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The Ordination and Deposition of Ministers.

Our correspondent "Lex," in another column discusses the ordination and the deposition of ministers in reference to the ecclesiastical body or authority concerned in such action, and asks also for some editorial reference to the subject. It is a subject which, as everyone who has given it much thought well knows, is beset with both theoretical and practical difficulties—difficulties which we are not so sanguine as to hope will be entirely removed by what may be said here. In any consideration of this subject, however, a fundamental fact to be taken into account is that the Baptist denomination is organized on the lines of the Congregational polity, in accordance with which the local church is an independent body.

In the Episcopal and Presbyterian systems, on the other hand, there is, in one form or another, a central ecclesiastical authority which legislates and administers for the local congregation within the bounds of its authority. The sphere of independent action for the local congregation is very limited, and especially in all matters which pertain to the general interests of the ecclesiastical body, the central authority determines the course to be pursued. In its hands are the appointment and induction as well as the examination and ordination of ministers. The local congregation may indicate its preference in the matter of an appointment, and that preference may or may not influence the action taken, but in any case it is the central authority which appoints and inducts as well as ordains. The same authority also investigates charges that may be made against a minister, and deals with him in such circumstances according to its wisdom.

In the Baptist denomination, organized as it is on congregational in distinction from episcopal or presbyterial lines, the practice is necessarily quite different. The church is not a central body with many local congregations, but a local and independent organization. There is no central authority to legislate for all the congregations, but each local church legislates for itself. There is no central authority to ordain and appoint ministers for the various congregations, but each local church calls its own pastor and, if necessary, ordains him. But in order that men who are thus ordained to the Christian ministry may have a recognized standing as ministers in the denomination at large, it is the custom with Baptist churches that when any church sets apart a man to the ministry, it is done with the advice and concurrence of a council representative of the Baptist churches in the neighborhood of the church taking such action. If questions seriously affecting the standing of a minister arise, it is the duty of the church to which he may at that time belong, to call a similar council which shall investigate the matter and advise the church in accordance with the ascertained facts.

"Lex" appears to feel that there is something incongruous and objectionable in the fact that the council which advises with a church in regard to a minister's deposition may be entirely different as to its personnel from the council which advised in regard to his ordination. We do not feel the force of this objection. Indeed it seems to us rather an advantage that the second council should be composed of other aren. The important thing is that in both cases the council shall be sufficiently large, representative and competent to insure judicious action.

Our correspondent is also inclined to the opinion that it would be an improvement upon our present practice if the power of ordaining and of deposing ministers were vested in the Convention or the Associations.

Now it would certainly be possible for the Baptist churches comprised within the limits of one of our Associations or of the Convention, to recognize one

of these bodies as a kind of church court, having authority in the matter of ordaining and deposing ministers. But such a method of procedure would seem incongruous with the congregational system, and so far foreign to the independent, democratic spirit which that system has developed in our local churches, that there is little probability of it ever being adopted. Whether, if it were practicable, it would on the whole give better results than the plan upon which we are now working, may be a debatable question, but in our judgment it is impracticable, because it would be quite generally regarded as a first step in the direction of a centralized ecclesiastical authority to which the congregational system -in genius and tradition-is entirely opposed. As Baptists we must work on the congregational system, and according to that system the matter of calling and ordaining ministers is in the hands of

the local church.

It is, however, obviously important that in ordaining a minister, a church should act with the advice of a council sufficiently representative and competent to safe-guard the interests which the whole denomination has in the ordained ministry. In order to insure this we think it is a wise practice for a church having a pastor to ordain to send him to its Association, not for ordination, but for examination and approval. Then, if the result be favorable, the church can proceed to ordain at its convenience and in accordance with the usual forms. This method is strictly in accordance with congregational principles, it interferes in no respect with the independent action of the local church, and at the same time it affords a reasonable assurance that the examination of the candidate for ordination will be conducted by a representative and competent body. We are pleased to observe that this method is being adopted to a certain extent in at least one of our Associations, and we think it is altogether worthy of encouragement.

Jesus and Zaccheus.

To think and say the worst that can with truth be said of any man, is to do not a little to help him realize his worst possibilities. On the other hand, by thinking and saying the best we truthfully can about a man, we may awaken in him the aspiration and the endeavor to live up to his best Evidently our Lord's idea of Zaccheus and ideals. his attitude toward him were very different indeed from those of the people of Jericho. Zaccheus was a publican-a class of men who farmed the revenues under the Roman Government, paying a certain sum on account of the taxes of a certain district, and recouping themselves by getting what they could from the people. They had the reputation-and probably in most instances they quite deserved itof being dishonest and oppressive, taking from the people all that the circumstances enabled them to extort. The Pharisee neighbors of Zaccheus despised and hated him as a publican. No doubt they thought and said many hard things about him. Very likely a good many of the hard things they said were true, but they were not all the truth, and they did nothing to make Zaccheus an honest man. None of these people discovered that Zaccheus had in him the making of an honest man, and none of them apparently did anything to persuade or help him to become such.

