

ORDINATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

Sermon by Rev. O. A. Bartholomew, Preached at the Twelfth Street Church of Christ, on Sunday Morning, March 3.

SPECIAL REPORT FOR EVENING TELEGRAPH. The subject selected by Mr. Bartholomew yesterday morning was, "Ordination of Church Officers." He said there were three questions connected with this subject which demanded Scriptural answers, namely:—What is ordination? who are proper subjects of ordination? and who should conduct the ordination ceremony?

I. What is ordination, according to the Scriptures? This question can only be answered satisfactorily by a full examination and analysis of the various references to the subject in the New Testament. These are the following:—"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables, wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint (Greek, ordain) over this business. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose (elected) Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochurus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. Acts vi. 3-6.

II. Who are proper subjects of ordination? Luke informs us that Paul sent and called the elders of the church at Ephesus, and when they came he told them to take heed to themselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit had appointed them, and he ordained them in every city. (ch. xiv. 23). Titus was left in Crete with instructions from an inspired apostle, to ordain elders in every city where a church had been planted. (Titus i. 5). Thus it appears that certain elders or men of superior gifts for office, were originally considered proper subjects of ordination.

III. Who should conduct the ordination ceremony? The Ephesian elders were ordained by Paul and Timothy, and the elders in every city were ordained by Paul and Timothy. This fact shows that ordination is a Divine appointment, not matter who the agents be, or who conduct the ceremony when the agents were ordained in Jerusalem. Certain prophets and teachers, whether inspired or not, cannot be ordained, but only those who are ordained by the direction of the Holy Spirit, Paul and Barnabas were ordained to preach the Gospel in the islands, and Timothy was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery or eldership. (Titus i. 5). Thus, an inspired evangelist, directed by an inspired apostle to ordain elders in every city for years.

IV. What is the nature of the ordination? This is a question which has been discussed by many writers, and has given rise to much controversy. Some have held that ordination is a sacrament, and that it confers grace upon the recipient. Others have held that it is a mere declaration of the church's approval of the candidate, and that it does not confer any special gifts or powers. The Scriptures, however, are silent upon this point.

V. What is the effect of ordination? The Scriptures do not explicitly state the effect of ordination. Some have held that it confers a special gift of the Holy Spirit, and that the ordained officer is empowered to perform the duties of his office. Others have held that it is a mere declaration of the church's approval, and that the recipient is not empowered to perform any special duties. The Scriptures, however, are silent upon this point.

VI. What is the proper mode of ordination? The Scriptures do not explicitly state the proper mode of ordination. Some have held that it should be performed by the laying on of hands, and that the candidate should be asked to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil. Others have held that it should be performed by the reading of a prayer, and that the candidate should be asked to subscribe to a statement of faith. The Scriptures, however, are silent upon this point.

And the elders, when ordained, became overseers or bishops. This is plainly declared in 1 Timothy iii. 2, where the qualifications for the office of bishop are given. It is also clearly taught in the letter to Titus, for immediately after the order to ordain elders, the apostle introduces the same qualifications for the office of bishop (Titus i. 5). Hence it follows that only such elders as possess the Scriptural qualifications for a bishop are proper subjects of ordination to his office. These qualifications are, that he must be of good behavior, sober, patient, temperate, just, holy, hospitable, able to teach, and to exhort and to convince the gainsayers, of good reputation without, the husband of one wife, not a new convert, not soon angry, not self-willed, not given to wine, not a brawler, not greedy, not greedy of base gain, a good ruler in his own house, blameless. Such an elder as here described may be ordained, or installed in the office of bishop or overseer. But it has been seen that there is another office in the Church of God, namely, the deacon's office. It is true that the word deacon does not occur in the Acts, to which attention has been called, but the same work there referred to is called the office of deacon twice, in the third chapter of First Timothy. The Apostle there says: "They that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. iii. 13). Again, "And let the first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found true in the faith, and having the witness of a good conscience, as those who have ministered to the saints in Christ Jesus which is at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons (1 Tim. iii. 8). It cannot be questioned, therefore, that the office of deacon is strictly an office of the Church, and as ordination is simply instalment in office, it follows that, before any man can be installed in the office of deacon, he must first be ordained into the office of ordination, or the imposition of hands, with fasting and prayer. This conclusion is fully confirmed by the history of the Church, which shows that the apostles and their successors in the Church in Jerusalem. Some of the Grecian brethren murmured because their rights were not equal to those of the Hebrew men in the Church in Jerusalem. Some of the Grecian brethren murmured because their rights were not equal to those of the Hebrew men in the Church in Jerusalem. Some of the Grecian brethren murmured because their rights were not equal to those of the Hebrew men in the Church in Jerusalem.

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Table with financial data for Delaware Mutual Safety Insurance Company including assets, liabilities, and income for 1866.

Table with financial data for Provident Life and Trust Company including assets, liabilities, and income for 1866.

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