

critics, both of what has been done, and of what has been left undone. The points raised seem perhaps to be small in themselves: they are not small in their total effect. It is by studying them in their whole range that the reader gains the assurance, that the words of the Bible are living words.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

II. CRITICISM OF RECENT THEORIES.

IN attempting to criticise the theories of which an outline was given in the last paper, it will be enough if we set before ourselves the latest and most complete, that of Dr. Harnack. This has the advantage over the others, that it has appeared since the epoch-making publication of the *Didaché*, and takes full account of that document. In criticising it, we shall be really criticising the rest, which are to a large extent embodied in it.

It will be enough, too, if we follow the lines of the last paper, and single out especially those points which are most open to question. These will be (1) the origin ascribed to the name and office of the *ἐπίσκοπος*, (2) the non-equivalence of the terms *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβύτερος*, (3) the account that is given of the origin of the more spiritual functions of the Christian ministry, and their gradual transference to the officers who now exercise them.

Among these debateable points there is no reason to include the origin of the diaconate and presbyterate. As to the first, no one seems disposed to question the account given in Acts vi.: and as to the second, we are indebted

to Dr. Hatch for calling attention to the difference between synagogue and *συνέδριον*; but on the main point—the Jewish origin and affinities of the office—recent critics appear to be agreed. On the functions of the presbyterate something will be said under our third head.

I. In regard to the term *ἐπίσκοπος*, I confess that I cannot quite satisfy myself as to the evidence which has been adduced to show that this was a standing title for the financial officer of the clubs or guilds which existed in such numbers throughout the more civilized parts of the Roman Empire. Of the two terms which Dr. Hatch quotes in this connexion (*Bamp. Lect.*, p. 37), the evidence seems to be rather better for *ἐπιμελητής*, which unfortunately does not help us. Dr. Hatch remarks: "There is this further point to be noted in reference to these names, that they were used not only in private associations, but also in municipalities; and that they were there applied not only to permanent or quasi-permanent officers, but also to the governing body, or a committee of the governing body, when entrusted with the administration of funds for any special purpose. The *βουλευταί* of a city or a division, or a committee of them, were for the time being, in relation to such administration, *ἐπιμεληταί* or *ἐπίσκοποι*" (pp. 37, 38). This is doubtless true; but a greater body of proof is needed to show that the few allusions that are found to *ἐπίσκοποι* in connexion with associations or temple worship may not have the same extraordinary and occasional character.

The passage most distinctly in point is that which is quoted by Dr. Hatch (as it had been by Bp. Lightfoot), from an inscription found at Thera: *Δεδόχθαι ἀ[ποδε]ξαμένους τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τὸ μ[ὲν ἀρ]γύριον ἐγδανείσαι τὸς ἐπισκό[πος] Δίωνα καὶ Μελέιππον*, "Resolved that the *ἐπίσκοποι* Dion and Meleippus should accept the offer and put out the money at interest." But this falls short by several steps of

complete proof of what is required. It needs to be shown : (1) that the *ἐπίσκοποι* were permanent officers, (2) that their duties related only, or primarily, to finance.<sup>1</sup>

The other instances to which Dr. Hatch refers seem to be still less conclusive. The word occurs several times in inscriptions collected from the *Haurân* (*Auranitis*, the south-eastern district of the ancient Bashan), by M. Waddington (*Voyage Archéologique*, tome iii.). In none of these are there any precise particulars as to the functions of the *ἐπίσκοπος*. Indeed, the number mentioned—two or three in No. 1,989, four in No. 1,990, five in No. 2,298—seems to be unnecessarily large for the standing financial officers of a single corporation. In the associations described by M. Foucart (*Associations religieuses chez les Grecs*, inscr. 6, 26), only one such officer is mentioned, who is called *ταμίης*; the term *ἐπίσκοπος* occurs, but with very vague functions attached to it.

