

THE
UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

NO. 4—MARCH-APRIL, 1895.

I.—LITERARY.

THE DEACON'S OFFICE AND WORK.

REV. J. F. CANNON, D. D.

It has been suggestively said by Prof. Witherow of Londonderry that, "all offices in the Christian church take origin from the Lord Jesus. He is Himself the author and embodiment of them all." Not only were they appointed by His authority; they were embodied in His person, and illustrated in His ministry. This follows as a corollary from the familiar New Testament doctrine that the church is the Body of Christ. The expression is not figurative, nor, as some would have it, anticipative; it is the statement of a real, present fact.

Two phrases occur in the New Testament which seem, at first sight, synonymous, but which are never used interchangeably. The one is the "Body of Jesus" or the "Lord's Body." This always has reference to that material body in which he tabernacled during his earthly ministry; which was nailed to the cross, laid in Joseph's tomb, raised from the dead and afterward received up into glory. The other is the "Body of Christ." This, if I mistake not, is always used to denote his Mystical Body, the church. The church is not simply likened to his body, but in a most real sense it is his body. It is the body of which he is the animating, guiding and ruling Head; in which he dwells by his Spirit; through which he perpetuates his presence among men, and carries on his work. In order that he might discharge his personal ministry as our

THE CALL TO OFFICE IN THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED BY THE APOSTLES.

In our last paper we presented brief sketches of the several kinds of ordinary and extraordinary offices of the Apostolic church. The question which seems most naturally to suggest itself next, to the student of the polity of an individual church of New Testament times is, how was the suitable man summoned to the office? Who saw his fitness to discharge its functions? Who informed him of that fitness? Who formally inducted him into that office? And it is to answering these questions that we propose to devote ourselves in the present paper.

In the way of further preliminary, it should be remarked, that, in the present discourse, we shall confine our attention, for the most part, to a consideration of the call and induction to *ordinary* offices. We shall do this for the following obvious reasons :

The church of the present has a relatively small interest in the forms of the call to the extraordinary offices—to the office of prophet say—if there ever were such forms. If the prophet was admitted to the exercise of his functions in the New Testament church only after formal action on the part of that church, that action is, nevertheless, of no great concern to us. It cannot serve as a rule for action on our part. The church of to-day has no prophets to induct into office ; but the Apostolic methods touching the call and ordination of ordinary officers are of the highest interest. The church of to-day should see in those methods the methods proper to herself *now*, in the relations considered. She should see in the customs of the Apostles the ideal pattern for her own following.

Again, the New Testament scriptures have so little to say about any action on the part of the church touching the call and recognition of extraordinary officers, that we are left to suppose that God intended to keep all such admissions entirely within the scope of his own immediate and miraculous activities in behalf of his church.

These reasons, we take it, are sufficient to justify us in confining our attention in the following presentation to the call and induction into the ordinary offices.

For the sake of clearness, we shall try to set forth in the first place the *manner of the summons* to official duty. And in the second place we shall try to show how the servant who had signified his readiness to obey the summons was *formally invested* with his office.

1. *The Summons to Office in the Apostolic Church* was two-fold—internal and external—a call from the Lord and a call from his people.

When our Lord was on the earth he called in person those whom he would have serve him in special and extraordinary offices. For example, coming upon "Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother" as they were fishing, he said unto them, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Again he appeared to Saul of Tarsus and said: "Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." In a similarly direct way the rest of the Apostles had been called by our Lord. So also the seventy who were sent out by twos. Matt. 4: 19.

No more satisfactory form of calling is easily conceivable. To have the Lord say in unmistakable accents that we were to enter upon certain offices would be to have an end put to all possible doubting as to our place and work. He is the head of the church. He is its king, as well as its greatest servant. And while he is the first of all its Apostles, the greatest of all its prophets, the sweetest of all evangelists, the most perfect of all its teachers, and the readiest of all its deacons, he is its absolute Lord; and a call from his lips could never be questioned.

