

true ministers, and the ability to recognize this authority, which he confers on the community of saints. How ought this recognition of God's authority to be solemnly bestowed?

It is desirable that the minister should be sustained, in his own conviction of the call of God, by the concurrence of older ministers, and supported in his duty by the authorization of the church.

Having already distinguished between authority and its recognition, we now distinguish between authority divinely given and that orderly admission of such authority which is becoming from a visible congregation, and which is sought by the humble-minded minister. In such authorization there is essentially a direct reference to God.

There is first of all the open acknowledgment of the community that "no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron"—a conviction which precedes the possibility of any ordination, and which must not be erroneously identified with the formal ratification of the church. (In Exodus iv. 27, we see that Aaron's call was a direct command from Jehovah; "The Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses:" and in verse 30, we see that Aaron's function ensued from this command. Although that priesthood was not our ministry, yet we see in Jeremiah xxiii. 21 that all true prophets must have their commission from God; and "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.") And there is subsequently, under the impression that this divine call has been granted, the dedication to God of the intending minister that he may receive the needful divine gifts to capacitate him in his special service.

We find in the New Testament two passages which enlighten us as to the proper course of a church of God.

St. Paul's injunction to Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 14), "Neglect not the gift that is in thee which was given thee through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," informs us that the imposition of the hands of the collected elderhood gave visible sanction to the ministerial gift (*charisma*) given to Timothy through prophecy—i.e., through inspired teaching. The consecrating action of older believers both besought and verified the possession of the special gift. The other directions to

Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 22, and 2 Tim. i. 6, appear clearly to refer not to any ministerial appointment, but to that laying on of hands (Hebrews vi. 2) which prevailed in the early church for the reception of the Holy Ghost. In ii. Tim. i. 6, St. Paul alludes to Timothy's reception of the Holy Ghost as a believer, through St. Paul's hands alone, just as St. Paul himself had received the gift through Ananias alone.

As a minister of the Word, taught by "prophecy" (Romans xii. 6), "according to the analogy of the faith," Timothy was ordained by the concurrence of elders; and it is inconceivable that St. Paul should speak of that joint solemnity as if it were solely his own act; whereas it is most natural and consistent with other scriptures that St. Paul alone should have conveyed to his "own son in faith" "the gift of God" (2 Tim. i. 6—as in Romans vi. 23), which had been communicated to himself in the same way by a single disciple. In 1 Tim. v. 22 the context shows that Timothy is cautioned against hastily conferring the same solemn ordinance in a dangerous participation with the impenitent.

Besides the passage, 1 Tim. iv. 14, which relates to ordination, we read, previously in the Acts (chapter xiii. 1-3) that the Holy Ghost said to certain prophets and teachers "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," and that thereupon, "when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

This is the clearest instance of ordination, following the call of God, that occurs in the New Testament.

Whether the imposition of hands was that only of the prophets and teachers, or whether other believers joined in it, we may not be certain: but it indicated the separation and dedication, by others, of Barnabas and Saul to a particular work to which God had called them.

One thing is absolutely clear, that those who were not Apostles, ordained (by separation and the imposition of their hands) two "Apostles, Barnabas and Paul" (Acts xiv. 14), for a special mission. In this case at least, it appears manifest that a commission, through certain prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, was deputed to Barnabas and Saul by devoting them to God solemnly for a peculiar work.