

From the Gospel Messenger.

"THE OLD PATHS;"

OR, THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

By G. Boyd.

II. The holy scriptures also teach that the apostles did ordain 'elders' (or presbyters) in every church. Thus it is written of Paul and Barnabas, both apostles, that when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed.' Acts 14, 23. See also Titus 1, 5.

'The functions of 'elders,' as Bishop H. U. Onderdonk well observes, 'as developed Acts 20, were only pastoral. They were to 'feed,' 'tend,' 'rule' the flock; 'take heed' to them; and 'watching' for them, were to 'warn' them against false teachers.' See Episcopacy tested by scripture.

III. For an example of the ordination of 'deacons' by the apostles, see Acts 6, 1—6.

'And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

'Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

'Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

'But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

'And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenus, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch;

'Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.'

Remarks, I. Thus the primitive Church was constituted, with three orders of minister—'apostles,' (not only the twelve, but others ordained by them to the apostleship)—'elders,' (for presbyters) and 'deacons.'

II. During the life time of the twelve apostles, and for some time after, the names of 'bishop,' and 'elders,' (or presbyter,) were used interchangeably, for the second order. 'In process of time, (says Theodoret, an ancient ecclesiastical writer,) those who succeeded to the apostolic office, left the name of apostle, strictly so called, and gave the name of bishop to those who succeeded to the apostolic office.' Videllius also, a non-episcopal writer, says of Clemens Romanus, mentioned in Phil. 4, 3, that after the death of Linus and Cletus, who were Bishops of Rome before him, 'That Clemens alone retained the name of Bishop, because there had now grown into use the distinction between bishop and presbyter.' See Note, p. 27, to Episcopacy tested by Scripture.

III. There was evidently intended to be a due subordination instituted in the Church of God, for the purpose of edification and peace.—Thus both presbyters and deacons were to be subject to the apostles and bishop, who were over them in the Lord, and the whole flock to their respective pastors, who watched for their souls. See 1 Cor. 14, 36—37. Acts 20; and Epistles to Tim. and Titus.

IV. That there was of necessity designed to be a succession of these orders, *apostles or bishops, presbyters and deacons*, is evident from the nature of the case. That which the apostles did under a divine commission must needs abide unalterable. The risen Saviour gave his authority to them, and to none but them; promising to be with them to the end of the world, which he could not be unless the church and ministry which they had organized should be perpetuated. So long as the Church should last, it would be necessary to have an order of men to preserve unity, and to ordain others, who should preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, transact for Christ in admitting members into his Church, banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word, and promote quietness, love and peace among the members of his family.

II. Let us now inquire what do ancient authors say upon the subject of the Church of Christ?

I will adduce three witnesses, all of them apostolic

men. Two of them were disciples of St. John, and the third spoken favorably of by St. Paul: St. CLEMENT, POLYCARP, and IGNATIUS.

I. St. Clement. St. Paul mentions him not only as his fellow laborer in the gospel, but as one 'whose name was written in the book of life.' He afterward became Bishop of Rome, and was placed there by the express direction of one, if not both the apostles, St. Paul and St. Peter.

The following quotations are taken from an Epistle of St. Clement, written by him to the Corinthians between the 64th and 70th years of Christ:

Chap. 19, entitled 'The orders of ministers in Christ's Church, established by the apostles, according to Christ's command. Therefore, they who have been duly placed in the ministry according to this order, cannot without great sin be put out of it.'

'The apostles have preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ from God, — Christ therefore was sent by God, the apostles by Christ, so both were orderly sent according to the will of God. For having received the command, and being thoroughly assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and convinced by the word of God, with the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they went abroad publishing that the kingdom of God was at hand; and thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be *bishops* (presbyter bishop) and *deacons*, over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the spirit.'

'Our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ that there should contentions arise, upon the account of the ministry, and therefore having a perfect fore-knowledge of this, and gave directions how when they die, other chosen and approved men should succeed to the ministry.—Wherefore we cannot think that those may justly be thrown out of the ministry who were either appointed by them, or afterwards chosen by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church, and who have with all lowliness and innocency, ministered to the flock of Christ in peace, and without self-interest, and were for a long time commended by all.'

II. St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was a disciple of St. John, and suffered martyrdom, A. D. 147. The Epistle from which I quote, was written by him A. D. 116, or 117, to the Philippians.

Chap. 1. 'Polycarp and the presbyters that are with him, to the church of God, which is at Philippi; mercy unto you and peace from God Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, be multiplied.'