In discussing the inscription, No. 1,990, M. Waddington compares the *ἐπίσκοπος* to the *ἀγορανόμοι*, or “clerks of the market,” who regulated the price of provisions, and imposed fines for the breach of their regulations. He points to the comparative frequency of the title in inscriptions from the *Haurân*, and takes occasion to express the opinion that the Christian use of the word is not connected with

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hatch remarks on this criticism, which he has seen, (1) that he is wrongly supposed to lay any exclusive or even especial stress upon the financial character of the *ἐπίσκοποι*: he refers me to *B. L.*, p. 36, where they are described as “officers of *administration and finance*”; (2) that the name *ἐπιμεληταί* had been appropriated by the Essenes, and so was less suited for Christian use; (3) that he does not think it necessary to prove that the *ἐπίσκοποι* in Gentile associations were *permanent* officers: he is quite prepared to believe that the corresponding Christian office was in the first instance temporary, but that it became permanent through the permanence of the need for it. Another point to which Dr. Hatch calls my attention is that the *διάκονοι* were not necessarily young men: a deacon did not become a presbyter by mere lapse of time, but might remain a deacon all his life. This, as I freely admit, has a bearing on what is said below. I only infer from the names that there may have been a distinction in age between *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι* on their first appointment, which was not afterwards maintained as a set rule.

the organization of the Greek municipality, but took its rise in Syria or Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

I am tempted to add another suggestion to those which have been already made on this subject. No doubt it is true that the term *ἐπίσκοποι* might be used of the overseers of a work. It is probably also true that it might be used of the administrators of a fund. But is it not possible that in its Christian application it denoted in the first instance not so much "overseers of a certain *work*," as "overseers" or "superintendents of certain *persons*"? It appears to be admitted on all hands that the diaconate was a novel institution, devised by the first Christians for a special practical purpose.<sup>2</sup> The deacons seem to have been chosen, as they are chosen now, from the younger men. And is it not a simple hypothesis to suppose that the *ἐπίσκοποι* were elders who were afterwards appointed to exercise supervision over them?<sup>3</sup>

Or rather, I would not restrict the connotation of the word too narrowly. The "bishops" were in the first instance "superintendents": and there is no necessity to specify exactly what they superintended; it may have been the work, or it may have been the persons, or more probably perhaps both combined. The leading feature in the suggestion is that the word arose in the same manner as *διάκονος*, and as correlative to it. We might suppose that both names grew rather out of popular usage than from any official and authoritative nomenclature. In the case of the deacons we find *διακονεῖν* and *διακονία* before we find *διά-*

<sup>1</sup> Compare Kühl, *Die Gemeindeverfassung in den Pastoralbriefen* (Berlin, 1885), p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> I see that the main point in this suggestion—that the name *ἐπίσκοπος* was given in the same way as *διάκονος*—has already been made by Dr. Kühl. I had forgotten this, and was building far more conscientiously on the data supplied by Bp. Lightfoot. I cannot, however, agree with Dr. Kühl, that the idea of the *ἐπίσκοπος* was taken from domestic arrangements, and that the word is used as an equivalent for *ἐπιτροπος*, "house-steward" (p. 123). The O. T. parallels seem to me far more to the purpose.

κοπος. The Seven themselves are not called "deacons" in the Acts. It is true that we find *ἐπίσκοπος* in Acts xx. 28 and in Phil. i. 1: but the word is evidently well established when first we find it, and it is possible that *ἐπισκοπεῖν* may have preceded it, as in the common text of 1 Pet. v. 2. If *διάκονος* is a natural word for young men appointed to the duties described in Acts vi. 1-3, *ἐπίσκοπος* would be equally natural for seniors appointed to a similar office.

This hypothesis at least fulfils, as I cannot help thinking, better than any other with which I am acquainted, what seems to be the first condition of such a hypothesis, viz. that it should place bishops and deacons in some real organic connexion. Dr. Hatch and Dr. Harnack have abundantly proved that this connexion did exist, and that the deacon stood to the bishop in a far more intimate relation than that in which he stood to the presbyter.

