

this is already far towards being determined, when we satisfy ourselves that the ancient Scriptures were committed as the very "oracles of God" into the hands of parties divinely charged with the keeping of them. For, how easy is the inference, that, as the same necessity exists for a well authenticated rule of faith now as in former ages—the interests of truth being equally precious—the providence of God would anticipate the perils inseparable from any just grounds of doubt on so primary and momentous a question! So, here also, we have but to look at the Old Testament, and find the principle standing out in bold relief, that for the good of all some should be separated to sacred offices; that the very outworks or subordinate parts of the temple service were to be committed to hands carefully chosen, and the work to be done according to exactly prescribed rules. But, especially to the service of the altar how sacredly was the approach guarded, and how impressive the recognition of this in New Testament language in connection with the very assumption of office by the Redeemer Himself: He "glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but was called of God as was Aaron!"

If the thought were to occur that the exclusive character of the offices of the Levitical economy was only in harmony with the local and temporary system of Judaism; if it should be thought that, the temple and the altar having passed away, the precedent is the less relevant—though we have distinct recognition of the analogy between the service of the altar and the Gospel in the reasonings of Paul himself—there is another standing out precedent among that people in whose affairs the Almighty took so immediate an interest. We read not only of the schools of the prophets, but of priests, and Levites, and scribes, who, in the character of public teachers, were charged with the instruction of their brethren, and at whose lips they were to learn the law. It is a mistake to suppose that the prophets whom God from time to time raised up constituted the ministry of those ages. These prophets were extraordinary and inspired men, whose appearance was occasional; and at some junctures in the history of that people, they had no prophet. Their ordinary ministry consisted of priests and Levites, who became learned in the law by study. For this end—as Lightfoot and others who treat of the Jewish constitutions have shown—they were disposed into no less than forty-eight cities, from whence, as from so many colleges, they were sent forth to teach the people. And in the time of the second temple, when the spirit of prophecy had departed, they must have specially depended on such a learned ministry, when the very language in which the Scriptures were written was comparatively unknown, and interpreters were required in each synagogue, to render it into the common tongue.

But, when we come to the New Testament, what do we find? We find at one time a body of twelve men, at another a body of seventy, sent out by Jesus as His messengers, to preach the kingdom of God. We find how, after the ascension, by an oracular voice it was said, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them." We find the apostle giving charge to Timothy to commit the things which he had heard to faithful men (or trust-worthy—*πιστοῖς*), who should be able to teach others also. "Lay hands suddenly on no man" is his express caution. I do not at present enter into the question whether Timothy and Titus were bishops of Ephesus and of Crete. In the charge to ordain elders in every city, given to the latter, our Episcopalian friends see a proof, of course, of his Episcopal authority. We Presbyterians—besides the evidence on the face of the Epistles, that neither Timothy nor Titus was appointed