'Knowing therefore, that God is not mocked, we ought to walk worthy both of his command and of his glory. Also the *deacons* must be blameless before him as the *ministry* of God in Christ, and not of men. Not false accusers or double-tongued; not lovers of money; but moderate in all things, compassionate, careful; walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant of all.'

III. St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was also a disciple of St. John. He suffered martyrdom under Trajan, by being exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre at Rome, about A. D. 107. Ignatius speaks of 'three orders' in the ministry not less than thirty times. A few examples follow:

'Seeing then, I have been judged worthy to see you by Damas, your most excellent *bishop*, and by your very worthy *presbyters*, Bassus and Appollonius, and by my fellow servant, Sotio the *deacon*; in whom I rejoice, forasmuch as he is subject unto his bishop, as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ, I determined to write unto you.—Wherefore it will become you also not to use your bishop too familiarly upon the account of his youth, but to yield all reverence to him according to their power of God the Father; as also I perceive that your holy presbyters do, not considering his age, which indeed to appearance is young, but as becometh those who are prudent in God, submitting to him, or rather not to him, but to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bishop of us all.'—'It will therefore behoove you with all sincerity to obey your bishop, in honor of him, whose pleasure it is that you should do so.'—'It is therefore fitting that we should not only be called Christians, but be so; as some call indeed their governor bishop, but yet do all things without him. But I can never think that such as these have a good conscience, seeing they are not gathered together thoroughly, according to God's command-

ment.'—'I exhort you that you study to do all things in a divine concord, your bishop presiding in the place of God, your presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles, and your deacons, most dear to me, being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ.'—'For whereas ye are subject to your presbyters, as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, that so believing in his death, ye might escape death. It is therefore necessary that as ye do, so without your bishop ye should do nothing; also be ye subject to your presbyters, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, our hope, in whom if we walk, we shall be found in him. The deacons also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means please all; for they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the Church of God.'—'See that ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ the Father; and the presbytery as the apostles; and reverence the deacons as the command of God. Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the Church, separately from the Bishop.'—'I salute your very worthy bishop, and your venerable presbytery, and your deacons, my fellow-servants, and all of you in general, and each of you in particular, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in his flesh and blood: in his passion and resurrection both fleshly and spiritually, and in the unity of God with you.' See Epistle to Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, and Smyrneans.

Thus clear, full and conclusive is the testimony from holy scriptures, and ancient authors in favor of primitive episcopacy. Much more to the same effect might have been presented. If any one is desirous of examining the subject further, he is referred to Dr. John E. Cooke's work on Episcopacy.

To be continued.

ANECDOTE OF REV. JAMES HERVEY.

In the parish where Mr. Hervey resided before he became decidedly evangelical in his sentiments, there lived a ploughman, who usually attended the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge and was well informed in the great truths of Christianity. Mr. Hervey being advised by his physician to follow the plough in order to smell the fresh earth for the benefit of his health, frequently accompanied this ploughman in his rural employment. Mr. Hervey one morning asked him what he thought was the hardest thing in religion? The man replied that as he was illiterate, and Mr. H. was a minister, he would beg leave to return the question. Mr. Hervey said he thought the hardest thing was to deny *sinful* self, grounding his opinion on the solemn admonition of our Lord, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." He argued on the import, and extent of the duty; showed that merely to forbear the vicious action was little; but that we must deny admittance, or entertainment at least to the evil imagination, and quench even the kindling sparks of unlawful desire. The ploughman replied, "there is another instance of self-denial to which the injunction extends which is of great moment and the hardest thing in religion, and that is to deny *righteous* self. You know, I do not come to hear you preach, but go every Sabbath with my family to Northampton to hear Dr. Doddridge. We rise early in the morning, and have prayers before we set out, in which I find pleasure; under the sermon I find pleasure; at the Lord's table I find pleasure, &c. but to this moment I find it the hardest thing to deny *righteous* self, I mean the renouncing of our own strength and of our own righteousness, not leaning on the one for holiness, or on the other for justification." Mr. Hervey was struck with these observations and though he did not then fully approve he soon felt their propriety, and became their warm advocate.

The true art of Happiness;—let those who have leisure find employment, and those who have business find leisure.—*Cecilia*.

I know of no better evidence of strength in grace than to bear with those who are weak in it.—*Abg. Leighton*.

The Faith on which so great a stress is laid in the Gospel, is to be understood of a vital operative principle, which purifies the heart and is productive of good works.—*Leland*.

Animal pleasures tear the constitution, and like the lightning of the night, darken the gloom through which they occasionally break.—*Nathak*.