This form of call, however, is not one with which the church has been blessed since the calling of Saul of Tarsus. Since that time, if we may judge from the New Testament record, no man has heard with bodily sense the voice of the Lord Jesus calling him to office in his church. Nevertheless *the Lord continues to call all who should serve him as officers* in his church. This may be immediately inferred from the headship, kingship, and absolute lordship of Christ, just adverted to. It is clearly implied also in such scriptures as Rom. 10: 15, "and how shall they preach except they be sent?" The summons to official work is evidently implied in the mission to it; and the mission here is predicated of God. It is

he that does the sending. It is taught again in Eph. 4: 11, 12, "And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." In the gift of such officers to the church there is involved their summons by the Lord Jesus.

It is true then that the Lord Jesus who is king in Zion calls all his servants whom he would have serve him so, to official functions. But he no longer comes upon his servants as upon the fishermen of Galilee, and says, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." He no longer calls by a voice from heaven; nor through any miraculous manifestations of himself. He is always calling through the teaching of his revealed word touching the need of, and the qualifications for official service. The qualifications for each of the offices are laid down with great distinctness, especially in the pastoral epistles; and every statement relative to the great work before the church is of the nature of a general call to all who have the qualifications or can acquire them. The Lord may also move upon the heart of his servants to "desire the office of a bishop." But he makes his call known more articulately through the voice of his people, where they are alive to their duty, as they make their call. Nothing is more plainly ascertainable from the New Testament than that *God intends that his people shall choose their own officers*. The call was to be from the Lord, indeed; but from the people also; and his call was to be made known for the most part through theirs. This was no doubt intended to prevent self-deception and other evils, which would have followed had everything been left to a supposed inner prompting of God.

The custom of the New Testament church in the matter of electing their ordinary officers is too plain to leave room for doubt; and that custom received the sanction of the inspired apostles. The disciples were accustomed to choose their own officers.

The body of the disciples on one occasion took part even in the election of an apostle—the one hundred and twenty disciples waiting in Jerusalem for the Pentacostal outpouring. In Acts 1: 15, 22, we have an account of a speech by Peter in which he pointed to the vacancy caused by the apostasy of Judas, and described the qualifications necessary in the man to succeed him, and the need that one should be ordained to fill the

vacancy. Immediately on the heels of this speech the disciples first designated two men and then, after prayer, "gave forth their lots; and the lot fell on Matthias." Here, whatever difference may be held as to the teaching of this passage in other respects, no one can fail to see the popular element in the choice of this apostle. The apostolic body was present. It was, by supposition, competent to designate the proper man to the office; but, of itself, it gives a share in the process of election to the ordinary members not inferior to that which the several apostolic members themselves enjoyed. The only meaning such conduct on the part of the apostles could have had, was to teach the church of that and all subsequent time that the people of God have the power of election in their own hands.

The body of the disciples elected the deacons. This is clear from the sixth chapter of Acts. An account of the election of the first deacons is there given with great particularity. The apostles had remarked the need for deacons. They called the multitude of believers together; explained the situation to them; and instructed them to look out among them "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," who might be appointed to serve table; in order that the apostles might give themselves "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 Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch. Acts 6: 2-5. The apostles were at Jerusalem. They could have made a wise choice of deacons. This was the case, if ever there has been one, when the people might with propriety have been deprived of the right of election; but the apostles "called the multitude of the disciples unto them" and asked them to choose seven men for deacons. The church was not always to have the apostles with it. Their work would soon be done. They would be taken to "be with Christ." They would, therefore, set the church to acting for itself as it would have to do when they were gone. Except upon the supposition that they intended this election to serve as a precedent, it is hard to account for their causing the body of disciples to go through the trouble of an election. But upon the view that it was the Divine intention that the people should elect their officers the conduct of the apostles becomes of the great-

est significance. No stronger affirmation of the right and duty of the people to choose their own officers could well be made.

