

who were to be appointed deacons.

The *manner* or *form* of appointing is, to my mind, very definitely exemplified. On this subject much has been written. Logic has too frequently taken the place of faith. The first ordination we have an account of is recorded Acts vi. 2—6. Let us attend briefly to the points embraced in the appointment of the first deacons. 1. The apostles assemble the disciples and give their reasons why they cannot attend to the pecuniary wants of the brotherhood. 2. They say, "Look you out from among yourselves seven men"—thus, though apostles, they do not take upon themselves to decide for the church in the matter of selection or election of the men. 3. The brethren generally were pleased with the apostolic proposition. 4. The apostles lay down the qualifications to be found in the men to be chosen—they were to be men of *honest* report, full of the *Holy* Spirit, and of *wisdom*. 5. When the requisite number of men with the requisite qualifications were chosen by the congregation (not by the apostles) "they were set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them." These who contend that the apostles' hands were not laid upon men except to confer spiritual gifts, stumble and fall on this passage: for these seven men were full of the Spirit and replete with wisdom before hands were laid upon them. Fasting is not mentioned in the case, and both prayer and fasting are omitted to be mentioned when Paul speaks to Timothy upon the subject of ordaining; but as we find fasting, prayer, and hands all associated in the ordination of Paul and Barnabas, and in the ordination of elders by their sanction and with their help, there is all the necessary evidence that these three were always in all ordinations associated, though they are not detailed in each particular case. I may just state in passing, that Paul's appointment at Antioch did not convey to him the Spirit: for he had received the Spirit after Ananias came to him in Damascus, Acts ix. 17.

So far then as I have learned, when the scriptures speak of those who are officially elders, bishops, overseers, or presbyters of the church of the Lord, reference is had to properly qualified men who were appointed to certain duties in the church by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands.

But what were their duties? If we examine what elders in the primitive church were to be, and what they were to do, we shall see the wisdom of powerfully impressing them with the responsibilities of their position. In my next I will attempt to combine together the several specifications of character and duty spoken of by Paul as