If our hypothesis were true, there would be a sense in which the bishops might rightly be described as successors of the Apostles. The deacons were at first appointed to help the Apostles in a certain locality. The Apostles were their *ἐπίσκοποι* for that locality. But such an arrangement could only last as long as the Church was a compact body, the greater part of which was resident in Jerusalem under the eye of the Twelve. As soon as it began to enlarge itself, and to throw out colonies as far away as to Antioch, an extension would become necessary. The extension would be provided for by the appointment of *ἐπίσκοποι*, who would thus do for the deacons, where the Apostles were absent, what the Apostles themselves did, where they were present. The main difference would be, that whereas it was only an accident that the Apostles were settled in any particular city, in the case of the *ἐπίσκοποι* localization was the rule; they were specially appointed to a particular Church. It would almost seem as if some such process as this were inevitable.

One of the reasons which seems especially to commend this theory of the origin of the episcopate, is that according to it the use of the name would be linked on directly to the usage of the Old Testament. "In the LXX.," says Dr. Lightfoot, "the word is common. In some places it signifies "inspectors, superintendents, task-masters," as 2 Kings xi. 19; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12, 17; Isa. lx. 17; in others it is a higher title, "captains" or "presidents," Neh. xi. 9, 14, 22. Of Antiochus Epiphanes we are told that when he determined to overthrow the worship of the one true God, he "appointed commissioners (*ἐπισκόπους*, bishops) over all the people," to see that his orders were obeyed (1 Macc. i. 51; comp. Joseph., *Ant.*, xii. 5, 4; in 2 Macc. v. 22 the word is *ἐπιστάτας*). The feminine *ἐπισκοπή*, which is not a classical word, occurs very frequently in the LXX., denoting sometimes the work, sometimes the office of an *ἐπίσκοπος*. Hence it passed into the language of the New Testament and of the Christian Church." If *ἐπισκοπή* had its origin in the usage of the LXX., is it not reasonable to derive *ἐπίσκοπος* from the same source?

I have indeed no objection on principle to the use of analogies from the Greek and Roman civil or religious organizations, but where the option is given of going either to these or to the LXX. for the groundwork of a theory, the latter seems to me distinctly preferable. The legislators of the infant Church, and the framers of such constitution as it possessed in its earliest stages, would naturally be the Apostles. But the Apostles were before all things Jews. Even St. Paul, the boldest and most enterprising spirit among them, was trained in the Rabbinical schools, and brought up on the Bible. He was certainly familiar with the LXX.: and if either he or any of his colleagues had occasion to give a name to a new institution, that was likely to be largely used amongst the Churches of the

Dispersion, it would be to the LXX. that his thoughts would naturally turn. The same would be true of the Christian democracy, if the name took its rise amongst them. It is only if the name were first given by Gentiles outside the Church, or in some purely Gentile community, that a precedent would be sought in the pagan associations. But that would not at all account for the connexion between the bishop and the deacons.

Unfortunately we cannot go beyond hypotheses. In that obscure period with which we are dealing we can only make our way by means of guesses. A few verses in the Acts would have made matters much clearer for us; but those verses were not written, and we must do as well as we can without them. In default therefore of more direct verification, I can only leave the suggestion which I have made to the judgment of scholars, to say whether it does, or does not, fit the facts.<sup>1</sup>

II. I am not sure that there is not some confirmation of this view to be found in the question with which we have next to deal. It seems to me to be an objection especially to Dr. Harnack's development of Dr. Hatch's theory, that it involves too great a separation between the bishop and the presbyter. I admit that in the passages which Dr. Harnack has enumerated they may be regarded as separable; but there are others in which that is not the case. In Acts xx. 17, St. Paul is described as summoning the *presbyters*

<sup>1</sup> The above argument seems to me to be greatly strengthened by the fact that before the end of the first century a direct appeal is made to the Old Testament in support of the Christian institution. Clement of Rome (*ad Cor.* c. 42), quotes from Isa. lx. 17 with a freedom which allows him to introduce the combination of *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι*: he is very explicit: *καὶ τοῦτο, οὐ καινῶς; ἐκ γὰρ δὴ πολλῶν χρόνων ἐγγέγραπτο περὶ ἐπισκόπων καὶ διακόνων, οὕτως γὰρ πον λέγει ἡ γραφὴ· Καταστήσω τοὺς ἐπισκόπους αὐτῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ τοὺς διακόνους αὐτῶν ἐν πίστει* (LXX *δώσω τοῖς ἀρχοντάς σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ, καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους σου ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ*). The same passage is quoted with a similar object but without variation from the LXX., by Irenæus, *Adv. Hæc.*, iv. 26, 5.