The body of the disciples elect their Elders. Acts 14 : 23, in connection with passages already considered, shows this. Acts 14 : 21-26, gives a very compendious account of the labors of Paul and Barnabas on their return tour of the first missionary journey. Among other things they are said, according to the rendering of the Authorized Version, to have "ordained them elders in every church;" but the word rendered *ordained* is the aorist participle of *cheirotonein* which means originally to stretch out the hand in voting; and points with great probability to popular election. In the light of what we have seen done in case of the apostle Matthias and in case of the seven deacons, we naturally conclude that Acts 14 : 23 gives a compendious account of the apostles' having secured an election of elders on the part of the people and then of their having, with prayer and fasting, solemnly set them apart to their official duties. This last act—ordination by the apostles—seems indeed to have been chiefly in the mind of the writer; but in bringing it out he used a word which called up before the mind of the reader the part of the people. The passage standing alone would, it is true, not be sufficient to establish our present thesis; but in the light of the full exhibition of the process of filling offices recounted in the same book, it teaches that the people elected their own presbyters. *

* Dr. Lyman Coleman, in his "Primitive Church," says in connection with Acts 14 : 23. "The question here turns wholly upon the interpretation of the term *cheirotoneantes*, 'when they had ordained,' or, as in the margin, "when with lifting up of hands they had chosen them."

If, according to the marginal reading, we understand, with our interpreters, the declaration to be, that the apostles made choice of these disciples, even this supposition does not, necessarily, exclude the members of the church themselves from participating in the election. It would imply rather, that they proceeded in the usual way, by calling the attention of the churches to the election of their own presbyters; just as in the instructions which Paul gives to Titus and to Timothy, respecting the appointment of presbyters and deacons for the churches of Ephesus and Crete respectively, the participation of these churches in the appointment is of necessity presupposed. For, from the fact that Paul, in committing to his pupils, as to Timothy and Titus, the organization of new churches, or of those which had fallen into many distractions, committed to them also the appointment of the presbyters and deacons, and directed their attention to the qualifications requisite for such offices—*from this fact we are by no means to infer, that they themselves effected this alone,*

Again, *the body of the disciples* of the Macedonian Churches chose a fellow-laborer of Paul for a special mission. Paul speaks of him (2 Cor. 8 : 18, 19) as one "whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; and not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches, etc." And here also the word *cheirotonein*, indicative of popular elections, is used. It would seem that wherever a congregation was to be represented in any way by a non-apostle, there was always an election.

It is a plain and necessary inference from these cases that the apostles intended that the body of the disciples should elect whom they would as their officers; and this inference is not diminished considerably in force, if the last two cases be rejected as insufficiently established. Popular election was designed by God to obtain in the church. *

The people of God, then, were to see a fellow's fitness for office and they were to inform him of it by choosing him to the office, in the Apostolic age.

No doubt it was the custom of Paul and of Timothy and of Titus and of presbyters generally in that age to look out "fit men" and recommend them as suitable for election. Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2: 2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." He instructs Timothy in these words to choose men and fit them for official service. The sessions of churches would no doubt aid Timothy in this work; and they should have done

without the participation of the churches. Much more, indeed, does the manner in which Paul himself is elsewhere wont to address himself to the whole church, and to claim the co-operation of the whole, authorize us to expect, that at least where there existed a church already established, he would have required their co-operation also in matters of common concern. But the supposition is certainly possible, that the apostle, in many cases, and especially in forming a new church, might think it best himself to propose to the church the persons best qualified for its officers, and such a nomination must naturally have had great weight. Neander also asserts that this mode of election, by the whole body of the church, remained unimpaired in the third century." Pp. 60, 61.

