

ordained them elders by shew of hands." But this election by the general membership did not constitute the persons office bearers without ordination by already existing office bearers. And of this second principle we have evidence in the following examples. After the deacons had been chosen by the multitude of believers "they were set before the apostles, who, when they had prayed, laid their hands on them;" when the first missionaries were appointed to the heathen nations, though they were selected by the Holy Ghost, they were not allowed to go forth without the open, formal and authoritative sanction of the church, for "The prophets and teachers which were in the church at Antioch, fasted, prayed and laid their hands on them;" and when Timothy was set apart to the gospel ministry, Paul did not advise him to go forth and preach the Gospel when and where his inclination might guide him, neither did that Apostle deem it proper of his own authority to ordain him, but this was done "by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

It is evident then, from the nature of the case, that a stated ministry is requisite, and it is just as plain from direct Scripture evidence that such a ministry has been divinely appointed. This is distinctly implied in our present text, for the Apostle Peter addresses a distinctive class of persons, as especially responsible for maintaining the interests of the church, and charges them to feed the flock of God, and take the oversight thereof.

We come now to consider the particulars relative to the Christian Ministry brought more immediately before us in the text, viz., its *work, character and reward*. The *work* is intimated by the Apostle in the exhortation "Feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof." Some are of opinion that while the word feed views the church under the idea of a flock, the word oversight contemplates it as a family. We do not see any ground for this distinction, but think that both terms have reference to the church as a flock. Paul, in addressing the elders of Ephesus, uses this language, "Take heed unto yourselves and all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*." There are included in