

Regular Contributors.

- A. SCOTT, WALKERTON; G. H. FINCH, WILTON; J. W. McGARVEY, RIDGETOWN; G. J. BARCLAY, RIDEAU; C. SINCLAIR, RIDEAU; W. M. CROWSON, ACTON; A. H. BIRCH, OWEN SOUND; E. R. PHILLIPS, SELKIRK.

ORDINATION,

Recently the question—'Should Christian Churches continue the practise of ordination?' has become the subject of a few bitter, uncourteous and unreasonable articles. We refer particularly to the articles headed 'Ordination at Owen Sound' and 'A. Scott's imparted gift to A. H. Finch,' as found on pages 335 and 324, respectively, in this month's Bible Index. We regret that brethren should so far forget themselves, and the rules which should govern or guide Christians while discussing Bible questions or while criticising their actions of brethren, as to indulge in language which displays the absence of love, refinement of thought and feelings which Christians should possess. Why Bro. Scott and Finch should be singled out and made targets for coarse vituperation is a problem which cannot be solved by the application of the 'Golden Rule.'

If the Bible were as silent as the grave on the Ordination question and if our brethren had always refused to practice it because of such silence, condemnation would be in order, and if such were the case the use of unkind expletives such as permeate the articles referred to, would tend to aggravate instead of remove the evil. But is the Bible silent with reference to ordination? Was it not practised by the Apostles and early Christians, and sanctioned by the Holy Spirit? If so should not the ceremony be perpetuated? And have not our ablest and best Biblical exegotes, such as Alexander Campbell, Robert Milligan and J. W. McGarvey not only practised ordination but written in favor of its perpetuity? That ordination was practised by the Apostles and early Christians no better will deny, but those who oppose its perpetuity affirm that the practise of laying on hands should have ceased with spiritual gifts; that miraculous gifts accompanied the laying on of hands during the Apostolic age and as miracles ceased, the practise through which power to perform miracles was communicated, should cease also. This position would be correct if it could be shown that none but the Apostles participated in the ordination ceremony, because they, only, had the power to impart spiritual gifts, but we find in Acts xiii, that Simeon, Lucius and Manean laid hands on Barnabas and Saul, in obedience to the Spirit's command, 'SEPARATE me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have called them.' And unless it can be shown that those prophets and teachers had the power to impart spiritual gifts we must conclude that the object in view was separation and not impartation.

But we find that others aside from the prophets and teachers mentioned took part in the ordination ceremony. Timothy was commanded 'to neglect not the gift that was in him, which was given him by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.' 1 Tim. 4:14. We learn by this that the Elders

means a servant. And as deacons or servants were solemnly set apart in the beginning by the imposition of hands and by prayer. Should not those who are appointed to that office now be thus solemnly set apart. But it is said by those who oppose ordination that the Apostles laid their hands on these seven deacons to impart to them the Holy Ghost or power to work miracles. Probably at this time they did receive such power, although nothing is said to justify a positive affirmation with reference to it, but the Holy Spirit does tell us that an appointment was made and in connection with that appointment we have the imposition of hands, hence the laying on of hands belongs to the appointing ceremony; the gift of the Holy Spirit may have been a result but was not the object in view. J. W. McGarvey in commenting on this occurrence says 'The part performed by the Apostles was their appointment to office. But all the Apostles did was to pray and lay on their hands hence this was the ceremony of their appointment. It stands upon record as a precedent and should be complied with in similar cases. The fact that men cannot now confer a miraculous gift by laying on hands does not relieve them from the obligation to impose hands as a ceremony of appointment to office. The question as to who should perform the ceremony should give no trouble. . . . Whoever plants a church, or sets one in order, should lay hands on its officers.'

The next class who submitted to ordination was Preachers, even the Apostle Paul and the evangelist or teacher, Barnabas, when about to start on a preaching tour among the Gentiles were ordained by the Presbytery at Antioch. See Acts 13. In this case the words appoint or ordain do not occur but we have the word separate instead. But Paul settles the question as to whether he was ordained or not. In his letter to Timothy he says, 'Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle. (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.' 1 Tim. 2:7.

