

EDITOR'S ANSWERS TO INTERESTING QUESTIONS

TWO ORDINATIONS – ONE OF GOD, ONE OF MAN

QUESTION. – When, by whom and how were you ordained a minister of the Gospel?

Answer. – Before answering this question, I would call attention to the Scriptural teaching on the subject of ordination. From what we believe to be the Bible standpoint, there are two ordinations proper. One is of God; one of men. The ordination of God is the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Without this no one is authorized to preach the Gospel. If any are preaching without this ordination they are, to our understanding, preaching without Divine ordination. They are doing something that they are not authorized to do.

Our Lord told how He was ordained to be a preacher; and the Scriptures tell us that we are to walk in His steps and to have experiences similar to His own in many respects. As ministers of the Cross, we are to copy our Lord Jesus Christ as fully as we are able to do. But He was perfect, and we are imperfect. Consequently we are to have the *forgiveness* of our sins, while he had no sins. He, therefore, constitutes the basis of forgiveness of all who come unto the Father through faith in His blood. He mentions His own ordination, saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek." (Isaiah 61:1.) As that ordination came upon Jesus, it still later came upon the disciples at Pentecost; and all down the Gospel Age it has come upon the followers of Christ, anointing them to preach the Gospel. – Luke 4:17-21; 1 John 2:27.

All who have received the ordination of God have the authority to preach according to their opportunities and abilities. Some of

them may be deaf mutes and cannot preach audibly. Others may be limited by sex; sisters cannot preach as do the brethren; but they can preach, nevertheless, in "showing forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9.) Moreover, they are fully ordained to make known the good tidings, but, according to the Apostle Paul's statement, not in a public way. There are some men who cannot preach publicly on account of lack of talent or opportunity, but all men, by their lives and conversation, can proclaim the glory and honor of the great and loving God who lifted them out of darkness into light, out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and placed their feet upon a Rock and established their goings. – Psalm 40:2.

There comes, however, another special ordination of those who are called ministers of the Gospel, in which class I count myself. This is ordination by the Church, and is recognized by all denominations everywhere. By some it is considered a mere form, by some it is performed with great ceremony, by others with less ceremony. But to our understanding, each congregation should have those whom it has chosen ordained in a Scriptural way – by the stretching forth of hands – by a vote.

The form of the statement in Acts 14:23, with other frequent references to elders in connection with all churches, justifies the inference that ordination was the *invariable* custom in the early Church. The term "elders," as seen in this text, includes evangelists, pastors, teachers, and prophets – public exponents. Hence it is important that we learn what is meant by the word "*ordained*."

At the present time the word *ordination* is generally used in reference to a *ceremony* of *installation*; but this is not the significance of the Greek word *cheirotoneo*, used in this text. It means "to elect by stretching out the hand," still the usual form of voting. This definition is given in Professor Young's "Analytical Concordance to the Bible." As this may be considered a

Presbyterian authority, we give also the definition set forth in Strong's "Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible," which may be considered a Methodist authority. The latter defines the root of the word – "*A hand-reacher, or voter* (by raising the hand)." [R5808 : page 359]

The Scriptural method of ordaining elders in all the churches is by congregational election – by stretching forth the hand in a vote. To insist upon such an election before serving is to follow Scriptural order; it fortifies the elder, and, additionally, reminds the congregation of its duties and responsibilities as appointees of the elders in the Lord's name and Spirit – as expressing God's choice, God's will. Additionally, the Scriptural arrangement interests the members of the congregation in all the words and deeds of the elders, as their servants and representatives. It opposes the too prevalent idea that the elders own and rule the congregation, and puts an end to their thinking of them as "my people" – rather than as "the Lord's people, whom I serve."

Whoever has not been ordained in these two ways is not an ordained minister of the Gospel in the Scriptural sense. First, the Divine ordination is necessary; second, the earthly ordination is necessary. By the grace of God I have both of these.

In the case of those who are doing a public work in the name of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, they are ordained as a whole. They are sent forth by the officers of the Society; and as a majority of the classes everywhere are recognized by the Society, and as they in turn recognize the Society, they therefore recognize this ordination through the Society.

Question. – Where did the Society get the authority for sending out preachers?

Answer. – It gets its authority *primarily* from the Lord, who authorizes all His people, who receive the Holy Spirit, to go forth. *Secondly*, the Society is a business organization for religious work in the service of the Lord, by printing books, pamphlets, charts, etc., and by sending out its representatives to preach – by word of mouth and by printed page. This is its only business. It is acting in the same way as did the Church at Antioch, who especially chose Paul and Barnabas to do a missionary work, and who voted these to be representatives of that Church. – Acts 13:2,3.

When Paul and Barnabas went forth, they did not say, "We preach in our own name." They would have had a right to go in the name of the Lord and preach; but, in addition, they had the financial backing, we understand, of the Antioch congregation, just as today our representatives have the backing of the Society. When they go to a place, they can say, "Here is a letter which shows that we are acting for the Society." So they do not go simply in the name of Christ, but they go as representatives of this Society, which is known to be doing an evangelizing work.

Question. – As to the name of the Association: Is it the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY? or the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION?