The narrative concerning Zaccheus is very brief. All that we know of him is contained in the few verses which we have as our Bible lesson for the current week. As to his life before and after that day when the Lord became a guest at his house, we know nothing except by inference. It seems evident however that, though Zaccheus had never seen Jesus before, he had heard of him, and that what he had heard had made him anxious to see him and to know more about him. It seems pretty certain that Zaccheus had been told how unlike the Scribes and the Pharisees the prophet of Nazareth was in his attitude toward the publicans and others who were despised by the religious and orthodox people of the day as outcasts and hopelessly wicked, how he had offended the Pharisees both because he had denounced their hypocrisies and because he had treated publicans and sinners as being not beyond the reach of his sympathy and his help. Zaccheus evidently found himself much interested in this teacher, so different from others, whose presence meant help for the sick, the lame, the blind, the leprous,

and all who were in suffering and affliction, and whose heart was so large and so genuinely human that even those most despised and degraded were not shut out from his sympathies. And on the other hand, Jesus knew of Zaccheus. Whether or not it was by the exercise of supernatural power that he discerned the presence of Zaccheus and his readiness to receive blessing at his hands, we need not here enquire. But doubtless the true Christian spirit will many times find a repentant son of Israel ready to receive a blessing, where a cold pharisaism can perceive only a despised publican moved with idle curiosity. Iesus saw in Zaccheus a man ready to vield his heart to God and receive a great spiritual blessing, and he could no more pass him by unblest than he could turn away from Bartimeus praying that he might receive his sight, or from the leper who cried-"Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean

It is important to consider that the purpose and effect of Christ's attitude toward publicans and sinners was not to countenance their sins, but to call them to repentance and to bring them into the kingdom. Zaccheus well understood that if he would have Iesus, not merely as his guest for an hour, but for his abiding friend, he must renounce unrighteous practices and become an honest man. And the declaration which he then and there publicly made was an emphatic testimony to the genuineness of his repentance and the value which he placed upon the friendship and fellowship of Jesus. Our Lord came not merely to seek, but to save, the lost, He came to call sinners, and his call to the sinner is always a call to repentance. But what we want to emphasize as the great lesson of this story of Zaccheus is that which has already been made prominent-that it was by the respect which Jesus felt for men as men, the great value which he set upon them, the great self-sacrificing sympathy which he felt for them, that he led sinners to repentance. And that divine spirlt of love and self-sacrifice which was in the Master must find expression also in the disciple, if he is to be a successful messenger of his Lord to call sinners to repentance

Editorial Notes.

—Our contributors are treating us very generously at present. We have a number of articles on hand, which we shall be glad to find room for as soon as practicable.

—The British Weekly bestows high praise upon "The Life of Jesus of Nazareth," by President Rush Rhees of Rochester, saying that a more attractive, thorough-going and profound study of the Life of Jesus does not exist, its only limitation being its small size.

—Lord Roberts is expected to arrive in England about the first of the year. His steamer will call at St. Helena on its way. Before leaving, Lord Roberts issued a farewell order, praising the army for its conduct during the campaign. He referred to the sufferings and hardships of the troops, uncomplainingly endured. They had acted, he said, according to the highest standard of patriotism and had made the army respected and feared in South Africa. In conclusion he said: "I regard you my comrades with affection and pride. You will live in my memory to my life's end."

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—Rev. J. Lewis of Clayton, North Carolina, writes us that in his opinion the exodus of negroes from that State, of which mention was made in these columns a few weeks ago, has been very much smaller than was reported. He is living in the midst of cotton growers and has heard no great anxiety expressed on account of the movement of the negroes. Mr. Lewis does not feel able to endorse the Southern white man's treatment of the negro but is not sure that he fares much better elsewhere.

—We are now within three weeks of the end of the year and yet our Year Book for 1899—1900 has not appeared. There seems to be no good reason why the publication of the Year Book should be delayed more than six weeks at most after the meeting of the Convention, but more than twice that length of time has now elapsed and yet there is no word of it. If there is any excuse for this long delay the denomination ought to be made acquainted with it. It is highly important that the Year Book be issued at as early a date as practicable, and its publication should not be made to wait upon anybody's convenience.

—By an obituary sketch which appears elsewhere in this paper, it will be seen that the serious illness—mentioned in our issue of last week—of the Rev Arthur C. Kempton of Janesville, Wis, has had a fatal termination. This fact is published with very deep regret. Mr. Kempton was a man of winning personality and of fine ability. He had but fairly entered upon his life work, and the results of the few years spent in the ministry had created the expectation that his life would be one of distinguished usefulness. The family, and especially the widowed mother who resides at Wolfville, will have in their very sad bereavement the hearffelt sympathy of many friends. May they also find that strength and consolation which no human source can yield.

—If the people of this or any other country should leave alcoholic and stimulating drinks of all kinds alone except scan be no hand and of happinn when the physician vided in softhe Un States c \$773.580, c stimulant of coffee, of coops penditure populatio 76,000,000

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