

CHAPTER XVIII

ARTICLE XVII.—*Of the Ministry.*—We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein a ministry of the word and sacraments, and calls men to this ministry; that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain them to the work of the ministry.

In the beginning, the Church of Christ was the creation of the Word of God. In all her history, she has existed to proclaim that Word, and has herself been led and nourished by it. Her highest office, accordingly, is the ministry of the Word, and of the Sacraments, which are the seals of that Word. This is of Divine Appointment, and none dare assume it, who have not been summoned to exercise it by the call of the Church's Head and Lord; and none dare refuse it in whose hearts and consciences the Divine imperative is sounding. The Church, for her part, receives these men as gifts from on high, gives them the place in her order which is their due, and, by solemn action, presents them to God for that special enduement of the Spirit, which alone can enable them to fulfil their sacred responsibilities. The United Church has an ordained ministry, whose orders are "valid" because they have been conferred by the Holy Spirit, and "regular" because the Church's action has been under the guidance of the same Divine Power, and "catholic" because they are scriptural, and human invention has had no part in their institution.