from Miletus, and yet in his address to them he says, that the Holy Ghost has made them "bishops" (or *overseers*) "in the flock" (Acts xx. 28). In 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, which might be quoted to the same effect, ἐπισκοποῦντες is omitted by B N, Tischendorf, and Westcott and Hort, and appears to be doubtful, though it is found in all the versions, and so is probably a second century reading. But Tit. i. 5-7 seems to be quite unequivocal. "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest . . . appoint *elders* (presbyters) in every city . . ., for a *bishop* (overseer) must be blameless," etc. Clearly the clause which assigns the reason, relates to the same persons as the previous clause, and those who are called in the one place "presbyters" are called in the other "bishops."

It is a cheap way of escaping the force of these passages to ascribe a late date to the documents from which they are taken. I do not feel myself at liberty to do this: I believe, not merely on traditional, but on what I conceive to be critical grounds, that the Acts were written by St. Luke *circa* A.D. 80, and the Epistle to Titus either by St. Paul, or by a companion writing for him, in the year 66 or 67. But even if the latest possible date were assigned to both books, the difficulty might be somewhat lessened, but it would be a long way from being removed. By the time of Ignatius the bishop has emerged, or is emerging, from the presbyterate. Before Ignatius there was certainly a broad *stratum* of literature—including, if not the Epistle to the Philippians, the Pastoral Epistles, the Acts, and probably the Epistle of Clement of Rome—in which bishop and presbyter were regarded as identical at least to the extent that both names were given to the same persons, and that the one suggested the other. How can we account for this if their origin was so wide apart as is supposed? On the theory of Dr. Harnack the interval between them is at its widest.<sup>1</sup> With

<sup>1</sup> We must not hold Dr. Harnack too closely to his words: but he himself,

the modification which I have proposed, it would be much narrower. In accordance with this, both titles, "bishop" and "presbyter," would take their rise on Jewish ground, and under very similar conditions. It would be implied in the very nature of the case that every bishop was a "presbyter," or elder, at least in the wider sense: for the object of his appointment would be to temper the zeal and energy of the younger deacons with something of the wisdom and experience of age. And it is probable that the bishop would be also a presbyter in the narrower sense in which that term is applied not to the whole body of "seniors" in the community but to the smaller committee of that body, to which was entrusted the management of its affairs. One who possessed the qualifications of a "bishop" could hardly fail to have a seat in this smaller body; so that the cases would be rare indeed in which the bishop might not be described indifferently as an elder or presbyter, though it would not necessarily follow that every presbyter was a bishop.

This seems to be as far as the data will carry us. In any case it must be wrong to press the identification too closely. For on the one hand the mere fact of a difference of name points to some difference of origin; and on the other hand, if bishop and presbyter had been absolutely identical, it seems impossible to understand how the bishop came to disengage himself again so quickly. It would rather seem that there was a loose use of words, and that *ἐπίσκοπος*, and still more *ἐπισκοπεῖν*, were sometimes employed in a strict and sometimes in a wider sense, precisely like *πρεσβύτερος*. If *πρεσβύτερος* sometimes means all those members of a community who have passed a certain age, and sometimes members of the executive committee chosen from among  
 at an earlier stage, had maintained the identity of presbyters and bishops, *e.g.* in his note on Clem. *ad Cor.* 42: "Luce clarius est, duo in clero ordines et apostolorum tempore et tum temporis fuisse, episcopus (=presbyteros) et diaconos."

them, it does not seem a forced assumption to suppose that *ἐπίσκοπος* might occasionally be used of any presbyter, though properly the *ἐπίσκοπος* is a presbyter with certain other functions superadded. This would be the more easy, as the committees do not seem to have been large. The *Apostolic Ordinances* (of which something was said in the last paper) set the number at four, one bishop and three presbyters. But Dr. Harnack has given good reasons for believing that the original document, reproduced in the *Ordinances*, had *two* presbyters instead of three. This document Dr. Harnack dates about 140-180 A.D. (*Texte u. Untersuch.*, Band II. Heft 5, pp. 11, 55).