* This inference as to the common custom of the Apostolic church is confirmed by the testimony of a younger contemporary of Paul, viz: Clement of Rome, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, § 44, he speaks of "presbyters ordained by the apostles, or after them by other men of high repute, *with the common assent and approbation of the whole church.*" See Jacob's "The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament," p. 147.

it themselves in the absence of the evangelist ; and they could with entire propriety nominate candidates whom they deemed worthy of office. It was their duty to do so. Nevertheless, the right and duty of saying who should be their officers belonged to the body of the disciples themselves. And all appointment of ministers or other officers by secular or ecclesiastical overlords are in contradiction to scripture teaching as to the where of electing power.

Under the Lord Jesus, who is the head of the church and who summoneth whom he will to official service, the people chose their officers in the Apostolic age.

2. Having disposed now of the question, who chose the officers in the church founded by the apostles, whilst it was still managed by them, it remains for us to show how the officer elected was invested with his office, or, how he was ordained.

The scriptures furnish us several instances of the induction into office of persons who had been already chosen thereto :

First. We learn from Acts 6 : 1-8, that when the seven deacons had been chosen by all the multitude of the disciples, they were set before the apostles ; and that "when they had prayed they laid their hands on them." The last act, according to this record, in the process of making the deacons—the act by which they were formally invested with office—the capstone of the call—was this act on the part of the presbyter Apostles, of prayer and laying on of hands.

Second. From Acts 13 ; 3, we learn that the Holy Ghost had said to certain prophets and teachers of Antioch, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them ; and that when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Here we have a formal recognition of Barnabas and Saul as called to foreign mission work ; and this capstone of their call—this formal designation to their work—was by an act of fasting and prayer with the imposition of hands, of teachers and prophets acting as presbyters probably.

It should be remarked, by the way, that this case shows that ordination is not unreiterable. An apostle is here ordained—reordained ?

Third. In Acts 14 : 21-23, we have an account of the work of Paul and Barnabas on the homeward part of the first missionary tour. Among other things we are told that "When they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed

with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed." This, as has already been asserted in another connection, is a highly compendious account of what actually occurred. But more seems to be made of the investing act, in the account, than of any other part of the process of making elders. And here again the act is spoken of as one of *prayer, with fasting*.

Fourth. In 1 Tim. 4: 14, we read. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Here we are clearly taught that Timothy was admitted to the exercise of his gifts as an elder, or evangelist-elder, with the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.

In these four cases of formal induction into office a plurality of elders was engaged in the solemnity in every instance. In three of the cases we are told that *prayer* formed a part of the solemnity; in the account of the fourth case—the investiture of Timothy with the office—the prayer is not mentioned; perhaps, owing to the brevity of the account. In three cases, also, there was, as a part of the investing act, the *imposition of hands*; in the compendious account in Acts 14: 23, nothing is said of the laying on of hands. This is an easily explainable feature of so sketchy an account. Again, in two of the cases the solemnity seems to have been attended by *fasting*. It is not at all improbable that fasting was an invariable feature of the New Testament investiture with office. Finally, the plurality of presbyters who set the elect officer apart formally to his office, is, in one case (1 Tim. 4: 14), called a *presbytery*. But all these cases of investiture are cases of ordination.

The term *ordination* is of Latin derivation; and originally denoted the double idea of popular election and formal induction into office. But, according to the present parlance, it denotes the act of setting apart to an office in the christian ministry. Hence, after some additional study of the cases mentioned, we should have a clear conception of what New

In that further study note:

First, New Testament ordination was by a plurality of elders.

It is perfectly certain that Timothy was ordained by a body of elders. Prelatists have tried to abate the force of this test; but their cavils have been successfully answered again and again; as by Porteus in his "Government and Kingdom of Christ." He says:

“To abate the force of the presbyterial ordination of Timothy, prelatists allege (1) That while the council of presbyters were present consenting, the act of ordination was by Paul alone. The two passages (1 Tim. 4 : 14 ; 2 Tim. 1 : 6) are held to refer to the same thing. This cannot be, for—First, the different expressions point out distinct gifts. ‘Neglect not the gift’ is most appropriate in relation to an office. An office cannot be stirred up, but heed may be taken not to neglect the duties which it implies. Secondly, The context points out the difference.