Answer. – It is *both*. They are virtually the same thing. The INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY and the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION are in many respects identical. Why have *three names*? For the same reason that there are in the various churches different Societies – the Home Missionary Society, the Christian Endeavor Society and the Epworth League, etc., etc. Are they not all doing the same work and trying to help people to live a Christian life, etc.? Yes. Why have

different Societies? For the reason that each has a different branch of the work to which to attend.

So it is with us. The parent Association is the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, chartered under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania. Its purpose is to publish the Truth, to send forth missionaries, etc., etc. The property that was necessary to transact business, etc., was in its name; for no other was necessary in the State of Pennsylvania.

When we moved here to New York, we were informed that the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY could not hold title to property here. We were told, "You can do business in a *personal* way, but not as a *Society*. So if you want to do any business here, you must be chartered as an *Association*." "Very well, then," we said, "we will organize the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION." This is merely another name for the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, for New York business.

Later on, in Great Britain, we were informed, "Your American Charter does not count for anything here." Consequently we took out a Charter there for the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION. This reads practically the same as the Charter of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

These three different Societies were made necessary by the law of different states and countries. For some things the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY is the preferable name. It is the parent Society and the one to which contributions are made. Whoever makes a donation is expected, if he will, to make it in the name of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

The PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION is the only one of the three that can do business here in New York, and the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY deals with the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION as though they were two

independent organizations. Nevertheless they are the same – just as with the different Societies of the nominal churches, which would have, perhaps, the same treasurer.

Thus the whole management is by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, and these auxiliary organizations merely help in carrying on its work. We sometimes use one name and sometimes another, just as any one would have the right to use any names appropriate to his work. It is equally appropriate to say that we are the INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION. We are Bible students, and are helping Bible students in all parts of the world, by the printed page, by financial assistance and in other ways. It is also appropriate to use the name PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION in connection with persons who are engaged in preaching and are acting under guidance of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

In other words, the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION cannot transact business except through the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY. The WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY has the management, and the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION does the work – absolutely.

The INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION has no legal status except in Great Britain; the PEOPLES PULPIT ASSOCIATION has none except in New York State.

We keep the "WATCH TOWER" prominent in letterheads, etc., so that the friends would not misunderstand us and think that the "WATCH TOWER" has gone out of the work. We use one name or another, as would seem to be most convenient in the work. For instance, we now have on the title page of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES the name INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, instead of WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, as formerly. Here we have a

distinctive name, different from others. There are Bible Teachers Associations, Tract Societies, etc., etc.; but here we have a name especially appropriate to put on our publications, [R5808 : page 360] because it represents exactly the thought which we desire to express.

Question. – From what School of Theology were you graduated?

Answer. – I am still in the School of Christ and have not yet been graduated. We get our theology from the BIBLE. Some of our friends have taken their theology otherwise, have taken it from human instructors, and have afterwards found that they had wasted their time. Some things which they were taught were *Scriptural*, and some things were *sectarian*. We are simply trying to find out what the BIBLE teaches. As the Apostle Paul said to Timothy, so we desire to do: "Study to show thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." – 2 Timothy 2:15.

The Apostle did not tell Timothy to go to some Theological School, or tell him which would be the proper one to attend if he wished to get confused. He merely told the young man to rightly divide the WORD OF TRUTH – to see which portions refer to Natural Israel and which refer to Spiritual Israel; which are *earthly* promises, belonging to the *natural* man, and which are *spiritual* promises, belonging to the *Christian*; which belong to the *present* time, and which to the *future*.

Some of our number have been graduated from a theological seminary. At the time of their graduation they thought that their school was the best there was. But since they entered into the School of Christ, they find that really they would have been much better off if they had not gone to the seminary at all; for it took many

months and years to get out of their heads the errors which were there drilled in.

Question. – How should we understand the Apostle's advice to Timothy to "Lay hands suddenly on no man"? Does not this imply a formal ordination? **[R5809 : page 360]**

Answer. – The Apostle Paul's words to Timothy might be variously understood. If we should read in tomorrow morning's paper that some one suddenly laid hands on a man we would understand that he had been assaulted. We are to remember that this is not the way the expression would be understood in the Greek, but that the translators gave us what they thought the proper meaning. The early Church had a ceremony of formally laying hands on the heads of their elders, deacons, etc. When the Apostles did this, it was the indication of the impartation of the Holy Spirit. None but the Apostles could bestow this. The Churches may have had some custom amongst themselves in the way of appointing ministers, however, that in thus doing they might indicate that they approved of such persons.

There would be nothing improper in a similar ceremony, if a Pilgrim were sent forth by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY for a special service of some kind. The officers of the Society might step forward, lay their hands on the Pilgrim's head and say, "You are the representative of the Society." The priests in olden time laid their hands upon the head of the animal that was to be offered – to show that it represented them. So some one might be sent forth by the Society; but a ceremonial laying on of hands would be merely an appeal to the eye, carrying with it no other authority than the words, "You are appointed for such and such service," etc.

This leaves each little company of the Lord's people to use whatever ceremony they choose. Episcopalians and Catholics use a great deal of ceremony; other denominations use less. We believe that we also have the right to use as much or as little ceremony as we choose. The meaning of the word ordination is to authorize. True ordination is, first, of the Holy Spirit; second, of the association sending forth its servant with the Gospel Message.

