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RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS ETC.
FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

ON THE INSTITUTION AND PREPARATION
OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Concluded from page 14.

III. We may now proceed to consider the third supposeable method of preparing a gospel ministry:—that the institution of a particular order being ordained, its ranks might be left to be filled up by such as should fortuitously be found qualified, without having undergone any special training for the ministerial office.

This method has undoubtedly the sanction of the Apostles in the circumstances in which they were placed.—They ordained elders in every city where they planted a Church. The men thus set apart to the sacred ministry—to be overseers of the flock—could not have received much previous preparation. They were, perhaps in

most instances, men without learning but of good repute, and full of faith and of the holy Ghost. They enjoyed however a peculiar advantage which in the present age is not vouchsafed. In the laying on of the hands of the Apostles, those supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit were imparted, through which they obtained a clearer understanding in spiritual things, and the power of confirming by miraculous signs the truths which they delivered. They thus received, as it were, a divine extemporaneous preparation for the duties of their office, to which we have no warrant to expect any thing analogous in these later ages of the Church. For though the laying on of the hands of an Apostle on the person previously approved, conferred not merely the title, but all the requisite qualifications for the ministerial office; the laying on