In 1 Tim. 4 : 14, the statement is given in connection with official acts. In the other passage personal and private character is the subject. This, therefore, refers to an endowment or grace. The laying on of hands was not only employed for ordination—it was used when imparting spiritual gifts. To do so required no consent of presbyters. But, thirdly, supposing that these passages refer to the same thing, the presbyters had an equal share in the ordination.

“It has been further alleged, (2) That Presbytery here (*presbuterion*) denotes the office of presbyter, not the council of presbyters, and should read ‘neglect not the gift of the presbyterate.’ This assertion also is inadmissible. Any term must be interpreted according to analogy in other instances. This is an admitted rule. The word occurs in Luke 22 : 66, the presbytery of the people; in Acts 22 : 5, it is translated ‘All the estate of the elders.’ This place (1 Tim. 4 : 14) is the only other occasion on which it is used. Robinson states that it means ‘an assembly of aged men, council of elders, senate, whence Engl. presbytery.’ In the two former passages the word is given for the Jewish Senate or Sanhedrin, as is explained in the first passage (*Sunedrion*). It must therefore have the same meaning when applied to the christian church. Presbytery thus designates the council and not the office of the presbyters. This prelatist sense mars the natural constructions.” Porteus : “Government and Kingdom of Christ,” p. 239.

This one case shows that New Testament ordination was in one case by a *plurality of presbyters* organized as a court ; and that such an ordination would in other cases be regarded as valid and regular.

Again, from Acts 13 : 1–4, we learn that presbyters (teachers), associated presbyters, took part, apparently an equal part, with that taken by the “prophets,” in the ordination of Barnabas and Saul to mission work. Moreover, it may easily be maintained, by a line of argument to be suggested presently, that these prophets spoken of here, were also presbyters and that, as presbyters, they took part in the ordination. Hence from this text also New Testament ordination appears to have been by a plurality of presbyters.

Finally, in Acts 6 : 6, we are told, indeed, that the apostles ordained the deacons. But they appear to have done this work as presbyters and not as apostles. 1. They were pres-

byters. Peter calls himself an "elder" (1 Peter 5: 1); and John twice speaks of himself as an elder (2 John 1: 1; 3 John 1: 1). Moreover they acted as elders; as in the synod of Jerusalem called to settle the controversy about circumcision. They argue with the elders there as equals, they vote with them as equals. 2. The apostles being, therefore, presbyters as well as apostles; ordination being, also, as we have seen, a function of the presbytery, it is more natural, in the absence of any express attribution of ordaining as a function to the apostolate, to hold that the apostles in ordaining the deacons were acting the part of presbyters. *

Remarks to the same effect might have been made concerning the cases of ordination by Paul and Barnabas recorded in Acts 14: 23.

From the foregoing remarks it is plain that it is not certain that, in New Testament times, any save presbyters, took part in ordaining to ecclesiastical office. It is not even probable that any but these presbyter-bishops took part in such acts. And it is perfectly plain that ordination by a plurality of presbyter-bishops was a normal feature of New Testament church life. These presbyters, too, were presumably (as certainly in the case recorded in 1 Tim. 4: 14) organized as courts.

It should be remarked that, so far as these cases show, the ordaining function belonged to both classes of elders. The ruling elders were a part of the presbytery as really as the teaching elders, when Timothy was ordained. Nor does the specific mention of teachers, in the ordination at Antioch, imply that there were no ruling elders participating in that act. Ordination is an act of rule and belongs equally to all rulers when properly associated.

Dr. Chas. Hodge took a contrary view, viz.: That only ministers may take part in the ordaining act to the ministry.