III. If I have been obliged to express some dissent from Dr. Harnack on the first two points proposed for our consideration, I am glad to find myself in cordial agreement with him on the third. It seems to me, that with the *Didaché* before us, we are almost driven to the conclusion which he has grasped so firmly. It is the master-key which alone fits all the wards of the historical problem.

Until the discovery of the *Didaché* there were certain phenomena of the Apostolic age which hung as it were in the air. They were like threads cut off abruptly of which we saw the beginning, but neither middle nor end. It is just these phenomena that the *Didaché* takes up, brings them again to our sight, and connects them with the course of subsequent history.

What, it might have been asked, became of all those spiritual gifts of which we have so vivid a description in the First Epistle to the Corinthians? What are these mysterious figures of "apostle," "prophet," and "teacher," who flit here and there across the stage, but nowhere stay long enough to be interrogated? Clearly they were not the unsubstantial forms that they are apt to appear to us. They must have had some more or less definite functions:

but, except for the details in those precious chapters (1 Cor. xii., xiv.), we should have had little idea what those functions were.

The *Didaché* gives us a glimpse of the same figures—we can hardly think much more than a generation later than even the Epistles to the Corinthians; I incline, with most English critics, to place the date about 100 A.D., if not before. We see them moving about from Church to Church, highly honoured wherever they went; pledged to poverty, and taking away nothing with them from the Churches which they visit, but if they (or rather specially the prophet) choose to settle in any community, gladly supported by the first-fruits and gifts of the members; preaching the word; conducting the Sunday services, especially the Eucharist, where the prophet alone is not bound to follow any set form.

From another side another difficulty arose for the solution of which we must also go to the *Didaché*.

The Jewish presbyters do not appear to have had any spiritual functions. Their duties were rather disciplinary and judicial. The ἀρχισυνάγωγος had to provide for the service of the synagogue, to keep order during the service, and to determine who should be invited to read the lesson or deliver the address; but the ἀρχισυνάγωγος himself did not necessarily do either the one or the other.

In like manner, before the Ignatian Epistles there is only very slight evidence that either the Christian presbyter or bishop exercised what we should call spiritual functions. The evidence would be "the laying on of hands" by the presbytery upon Timothy when he first received the gift which St. Paul calls upon him to cherish (1 Tim. iv. 14), and the three allusions to the gift of teaching or preaching as a desirable qualification in a presbyter or bishop (1 Tim. iii. 2; v. 17; Tit. i. 9). In the first of these instances, the "laying on of hands" by the presbytery accompanies an

intervention, which is not more precisely defined, on the part not of the presbytery, but of the prophets or prophet (the phrase is τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χαρίσματος, ὃ ἐδόθη σοι διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου). In the others it does not follow that every bishop or presbyter would have the gift of teaching or preaching. Indeed, the second passage expressly excludes this: when it is said, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching," it is clearly implied that there were elders who did not labour in the word and in teaching. But there is no hint, to the best of my belief, either throughout the New Testament, or in the works of the Apostolic Fathers prior to the *Didaché*, which connects bishops or presbyters with the conduct of the Christian services. There are, of course, repeated references to the Apostles as "breaking the bread" and offering public prayer; and there is one reference to other ministrations of the same kind (Acts xiii. 1, λειτουργούντων τῷ Κυρίῳ καὶ νηστεούντων), but it is the "prophets and teachers" resident at Antioch to whom these ministrations are ascribed.

If it is asked then, by whom the Christian services were conducted, we may accept the indication in the last passage, and say without much hesitation, as a rule, and so far as our information goes, by the prophets and teachers. The *Didaché* confirms this. It makes it clear that, wherever he was present, the prophet took the lead in such services. He has indeed a special privilege in connexion with them, which he does not share with any one else. He alone is allowed the untrammelled use of *extempore* prayer. In other respects the teacher is put upon the same footing with him.

To these two, the prophet and the teacher, the ministry of the word and sacraments appears to have fallen in the first line; in the second line it fell to the bishops and deacons. They also are to have a place in the honour

conferred upon the prophets and teachers, because they discharge the same sacred duties (*ὕμιν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων. Did., c. 15*).

