

THE AFRICAN CHURCHES.

We welcome with cordiality the *Christian Recorder*, which comes to us from one branch of this Church. Dr. Tanner, the editor, gives us in the last number we have received a sketch of the various divisions of the African Church. We are sorry to find our friends are so much split up. When they resolved to set up for themselves—or we might say, to renew their organizations, for they seem to be of long standing,—we felt a sympathy for them, considering the cold and patronizing tone which the churches of the South maintained towards them. The Unitarian Association, through Rev. Charles Lowe, then Secretary, made overtures of fellowship to them, and we have endeavored to keep up the fraternal relations through this *Review*.

We can hardly blame them for their dividing lines and different branches. They are only like the rest of us. Various local causes and sectional feelings have created three distinct organizations, which may work for their advantage, if they only agree to have fellowship one with another, as we trust they do. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, according to Dr. Tanner, comes first on the list, being the oldest. The paper we receive is

the organ of that church. It was organized in Philadelphia in 1816, by the colored people of that city. After having considered "the evils under which they labored, arising from the unkind treatment of their white brethren who considered them a nuisance in the house of worship," Richard Allen, their leader, purchased a blacksmith shop, and converted it into a church, he being elected as its first bishop. From that small beginning the church has spread over the country. They have twenty-five conferences in working order; one university with a faculty of four, and one hundred students; a publishing house, where they issue their hymn-books; and a weekly organ — the paper we have mentioned, — the *Christian Recorder*, which has a circulation of four thousand copies.

The second branch of the African Church is called the Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. This organization was established in New York, and seems to have originated in some differences in regard to ordination and the laying on of hands. This difference to us Congregationalists seems a very slight one to separate two religious bodies of the same race. But we must put ourselves in their place for a moment, and see how to a genuine Episcopal Methodist, who believes in an ordained life-time episcopacy, any policy "which subordinates the spiritual officers of the church to the trustees," would be very unacceptable. This Church has five "unordained" bishops, and sixteen conferences. We are sorry to hear that the way does not yet appear very clear to a fellowship between these two churches.

The third organization is the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. This, according to Dr. Tanner, is the best known of all the three churches. It was organized in Tennessee, in 1872, by the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church South (white). Dr. Tanner remarks "that in sending Hagar away, they were humane enough to give her a loaf of bread, and a bottle of water, in the shape of a well-accredited episcopacy, a hymn-book, a catechism, and a monthly paper called the *Christian Index*." He fancies how the old man Allen, their founder, would have shouted had such kindness been shown to *them* when they went forth into the desert. He speaks of this Church as being truly alive, and doing a fine work among the people. These independent African churches deserve our warmest sympathy, and we believe our denomination, which was so foremost in serving the cause of the education of the freedmen, will not be slow to extend its cordial fellowship.