*It has in the text been proven that ordaining was no distinctive function of the apostolate; but if the contrary could have been shown, then we would be obliged to deny any Biblical warrant for the ordination of officers in the churches of to-day. For the Bible makes it plain that the apostolate with its distinctive functions, was an extraordinary and temporary office. Cp. pp. 87 and 88 of this volume of the Magazine.

Moreover, it would be hard to justify ordination in the Apostolic Age if it were not to be continued in subsequent ages. What good reasons can be given for ordaining deacons, missionaries, elders, in the Apostolic age that would not be equally strong for ordination of the same officers now.

And with him the Northern Presbyterian church has continued. till the present, to hold. See Hodge: Church Polity, pp. 290 ff. Moore's Digest, pp. 116, 117. But it may be said safely that they are wrong; for the reasons given in the text. Porteus very justly says: "Ordination is not analogous to preaching, administration of sacraments, or other functions proper to individual ministers. Consequently, that act pertains, not to those members only who possess the office to which the person is to be ordained, but to every member of that court" "Government and Kingdom of Christ, p. 225.

There were, in all probability, in New Testament times, many cases of ordination by one presbyter; but such cases were due to the fact that that presbyter could not get the aid of a presbytery—that he was "in the regions beyond." When Titus was left in Crete to "ordain elders in every city," Tit. 1: 6, he may, once and again, have, of necessity, had to act the part of a presbytery; but as soon as he had created other presbyters in any district he would proceed, after the apostolic fashion, to use them in further ordinations.

Whence it appears that in the regular, valid, scriptural and apostolic mode of ordination, one element was *the performance of the act by a presbytery.* *

Second, the ordaining act consists of a solemn, formal recognition, of the fitness of the candidate for the office, of his call from the people, of his call from God; together with an assent to the call and an earnest imploration for God's blessing on the candidate that he may be made an officer indeed. In this act the church completes the call and openly recognizes him who has been called as an officer thenceforth.

As no man could be an officer in the church until he had received ordination, it is a clear implication that the presbytery—the ruling body in the church—had a power of examining the candidate as to his fitness for the office, and of vetoing the call on his appearing wanting. This inference is supported by the plain teaching of scripture. Paul exhorted Timothy (1 Tim. 5: 22) "to lay hands suddenly on no man," warning him that in case he helped ordain an unworthy man to office he would become partaker of that man's sins. But the necessary qualifications could be known only by examination. Hence, we conclude the man called by the people was

* Cp. Jacob: The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament, pp. 114, 115.

to be examined by the presbyters; and if found wanting—if the people had made a mistake—the presbytery was to refuse to ordain him. The people had full right to choose their own officers. The presbytery (and any other power) could not impose an officer upon the congregation against its will. But on the other hand it was invested with a power which enabled it to keep in some degree the command. “The same (word) commit to faithful men, able to teach others also.” The truth of this paragraph is in the teeth of Congregationalism on the one hand, and of prelacy, Erastianism, etc., on the other. It proves them unbiblical.

In case the candidate seemed to have the qualifications needed in order to discharge the functions of the office, and thereby gave evidence, in harmony with the call of the people, that the Lord had called him to official work in his church, the presbytery added its call to that of the people and proceeded by an impressive rite to put him formally into the office. They *laid their hands on him and prayed God's blessing on him in the office.*

Imposition of hands is used in the New Testament, at times, in the impartation of a spiritual gift peculiar to that age. An instance of this may be seen in Acts 8: 17, 18: “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that this laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.” Another instance of the same use of laying on of hands is recounted in Acts 9: 17, 18: And “Ananias putting his hands on him said, brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received his sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.” This last case suggests a kindred use of the laying on of hands, viz.: in working miracles of healing. In both these classes of cases we have no ground for supposing that the hands were channels of the spiritual power. On the contrary, *that* came directly from God; and imposition of hands served merely to arrest the attention of the recipient and to designate him properly to all witnesses, or other such ends.

