

Not only in Jerusalem, but in every Church throughout the world, the presbyters became the successors of the Apostles in carrying on Christian work. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every Church in Lycaonia and Pisidia during their first missionary journey. Some years afterwards these presbyters assisted at the ordination of a young man by the name of Timothy, one of the fruits of missionary labour there, who was by and by appointed an evangelist in the region of Ephesus and instructed by Paul to ordain elders in every new Church throughout all that district. The qualifications of both presbyters and deacons are described to him at length. The things which he has heard from the Apostle are to be committed to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. In the Church of Antioch, there were teachers as well as prophets, and in Philippi there were both bishops and deacons. The Thessalonian Christians had persons who laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord. The Hebrew saints possessed a second generation of officers, who ruled over them and watched for their souls. Individuals like Epaphrus, Archippus, and the elders of Ephesus are said to have received a ministry in the Lord and are exhorted to fulfil it.

3. The inward call of the Holy Spirit is the central element in a man's authority and ability to exercise the functions of a minister, for the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Not only did the Holy Spirit indicate the classes of office-bearers which the Apostles were to appoint in the Church, the work which they were to do and the qualifications that they were to possess; but He has all along indicated to particular persons that He wished them to devote themselves to His service in this office.

This call is manifested partly in the region of natural law, but mainly in the super-sensuous realm. The Spirit endows the person with gifts for the ministry and awakens a strong desire in his heart to engage in the work. He enables him to see that he possesses the physical, intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual gifts necessary for the office. He opens up the way to the requisite education, sometimes by removing obstacles from his path in an evidently providential manner. He influences him by the advice of friends, by giving him pleasure and success in Christian work, and above all he impresses him through the emotions of his soul and the convictions of his conscience that this is his life work. He who can keep strong and clear amid the trials and disappointments of life, his conviction of a direct commission from the Most High to the work in which he is engaged, will not be troubled about the ground of his authority. No right can be higher than that which is directly conferred by God himself. No warrant can be stronger than that truth which burns like a fire in the prophet's bones, and which must find utterance.

4. The Church homologates this call by ordination to the ministerial office. The man himself is liable to be deceived. He may have mistaken the workings of a heated imagination for the leadings of the Holy Spirit. He needs the calm, critical judgment of the members and ministers of the Church, in the exercise of their gift of discerning spirits, to pronounce on the suitability of his gifts and the reality of his call.

Hence the approval of the people as expressed in their call, is an important element in the personal call of the minister to his work. The same divine Spirit who impels the soul of the candidate towards the office, also enables the godly members of the Church to recognize his gifts and his vocation, and to declare themselves willing to be profited thereby. When they have done this, and when the Presbytery has satisfied itself as to the adequacy of his preparation, it proceeds to ordain him.

Ordination is the public and solemn declaration, the Church believes that the candidate is called of God to the work of

the ministry; it conveys to him the formal and official appointment to the office, and gives him full ecclesiastical authority to discharge its functions. It may be called the ratification of the Divine call. The ceremony does not in, and of itself, confer the necessary qualifications or the divine authority of the office. But inasmuch as it is of Divine appointment we ought to believe, that, when approached in the right spirit by the candidate and by the Presbytery, it may, and ought to be, an effectual means for preparing the minister of Christ for the work to which he is called. In the case of Timothy, God honoured His own ordinance by bestowing, in the act of ordination, not only the formal investiture with the office, but also the grace needed for the performance of its duties.

We need not allow ourselves to be disturbed by the fact that we have not received Episcopal ordination. There are only three clear instances of ordination mentioned in the New Testament, viz.: the deacons, who were ordained by the Apostles; Paul and Barnabas, who were ordained by the prophets and teachers of Antioch; and Timothy, who was ordained by the Presbytery. Apostles and prophets have ceased in the Church; therefore the only remaining authority to which the right to ordain belongs, according to the New Testament, is the Presbytery, since it is composed of the associated teachers and rulers of the Church.