The third and last class mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, as having been ordained is Elders. While on the preaching tour to which Barnabas and Saul had been sent from Antioch, they ordained Elders in every city. Acts 14:23. And Titus was left at Crete to set in order the things that were wanting and to ordain Elders in every city as Paul had appointed him. Space will not permit further investigation of the question in this issue, but we presume that sufficient proof has been deduced to show that ordination was practised by the Primitive Christians; that fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands constituted the ceremony; that Elders and Evangelists ordained with the approval of the Holy Spirit; that Deacons, Evangelists and Elders were ordained in many cases by men who had no power to impart miraculous gifts, also that our ablest Biblical scholars have advocated the practise of ordination and written in favor of its perpetuity.

Our old and esteemed brethren, Black and Sheppard, have practised ordination in Canada, not forgetting the laying on of hands. Of course we do not argue for a continuance of the practise simply because Bro. Campbell, Milligan, McGarvey, Black, Sheppard and a host of our ablest and most devoted brethren have advocated it, but in view of the plain declarations of the Bible, we cannot understand how Christians having a good conscience

ordained, we will now proceed to point out the classes of officers who were and should be ordained. In Acts 6 we have the first account of the appointing or ordination ceremony. The Apostles told the murmuring Grecians 'to look out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, 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 Nicolas a Proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the Apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.'

There is no reasonable doubt but that the proper appellation for the above seven is 'Deacons' because they occupied the position of servants of the church and the word deacon

characterizes a Divinely appointed ordinance, or an ordinance which is so generally considered divine as a 'silly' if not 'blasphemous farce,' ordination 'mummery,' etc., and can speak of the presbyter who conducted the ceremony as a 'paltry slip of a preacher.' We have always thought that argument, not vituperation, should be leading characteristic in writers who profess to take the bible and the Bible only for their guide, but apparently an effort is being made to subvert the example set us by those noble pioneers of primitive christianity. Fortunately for the cause of truth and justice this class of writers compose but a small part of the brotherhood in Canada, and we trust the time will soon come when 'Righteousness (right doing right thinking, truthful speaking and writing) will cover the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep.' H.T.L.

MEETING IN MUSKOKA.

When Bro. Stirling left home for Muskoka, he wrote asking me to come along as soon as possible. Accepting his invitation I was with him on Thursday, Oct. 28, and a meeting was announced for at a school house 8 miles from Bracebridge, commencing Lord's day, Nov. 1st, at 7 p.m. Finding a goodly number present the meeting was continued 9 evenings during which time six of those who heard the word believed and were baptized, and one lady who had been baptized by the Methodists united with us on the 'Great Union Ground,' with the Bible only as our rule of faith and practise. These seven with three who obeyed the gospel, when Bro. Stirling held two meetings there in September, (making ten in all) have decided to meet regularly on Lord's day for worship, and will also conduct a Sunday School for the instruction of the younger people. I enjoyed my stay among these brethren very much, talking from morning until evening about the things of the Master's Kingdom, and the exceeding great and precious promises in God's Word. A stay so short where so much work is needed, was to be regretted. I could only promise to return again if possible, unless some one else shall hold a meeting there. J. C. WHITELAW.

DR. CASSELS ON BAPTISM AND CLOSE COMMUNION.

On the 3rd Lord's day in October, our Baptist friends here were favored with a visit from Dr. Cassels, President of McMaster Hall, Toronto. In the afternoon he discoursed to a large audience on the subject of 'Baptist Belief.' The Doctor possesses many excellent qualities as a public speaker; is calm and deliberate in his manner, uses good language and displays a kindly disposition, harshness and vindictiveness are commodities which he appears to have but little if any use for; and in this and many other respects, his style of speaking is worthy of imitation. His arguments and appeals for the union of God's people were clear and strong, but in speaking of the importance of baptism and on the subject of Close Communion, we thought his reasoning was very defective. He said many people are laboring under the impression that Baptists attach an importance to baptism which it does not possess, viz: a saving effect. He appeared very anxious to correct this impression, and emphatically denied the existence of any connection between baptism and salvation. Said it is faith and re-

pentance that saves. When a person believes on Christ and repents of his sins, such a person is in a saved state and is baptized because he is in a saved condition. This reasoning sounds very well and the only difficulty in the way of its acceptance lies in its contradiction with the words of our Saviour, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' and with the words of Peter, 'Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.' The Doctor is authority for placing salvation before baptism, while the King of kings and Lord of lords places salvation or the remission of sins after baptism. Whose teaching shall we accept? The Doctor's position as to the importance of baptism showed to disadvantage when he explained the position Baptists hold with reference to Close Communion as practiced by them, said we do not invite any to partake of the Lord's Supper who have not been immersed it is for his obedient children, and those who have not been immersed are in a state of disobedience. But the Doctor has already said that faith and repentance saves.

