

ments in either elections. The Sabbath Observance Committee petitioned the directors of the Street Car Company, but the reply was not reassuring: There are ninety-five per cent. of the drivers Roman Catholics, who go to early mass on Sundays; and are not deprived of Church ordinances, and that by not running the cars a large number of good citizens would be deprived of the privilege of attending service, and that five times as many men and horses would be employed to accommodate church goers.

The old argument, doing evil that good may come.

In regard to Christian work in Montreal, some, indeed many, may be disposed to cry, How long, how long? but we should rather be thankful for what has been done, and well done, and is worth all the labour and money spent upon it.

Seeing light in a French Protestant church a few evenings ago I went to the door, and looked in, and listened for a short time, and although the several speakers spoke in French I could not help admiring how one young lady acquitted herself when giving a recitation. There must have been over 200 present, who listened attentively. In Ontario one can have no idea of the difficulties to be grappled with in bringing the claims of the Gospel to bear on a French-speaking population, bound by the fetters of Rome. K.

Montreal, Feb., 1887.

THE ELDERSHIP.

Dr. MacNish has written a series of valuable articles on the polity of the Presbyterian Church, treating it chiefly in its practical aspects.

What he says about the "elder" is not a little intricate, to say the least. No wonder. The attempt to extract "two classes of officers" so distinct from one another, out of the word "presbyter" has led only to confusion in other hands than his. No sort of ingenuity can do it.

In his second article he gives an extract from the "Form of Government" drawn up by the Westminster Assembly as follows:

As there were in the Jewish Church elders of the people joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the Church, so Christ, who hath instituted government and governors ecclesiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in the Church beside the ministers of the Word with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereunto, who are to be joined with the minister in the government of the Church, which officers the Reformed Churches called elders.

The propositions here laid down are:

1. That the office of the elder is from Christ.
2. That it is an office *sui generis*—strictly and originally one of rule.
3. That the gifts or capacity for the office are also from the Lord Jesus.
4. That the elder is one "of the people"—the laity; like the tribal elder, his analogue, in the Jewish Church.
5. He is appointed to the office on the call or election of the people, to act as their representative or in their name.
6. The place of the elder is that of a help, associate or adviser with the pastor in the government, order and discipline of the Church.

The Assembly adds that the Reformed Churches called this functionary by the name of "elder." They did it optionally for convenience, distinction or respect.

It is plain in the light of this extract that the Westminster Assembly did not believe that "presbyter" is the title of an office distinct from that of the clergyman or pastor.

Dr. MacNish thinks that the elder has no right to the peculiar functions of the minister; and yet in another place he takes the position that in the earlier periods of the Christian Church there was no such distinction of minister and elder as that which now exists—all elders were ministers. Where then in our economy is the apostolic elder?

He is also unwilling to have it said that the elder is a layman; for the reason that to put the elder in the ranks of the laity is to sink him ungracefully below the dignity of his office!

The familiar interpretation of 1 Timothy v. 17, which Dr. MacNish is anxious to adopt as the right one, is obviously at variance with the principle and logical consistency of the extract from the "Form of Government."

Holding as he does that the functions of teaching and of ruling were at first inseparable, how does he account for the origin of the elder? Somewhat curiously. He supposes that certain presbyters, who were chosen for their ability to teach, were found on trial not to be possessed of the faculty of elocution. Their forte, it was discovered, was ruling. So they dropped the other part of the investiture, and took to ruling. Hence, the office. According to this fancy, the eldership was a mere accident, with no divine foundation, a thing born of a mistake!

If "presbyter" does not stand for the elder, there is, he asserts, no warrant for the office in the Word of God, not a trace; and yet he is at pains to show, and in fact successfully shows with the light and force of scriptural reference, that the office did exist in apostolic times, and is emphatically marked with apostolic recognition.

Do we not read, however, of a plurality of elders in a Church? We do; but a Church was not a single congregation in the modern usage of the word, but a multiplicity; the centre, in fact, of a large environment of missionary stations, in which there was ample scope and necessity for almost any number of presbyters.

A note from Dr. Hodge may here be of service. In his comment on 1 Cor. xii. 28 he says on the word "governments": "As this gift and office of ruling are distinguished from those of teachers, it cannot be understood of the presbyters or bishops who were required to be 'apt to teach.' It seems to refer clearly to a class of officers distinct from teachers, i.e., rulers; or, as they are called in the Reformed Churches, 'ruling elders,' and in the Ancient Church, *seniores plebis*."

Many of your readers are no doubt well acquainted with the wonderful success which has crowned the labours of the American Mission in Asiatic Turkey, and the circumstances which led the missionaries, as the work grew upon their hands to form the converts into what is now known as the Armenian Evangelical Church. Their plan of organization said:

"The officers of the Evangelical Armenian Church shall consist of elders or bishops (called also pastors) and deacons."