Imposition of hands was used again, or as in Mark 10: 16, “And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them”—used in blessing. Here, also, the act

seemed designed to arrest the attention of the one to be blessed, to secure the chord of sympathy that might be strung by the touch and to indicate to God the object to be blessed. No magic power went through the finger tips.

In the *cases of ordination* the imposition of hands seems to have been a formal designation of the individual elected, *to the people*, as called by the church and God to the office; and a formal designation of the individual *to God*, as in need of special grace in order to the discharge of his duties. The great North African father, Augustine, magnified the latter element in the idea of laying on of hands. He asks, "What else is the imposition of hands, then, than a prayer over the man?" "*Quid alius est manuum impositis quam oratio super hominm?*" Augustinus—De Bapt. c. Donat., 3, 16. Certainly there is no sign that the ordainers gave any magical power to him who was ordained. The seven deacons were elected because they were already men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Barnabas and Saul were ordained by prophets and teachers who may have been destitute of every sort of miraculous power. Timothy was ordained with the laying on of hands by simple body of presbyters. In no case is there any evidence of a communication of any sort of power on the part of the ordainers to the ordained. With the end of the ordaining act, ended the process by which the candidate received *not power but authority* to serve in the official manner contemplated. But we should say that this giving of authority was the call and in the act of the court by which it recognized the candidate's call to office, and which preceded the ceremony popularly called ordination. The laying on of hands seems, then, to designate as an authoritative officer the person thus pointed out—to designate such an one before God and in the eyes of man.

The prayer is a highly appropriate part of the act. The career just being entered upon by the candidate is so all-important; highly important, too, was the fasting which was fitted to make all concerned feel their dependence on God, the more keenly, for strength with which to discharge their correlated duties growing out of the new relations. Neither fasting nor prayer can be shown to have been an essential part of ordination. But there could be no beautiful and approximately perfect ordination without them. They were generally and perhaps always parts of the ordination act in the New

Testament. In that church, admission to office seems to have been with *prayer, fasting and laying on of hands*.

Summing up, we re-affirm, that the ordination act was the solemn and formal recognition of the candidates call, from the people, and from God—implying as a precondition an examination of the candidate and a perception of his fitness for the duties contemplated—together with a formal authentication of him as an officer, and a designation of him before God and his people, as such. The act was accompanied by earnest prayer for God's blessing.

We have seen that the act was an act of the presbytery.

We have now shown how men were gotten into ecclesiastical offices in the apostolical age. Some questions, however, of present practical importance remain. E. g. Was ordination necessary in order to the discharge of the functions of serving tables, of looking after the walk and conversation of other members of the church, and of teaching? Not at all, so far as the New Testament speaks. No one could be the officer called deacon without ordination; but it was every christian's right and duty, so far as he had opportunity, to wait on the poor. No one could be a ruling elder without ordination; but every man had the right and was under moral obligations to be his brother's keeper. No one could be an official teacher without ordination as such; but it was the duty of every disciple to "preach the word." Acts 8: 4, *Enangelidzomenoi ton logon*. There was a great deal of teaching and "preaching" by christians who were never made—and could never have been wisely made—authoritative, official preachers—a lesson which the church of the present should learn. It was, in part, owing to this unofficial "preaching" that the church spread so rapidly.

The christian churches would naturally admit of unofficial preaching. It was the synagogue custom, as we learn from Luke 4: 16 ff., and from Acts 13: 15 ff., et passim. Jesus was no official teacher of the synagogue of Nazareth. Nor were Paul and Barnabas official teachers to the Jews adhering to Moses, in the Pisidian. Antioch or elsewhere; but they were invited to preach. The whole conduct of the synagogue worship was in the hands of the bench of elders. Christian churches would naturally follow the same custom. Sessions would exercise the liberty to call on unofficial teachers occasionally.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

March 13th, 1895.