Not only is Presbyterian ordination Scriptural and valid, but we hold that it is the only mode of ordination which is absolutely regular according to the Apostolic model. Episcopal ordination of presbyters is "irregular" because it is not generally performed by the court of presbyters, but by a single presbyter who has unwarrantably assumed to himself the name and functions of a bishop. Not only are the orders derived through the line of the Church of Scotland equally valid with those of the Archbishop of Canterbury, but they are much more regular than his are, because he received the presbyterate, his only Scriptural office, from a single individual. It is a strange spectacle to see the High Church section of the Anglican communion unchurching the whole of the rest of Protestant Christendom, because it will not acknowledge the divine right and absolute necessity of an official, who, according to the ablest Episcopal scholars, did not attain his present position in the Church until a late date, and indeed was entirely unknown as the superior of presbyters until some time in the 2nd century. No lover of the true unity of the Church of God can for a moment allow that physical contact with an unscriptural official shall be counted more than grace and truth combined.

5 From these premises, I think we may safely draw the conclusion, that men thus called to the ministry of the Word, and who have their call thus authenticated by the Church, have an authority to preach and dispense ordinances not possessed by any other member of the Church, no matter what their gifts or their success may be. The physician who has passed the examination of the Medical Council has an authority to practice his profession in Ontario not possessed by the man who has not passed it, no matter how vast his knowledge or how great his skill. All honour to the laymen who are successful in bringing men to Christ; but if they wish the recognition of the Church as ministers of the Word, they must come in by the door.

Some apology is perhaps necessary for rehearsing so much elementary and well known truth in a Synod of Christian pastors. I wished to trace the Scriptural authority of the ministry, as indicated by the course through which it has come to us. The question possesses more than a theological and historical interest. It is intensely practical. We need to be convinced of the Scriptural validity of our orders to guard ourselves against being brow-beaten out of our standing by the arrogance of Roman Catholic and High Church assumption on the one hand and by the brethren's sneer of a hireling ministry on the other.

And when in our work we are face to face with the obduracy of the human heart, when again and again we have been hindered and baffled by the force of habit or the seductiveness of sin, we need to be sure that we are standing where God ordained us to be; that our poor words and service are, after all, the appointed means for evangelizing the earth, making disciples of all nations, and thus bringing in the millennial dawn. He who called us by the special operations of His Spirit, and who, through the leadings of His providence, hath given us recognition and standing as the ministers of His Church, is bound by the conditions of His promise, to be with us always until the campaign closes with victory.

Every minister ought to magnify his office, and not try to see how he can belittle it, or explain the foundations of its authority away on the ground of expediency or natural law. He ought to magnify his ministerial power—not to nourish self-conceit or vanity, but to awaken fervent gratitude to the King of Zion, who called him by His grace, and to stimulate strong faith in the means of grace as administered by him, that they will be the power of God unto salvation to perishing men.

JOB'S FAITH.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Job xii. 15.

How good to all Thou art, O Lord,
We read in Nature's every mood;
No whit the less Thy written word,
In every page reveals Thee good.

Even when Thou frownest in the storm,
Or by thy prophets curstest man,
There we can trace fair Mercy's form,
Here feel that goodness prompts the ban.

The child may read it as he runs;
Love beams from earth and sea and sky.
Even wintry snows and sultry suns
To the same truth but testify.

Hearts happy own Thee good and just,
Hearts, too, by grief and care subdued;
Since Christ hath bowed Him to the dust,
E'en in the dust we find Thee good.

Thee we would love and Thee would trust
Whatever on us Thy love bestow;
But who the unworthy world would thrust
Between us deem our deadliest foe.

Thee we would trust and Thee would love,
When Thou dost smile on us, O God!
Yet give the faith no frown can move,
The love that feels love in the rod.

Shall we not love Thee more and more,
E'en though Thou cross our heart's desire,
If we be reckoned precious ore
And worthy the Refiner's fire?

Then if our lot be scored with care,
A token of Thy love 'twill be;
That blessing would but prove a snare,
That blinds us to our need of Thee.

Help us, if tried like Job, to say:
"Yea, though Thou slay we'll trust Thee still."

Draw us but nearer Thee each day
And perfect in us Thy whole will.
Toronto, May 18th. WM. KAY.

