

made you overseers" (Acts xx. 28). Ordination is the recognition and approval by the Church of those whom God has endowed and called to the ministry of the Gospel.

We repudiate and reject the dogma of "apostolical succession," which assumes that only ordination by a bishop, in the modern Episcopalian sense of the term, can make a Christian minister with authority to administer the sacraments; and that without such ordination there can be no true Church. There is no authority whatever for this notion in the Scriptures. The ordination of elders in the apostolic Church no more proves this dogma than ordination in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches proves that they hold it. It is out of harmony with the whole tenor of New Testament teaching, which places inward spiritual religion above all external rites and forms. This theory of the ministry exalts things human and formal above soundness in doctrine, the experience of the new birth, and godly consecrated lives, which are the true notes of a scriptural Church. The Master's test is, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20). The belief of this theory also tends to promote a sectarian and exclusive spirit, utterly at variance with the catholic spirit of New Testament Christianity.