their work was accomplished. The gifts perpetuated in the church are evangelists, pastors, teachers, helps, and governments *h*. These, however, do not appear to be distinct officers, but they imply different kinds of duties, which are performed by bishops or elders, deacons and others.

1. *Bishops* are overseers *i*, who have the charge of souls—to instruct and rule them by the word *j*. They are called elders *k*, and they perform the duties of pastors, teachers, and evangelists *l*. The qualifications required in a candidate for this office, are as follows:—He must be guiltless, and the husband of but one wife. He must be watchful, prudent, and have the regular exercise of cool, dispassionate reason. His conduct and manners must be decent, orderly and grave. He must be a lover of hospitality, and of good men; ready to communicate and able to teach *m*. He must be temperate; not quarrelsome; nor desirous of base gain *n*. He must govern his family well; he must not be a novice, but experienced in the things of God, and have a character not justly liable to reproach *o*. He must be

a 1 Cor i 2.—Unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints." Acts ii 47. 2 Cor viii 6. Rev ii 1, 7, 8, 12, 18, iiii 1, 7, 14.

b Eph v 23.—"Christ is the head of the Church." Eph i 22; iiii 10; v 25. 27 Gal i 18—24.

c 1 Cor xii 27.—"Now ye are the body of Christ." Gal i 18. 1 Cor i 18.

d 1 Pet ii 5.—"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." 2 Cor vi 14, 15. John xvii 36 Gal iv 28—31 Rom ix 8 Ps 1, 16. 1 John xv 2—6.

e Acts ii 41.—"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Gal iii 27.

f Eph ii 20 Phil i 1 Luke vi 13 1 Cor iv 9.

g Acts x 39; i 8: v 32 Luke xxiv 48.

h Eph iv 11—1 Cor xii 28 2 Tim iv 5 Acts xiii 1.

i Acts xx 28 1 Tim iii 1—6.

j 1 Tim iii 5 1 Peter v 2 Acts xx 28.

k Titus i 5—7 1 Peter v 1 Acts xiv 23 Compare Acts xx 28 with verse 17.

l 2 Tim iv 6 Eph iv 11, 12 1 Tim iii 1, 2 Jer iii 10 1 Cor iv 11 1 Cor xii 28 Tit i 8 2 Tim iv 5.

m 1 Tim iii 2 Tit i 8 2 Tim iv 5.

n 1 Tim iii 2 Tit i 8 2 Tim iv 5.

o 1 Tim iii 2 Tit i 8 2 Tim iv 5.