The Toronto Young People's Presbyterian Union held their regular Missionary meeting in the school room of Knox Church, on Monday evening, May 29th, at eight o'clock, when an interesting programme of missionary addresses and music will be given. All friends interested in the work of the Union will be cordially welcome.

Association Hall was crowded to the doors on Thursday last, on the occasion of the concert given by the pupils of the Toronto College of Music, under Mr. Torrington's directions, assisted by Mr. Paul Morgan, cellist and Mr. Bomhre, violinist, of the College staff. A very artistic programme was rendered, consisting of piano, organ, cello and vocal solos; also a cello trio and Mendelssohn's trio op. 49, for piano, violin and cello.

The finest private collection of postage stamps in the world is owned, it is said, by M. Ferrari, of Paris. It is worth about £250,000. Perhaps next to it in value, is the collection contributed to the British Museum by the late Mr. T. K. Tapling, M. P. The Duke of Edinburgh possesses a very good collection, and so does the Duke of York. The young princes of Siam are among the keenest stamp collectors in the world, and a very fine collection of English stamps is owned by Mr. F. A. Filbrick, Q. A.; another is owned by one of the Rothschild family. Also the Czar of Russia used to take much pleasure in his collection.

Christian Endeavor.

BIBLE IDEAL OF CHARACTER.

REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

MAY 28.—Prov. 31: 20-31; II. Tim. 2: 15.

Many are the conjectures as to who King Lemuel was, but as we have no means now of determining with any degree of certainty who, or what he was, we shall content ourselves with the consideration of some of his words—words which his mother taught him (Prov. 31: 1). These words we may regard as a picture in which there are presented the most prominent features of an ideal character.

I. The ideal character is kind. The man who takes the Bible for his guide will open his hand wide unto his needy brother; he will bear the burdens of his fellows; he will show kindness to the poor; he will give to him who asks, and from him who would borrow of him, he will not turn away. He will regard it not only as a duty, but as a privilege, to show kindness to the unfortunate, to speak encouragingly to the despondent, to extend a helping hand to the fallen, to comfort the sorrowing, and to guide the erring. (Prov. 31: 20; Deut. 15: 11).

II. The ideal character is provident. Though the true Christian knows and believes that God will supply all his needs; that seed time and harvest shall not fail, that God who feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies with beauty, will give him food and shelter; yet he will not tempt Providence by neglecting the ordinary means of providing for himself and those dependent upon him. Though he knows that bread shall be given him and that his water shall be sure; though he knows that the righteous shall not be forsaken, nor his seed beg bread; yet he also knows that if a man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he is worse than an infidel. (Ps. 37: 25; Prov. 31: 21-22; Isa. 33: 16; I. Tim. 5: 8).

III. The ideal character is diligent. The truly good man knows that ever since Adam was cast out of Paradise, man has been compelled to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, but he is prepared to cheerfully accept the situation and make the most of it. He has no desire to eat the bread of idleness. He would not be a drone even if he could. Even though he has more than he requires for his own needs, he feels that his money is well invested when it is relieving the needs of some of God's poor. He feels that life is too short, and time too precious, to be frittered away on trifles, hence, he redeems the time, and day after day he fills up with blessed toil. (Prov. 13: 4; 21: 5; 27: 23).

IV. The ideal character exerts a beneficial influence upon others. He looks not upon his own things, but upon the things of others also. He lives not for himself alone, but for others; not for his own selfish ends, but for the advancement of God's glory; not for his own aggrandizement, but for the good that he can do. As he lives in the fear of God, his life cannot be otherwise than helpful and inspiring to those with whom he comes in contact.

It may be said that this ideal is very high. Certainly it is, but what is the religion of the Bible worth if it does not more strongly move the mainsprings of life; if it does not raise man to a higher level; if it does not inculcate a higher tone of morals, and if it does not stimulate to loftier aspirations than that of the Koran or the Vedas? And then, God does not mock the Christian by saying: "There is your ideal, now attain it if you can." But He says: "There is your ideal, but My grace is sufficient for thee." And just in proportion as the Christian rises to that ideal will he have peace, joy and satisfaction in this life, and an entrance shall be ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (II. Pet. 1: 11).

Every penitent tear that falls from the eye springs up a flower of comfort.—MAT.