The saved compose Christ's Kingdom. They are God's children and being his children they are heirs with Christ, and therefore have a right to every privilege which heirs enjoy including access to the Lord's table. Consequently if the Doctor is sure that the remission of sins takes place before baptism how can he consistently discriminate between the immersed saved, and the unimmersed saved, at the Lord's table. Are not Christ's followers (all the saved) equal, and being equal do they not all enjoy the same privileges?

If the doctor would follow the example of Peter and tell anxious believers to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, as he did on the day of Pentecost, and become followers of Christ through obedience to his will, 'For He being made perfect, became the author of Eternal Salvation unto all them who obey him' Hebrews 5:9. All difficulties as to who should partake at the Lord's table would disappear as mist before the morning's sun, and teaching which is considered inconsistent by all religious people outside of the Baptist Church, would give way to that which is consistent and logical and what is far better—Biblical. H.T.L.

Stratford, Oct. 19.

Dear Bro: Bro Lediard went away after spending a very profitable week to the church, and having baptized on Friday night the young lady who made confession when Bro. Harding was here. I was very sorry Bro. I could not stay longer with us and think we shall have to ask the Ridgetown and Blenheim brethren to let us have him again in the near future for a continued meeting. We hope they will prepare their minds to anewer, Yea. EDGAR MACKLIN.

We had a fire in our meeting house on the 11th. A chandelier with six lamps fell and broke making a terrible fire, ruining three seats and blackening the ceiling. No one was hurt. If it had occurred 20 minutes later, the audience would have been in, and without a doubt lives would have been lost. All well. H. B. SHERMAN.

DEATH.—While I was on the Manitoulin Island in September last, brother and sister K. Johnson of Gore Bay, were called upon to part with a sweet little baby boy. The mortal remains of which we accompanied to the 'city of the dead.' W.M.C.

NEWS ITEMS.

Bro. Stirling visited the Church at Collingwood, Nov. 22

Bros Sherman and Scott are in a meeting at Beamsville with four additions at last writing and a good interest.

Bro. Stevenson is to remain six months longer at St. Thomas. There were two baptisms there on the 5th inst.

During my stay at Gore Bay, Bro. Geo. H. Walter was duly authorized to perform the rite of marriage. W. M. CROWSON.

Bros. C. Sinclair and Sheppard held a short meeting in Lobo in October at which time four were added to the church. Bro A. Sinclair is an acceptable worker in that part.

Bro. O. G. Hertzog has been engaged as evangelist by the New York State Missionary Society, We are glad to see Bro. H. right into the work again, but sorry that he has left Ont.

The brethren at West End, Toronto, need a house of their own body, they cannot hold a series of meetings in the hall they occupy, as it is used for other purposes during the week.

Bro. C. J. Lister has returned from the Manitoulin. During his stay there thirteen were baptized. The debate spoken of did not come on.

Bro. Stevenson of St. Thomas and Elder Sheppard just closed a meeting at Downmanville, during which twelve were added to the church. We are glad to hear that Bro. Stevenson is doing some evangelistic work. If he would be perfect now, he should write more for the WORKER.

Ridgetown, Nov. 7. Dear Bro:—Bro Martz left here for his first appointment at Rodney this morning. We called our brethren together and spent last evening in prayer for his success and he is gone out full of hope. Bro Sinclair was with us and exhorted us not only to pray but to make sacrifice for the success of the work. Trusting that success may attend him. I am Your Bro. J. LEDIARD.

Bro. Barclay has a pressing invitation, from some churches in New York state, asking him to go over and devote his whole time to preaching the Gospel among them. Those brethren would do well to secure the services of Bro. Barclay for he is an earnest worker; but we would be sorry to see him leave Ontario, where work is so much needed. The churches here should bestir themselves and retain him in our midst, and we believe Bro. B. would prefer remaining in Ontario if his labors would only be appreciated as they ought.

Bayville, Nov. 14.

Bro. Editors:—I have just returned from Acton. Am moving my family up here, wish my paper sent here. Twenty baptisms here and in Ridout; since Bro. Munro came much good has been done, five or six are uniting who have been baptized by the sects making say 25 including the five reported last month at the opening of the meeting house in Ridout. Yours, &c. W. M. CROWSON.