The duty of the pastor was defined to be: To give himself to the preaching of the Word and to prayer, and to administer the sacraments; and to watch over and visit his flock. The duty of the deacons—to care for the poor of the Church, and to assist the pastor in all suitable ways in spiritual duties.

For the *government* of the Church it was provided that—"inasmuch as discipline according to the Scriptures belongs not to the clergy alone, but with them to the people; and inasmuch as it is not always convenient or expedient for the whole Church to come together for that purpose, they shall choose three or more brethren as 'helps, governments,' to form with the pastor and deacons a Church Session, or standing committee for the examination of candidates for admission into the Church, and the administration of discipline."

They point to 2 Co. v. 4, 2 Cor. ii. 6, and 1 Cor. xii. 28 for the source of their adopted form of Church polity.

It is manifestly on the line of the Reformed Churches. What Presbyterian would say that it is not also on the simplicity of the apostolic model?

It is an interesting fact, and well known, that the Syrian missionaries are not all Presbyterians; they were partly of the Congregational Church.

PRESBYTER.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN REGINA.

MR. EDITOR,—As many of your readers are doubtless very much interested in the progress of the Church in the capital of the North-West, permit me to send your journal a few extracts from the report presented at the annual meeting of the congregation held on the 20th ult. Many of the people of the Eastern Provinces are under the impression that Regina is an humble place—where no one but mounted police and Government officials live—indeed such was the character recently given it by Mr. Smelley, of the St. Paul, Minn., *North-West Magazine*, but Mr. Smelley is in the employ of the Northern Pacific Railway Company, and a slap at a Canadian town is in his line.

Regina is, let me tell your readers, a happy little

town; its people are refined, intelligent, and possess none of that discontented spirit which a couple of years ago was so prevalent with the people of this portion of the Dominion. They have the fullest confidence in the future of the North-West capital, and they set an example to the people of other towns, which is worthy of being imitated.

It will be gratifying for your readers to know that during the past year the congregation made considerable progress, both numerically and otherwise. To the roll of membership last year forty were added. These were received into the membership of the congregation, eleven being by profession of faith, and twenty-nine by certificate.

The number of communicants at present on the roll and in full communion is, after deducting those who have removed to other parts of the country, 140.

The total number of admissions since the formation of the congregation has been 111, of whom ninety-one have been admitted since May, 1885—thus the report says the membership has more than doubled itself during the past eighteen months.

An agreeable feature also is that the attendance during the past year in connection with the regular services of the congregation has considerably increased in the evening especially.

The report states that the average attendance at this meeting—the weekly prayer meeting—during the past year was between twenty and thirty. The Sabbath school and Bible class have made most encouraging progress during the year. There has been an increase in the number of classes, and several additions have been made to the teaching staff. There is now an average attendance at the school of 120.

The report further adds that it has been felt for some time that the Session, in order to meet the growing necessities of the congregation, requires an addition to its numbers, and in the near future propose taking steps in this direction. It concludes with the following words: "It is believed that not only will the Session be strengthened by such addition, but that the congregation will also derive advantage therefrom. Believing that it will materially aid in the contributions to the schemes of the Church to have connected with the congregation a missionary association, steps are now being taken to organize the same."

"The Session feel that they cannot close their report without a reference to the union meetings now in progress, which have been continued during the past three weeks with interest. It is sincerely hoped that the result of these meetings will abound in much fruit to the honour and glory of the Great King and Head of the Church, and that the whole efforts of this congregation during the year upon which it has entered may be crowned with much success."

Another pleasing feature is the choir, which is certainly the best in the North-West, and its members seem to have taken hold in earnest.

The resolution of Rev. Mr. Urquhart was a good step. He is an earnest and excellent worker, and would, I think, have been lost had he located himself in an Indian schoolhouse as he intended. The congregation recognize his zeal and his usefulness in his present sphere. Yours sincerely, G. B. E.

Regina, Feb. 1, 1887.

AS USING BUT NOT ABUSING.

We may possess earthly comforts, but we must not be possessed by them; we may use them as flowers to smell, but not as garlands to crown ourselves with; we may as pilgrims walk with them, as staves in our hands, seeking the country which is above; but we may not load ourselves with them, or bear them as burdens upon our backs; we may make them our encouragement, but not our confidence; we may use them as accessories, but we may not love them as our principal happiness. As bees, though they live in the midst of honey and wax, yet have not their wings touched with any vicious matter, that hinders their delightful flight abroad, and their nimble passing from one flower to another, so should Christians that live in abundance of earthly comforts, as in a hive of sweetness, be exceedingly careful that nothing of the world do cleave to their affections, which are wings of the soul, that may hinder lifting up and raising their hearts toward heavenly objects, or abate the activity of their thoughts in their frequent musings upon the promises, and all the mysteries of the Gospel, on which the mind, above all other things, ought to be most exercised and delighted.