More than this we are left to fill up by speculation. But it is no hazardous speculation which leads us to see the advantage which the stationary and permanent officers of a Church must have possessed over those who were only occasional visitants, and whose visits moreover must have become less and less frequent as time went on. The high pitch of the Corinthian Church at the time when St. Paul wrote to it, could not always be sustained. There must come a time when the splendid dawn of Spirit-given illumination would "fade into the light of common day." Then the Churches would be thrown back on their more ordinary resources, and those who had hitherto been chiefly employed in dispensing alms, in organizing hospitality, in keeping the rolls of church-membership, in conducting the correspondence with foreign Churches, in representing the Church in its contact with the world, and in providing the material accessories of the Church services, would be called upon to devote themselves more regularly and permanently to a still higher function, the direct approach to God in worship and thanksgiving.

The *Didaché* marks the half-way stage on the road to what gradually became the normal condition of things. It was natural that there should be a reluctance in some quarters to confess that the dead level had been reached, and that the gift of extraordinary inspiration had been withdrawn. This reluctance expressed itself in Montanism, which was a protest against the assumption that "prophecy had ceased." The reviewer of Dr. Hatch's *Bampton Lectures*, in the *Church Quarterly* (Vol. xii. p. 438), says that "Montanism specially represents the spirit of innovation. They (the Montanists) claimed to inaugu-

rate a new era, the era of the Spirit." It is of course true that the Montanists claimed to inaugurate the era of the Spirit; but, that does not make them represent the "spirit of innovation." So far from being innovators, they really professed to perpetuate the prophetic gifts which had been handed down from the time of the Apostles, and which they saw dying out in the Catholic Churches all around them. Not content with asserting the continuance of these gifts, Montanus went a step further, and claimed to be himself a revelation of the Paraclete, *i.e.* not the end of a descent but the climax of an ascent from the day of Pentecost. It was this element of conservatism in it, the fact that it spoke the language and re-affirmed the ideas of a by-gone day, that gave Montanism its strength, and won over to it so powerful a champion as Tertullian. But the event showed that the movement, so far as it professed to rest upon prophecy, was a spurious one. Priscilla and Maximilla were not part of the foundation on which the Church was to be built. Montanism had its high aims and aspirations. Perhaps its best side was its assertion of the independence of the individual Christian against the growing powers of a mechanically-working hierarchy. But the follies with which it was mixed up weakened its cause; and the consequence of the whole movement was rather to accelerate, by force of reaction, the process which it sought to retard. The *ecclesia Spiritus* had to yield to the *ecclesia episcoporum*. It was necessary perhaps for the preservation of Christianity that it should do so. The centrifugal tendencies in the Church were so strong that if once they had got the upper hand the end might have been simply wreck and ruin. But good and evil are inextricably blended in this world. Something that was good perished, or at least was driven inwards, with the fall of Montanism. It broke out again—never more, we will hope, to be extinguished—at the Reformation.

Let me cast a glance backwards, and try to summarize, as well as I can, the position in which it seems to me that the question as to the origin of the Christian Ministry stands at the present time.

(1) As to the source from which was derived the name *ἐπίσκοπος*, we have not yet, I think, heard the last. I have ventured to put forward a suggestion myself, in regard to which I should be interested to know the opinion of others. It is possible that there may be more evidence in the background for Dr. Hatch's view than I have been able to recognise. I have no antecedent objection to this, and shall be quite willing to accept it if it can be established; but I do not think that it can be held to be established at present.

(2) I think that it is necessary to recognise more fully than Dr. Harnack has done, though not quite so unreservedly as is maintained by Dr. Lightfoot, the practical identity of bishop and presbyter in the latter half of the apostolic age. I seem to be able to explain well enough to my own satisfaction the places where a bishop is called "presbyter," but I can only account for those where a presbyter is called "bishop" by assuming a looseness or double use of language, which some may be slow to admit. On *a priori* grounds it seems easy to understand why the bishop should be president of the college of presbyters, but any direct evidence bearing upon this would be welcome. It would also be most welcome, if any such evidence could be produced, as to the part taken by the bishop in public worship at a date earlier than the *Didaché*. I am conscious of not having anything to offer myself but inference and conjecture, for which I am mainly indebted to my predecessors.

