

Ordinances of the Apostles

by Clement of Rome

The apostles took steps to prevent strife in the Church by appointing ministers to succeed them, and these ministers must meet certain qualifications to be considered blameless.

Scripture: Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:5, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:2

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Ministerial Integrity"

Description

Clement of Rome addresses the importance of maintaining the office of the episcopate and the succession of approved ministers in the Church. He emphasizes the need for those who have served blamelessly and humbly to be respected and not unjustly dismissed from their ministry, warning of the sin that comes from ejecting such faithful servants. Clement praises those who have finished their course well and obtained a fruitful departure, highlighting the security they have in their eternal place. He expresses concern over the removal of men of excellent behavior from the ministry, calling for honor and respect for those who faithfully fulfill their duties.

Transcript

Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate. For this reason, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect fore-knowledge of this, they appointed those [ministers] already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions, that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry.

We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ in a humble, peaceable, and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry.

For our sin will not be small, if we eject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily fulfilled its duties. Blessed are those presbyters who, having finished their course before now, have obtained a fruitful and perfect departure [from this world]; for they have no fear lest any one deprive them of the place now appointed them. But we see that you have removed some men of excellent behaviour from the ministry, which they fulfilled blamelessly and with honour.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/clement-of-rome/ordinances-of-the-apostles/>

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