(3) At the same time, the general principle that there were two distinct forms of ministration in the primitive Church, the one local, the other not confined to any set

locality ; the one by formal appointment, the other without such appointment, but claiming direct Divine attestation ; the one more upon the ordinary level of human activity, the other extraordinary : and further that there was a gradual transference, especially of the functions relating to worship, from the second class to the first, which was in rapid progress by the end of the first century : this seems to me to have been triumphantly proved by the statements and silences of the New Testament, taken along with the few but eloquent sentences of the *Didaché*. The theory no doubt is a new one, and it will have to run the gauntlet of criticism. I myself am only giving a preliminary impression in regard to it ; but it is an impression which I strongly suspect will be confirmed.

In tracing the growth of these primitive institutions, I have tried to be as far as possible constructive, and to present the facts in what I believe to be their genetic and organic sequence. This has led me to avoid controversial digressions, more particularly on lines which seem to me to lead nowhere. Among these irrelevant and inconclusive arguments I should include that which sees in Timothy and Titus the direct and lineal ancestor of our modern bishops. No doubt we must look not at names, but at things. Names are, however, the indications of things. And in the case of institutions, the only means we have of tracing continuity is by following the course of the name. Institutions are in this respect like persons. We are told that every particle of our bodies changes, if I am not mistaken, once in seven years. Yet personal identity survives, and is marked by the name. In like manner the name of an institution may change its contents ; these may be added to, or subtracted from, or transformed in one way or another ; but the process is a historical one, and the track of its history follows the course of its name. Now it is true that Timothy and Titus are

called "bishops," but in authorities so late as to be practically worthless. And on the other hand they are represented in the Epistles addressed to them, not as being bishops themselves, but as appointing other persons to be bishops. It is to those other persons that we must look to see what the attributes of a bishop were; and it is by comparing the different instances in which the name occurs that we must trace their development. The only other method that I could conceive to be legitimate would be arguing *à priori* from the known conditions of the case; and this twofold method is that which has been pursued above.

Another caution that should be borne in mind is, that in approaching the subject it is well to divest ourselves as far as possible of associations derived from the modern episcopate. The bishop of primitive times was not by any means the potentate that we are apt to think him. There were at first very few Christians in the country, and these few would come into the towns to worship. Every town of any size had its bishop; and if there were several churches, they were served by the clergy whom the bishop kept about him: they were in fact like our present "chapels of ease," and the whole position of the bishop was very similar to that of the incumbent of the parish church in one of our smaller towns. The tendency at first, as Ignatius shows, was towards complete centralization: the whole serving of his *παροικία* was directly in the hands of the bishop. The parish system in the later sense, with an extended diocese, and a number of more or less independent clergy circling round the bishop, did not grow up until the 6th-9th centuries, when it took shape mainly in France under the Merovingian and Carolingian kings.<sup>1</sup>

In some of these respects the Nonconformist communities of our own time furnish a closer parallel to the primitive

<sup>1</sup> See all this admirably drawn out in Dr. Hatch's 8th lecture.

state of things than an Established Church can possibly do. Christianity itself was an instance of Nonconformity. Accordingly it could not, either in theory or in practice, embrace every person in the state: the Christian Church consisted of a number of scattered congregations, islanded as it were amongst the masses of an alien population. At first the ubiquitous ministrations of apostles, prophets, and teachers, and afterwards the federation of bishops, formed the bond of union.

When first I began these articles it was my intention, when I got to the end, to review the position from a different standpoint, viz. in its bearing upon our confessional differences. But on second thoughts I think that it will be best at least to postpone that part of the subject for the present. We are too apt in England to let our thoughts run ahead of the argument and to be speculating anxiously about the end before we have well got beyond the beginning. So the whole of our mental vision is troubled and distorted; we do not look straight at the facts, but are always casting our eyes askance at their imagined consequences. It is time that we broke ourselves of this habit. And the best way to do so is to keep the two parts of our enquiry strictly separate. When the facts have once been ascertained, we can then turn round and consider how we stand in regard to them.

W. SANDAY.

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