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of forgiveness or hallowing, the truth which John was honoured to crystallize into the deep and radiant words, "We beheld His glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." The double source is one source, for in the Son is the whole fulness of the Godhead; and the grace of God, bringing with it the peace of God, is poured into that spirit which bows humbly before Jesus Christ, and trusts Him when He says, with love in His eyes and comfort in His tones, "My grace is sufficient for thee"; "My peace give I unto you."

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

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DR. SANDAY ON THE ORIGIN OF THE  
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

THE admirably clear and sufficiently complete summary of the main theories in regard to the origin of the Christian ministry presently under discussion, given by Dr. Sanday in his opening paper, marks distinctly enough the lines along which investigation must proceed. The controversial productions of earlier years, though necessarily ranking still in any account of the historical development of the several theories referred to, have been so kept in view and used by Lightfoot, Hatch, and Harnack, the problems that demand examination and settlement, though not by any means solved, have yet been so clearly stated, that in a discussion of the opinions of those three investigators, all that is valuable in previous researches may be easily preserved and utilized. During the twenty years that have passed since the first publication of Lightfoot's *Commentary on Philippians*, with its detached note on the synonymes bishop and presbyter, and its appended "Dis-

sertation on the Christian Ministry," the controversy has been conducted within well-defined limits. Extreme views, that had been wont to receive serious attention, are now quietly ruled out of court by all representative controversialists. The moderate position assumed by Lightfoot has not been displaced in regard to any of its fundamental principles, and the only modifications that have been made, or at least suggested, are in the direction of determining more exactly the date of the transition from the presbyter-bishop to the monarchical bishop, and of fixing more in detail the relation of the several Church office-bearers to one another. Those twenty years, however, have witnessed an enormous massing of historical material, more or less serviceable in the direction thus indicated. The discoveries of the last few years help greatly in bridging over the earlier portion of that period usually called the Post-apostolic Age, through the empty spaces of which the older school of controversialists had allowed their imagination to roam with unrestricted freedom. One result of the discovery of those early documents, and the scientific researches based upon them, is the final withdrawal of all attempts to identify the episcopacy of the early centuries with that of modern times. Even the most respectable controversialists of the last century on the episcopal side felt themselves entitled to ascribe to the primitive bishop the attributes and functions of the Church dignitaries of their own days, and their opponents felt it necessary for the maintenance of their position to disprove the genuineness or minimise the importance of those documents, in which mention was made of bishops as distinguished from presbyters at what seemed to be an inconveniently early date. And even yet, the very fact that the same name is employed to designate an office-bearer of the early Church and an office-bearer in certain Churches of our own day will be apt to occasion a con-

fusion in the minds of the unlearned and uncritical in regard to the offices held by those so named. No scholar, however, will be found willing to risk his reputation by allowing any suspicion to arise that he is not aware of the vast difference that exists between the two in respect of jurisdiction, function, and daily round of duties. In this direction a decided advance has been made within the period above referred to. Hatch has, much more distinctly than Lightfoot, indicated the difference between the primitive bishop and the diocesan, of whom we naturally think when we now use the word. Dr. Sanday has adopted, in the most unreserved manner, the conclusions reached by Hatch as to the period of the development of the modern parochial system, which give the sixth century as the date of the origin, and the ninth as the date of the perfecting of the scheme of diocesan episcopacy.

There are two questions evidently of the highest importance in the present discussion, with which the theories stated and reviewed by Dr. Sanday deal in various ways. We have, on the one hand, to determine as precisely as possible the date at which the bishop came to be distinguished from the presbyter; and, on the other hand, we have carefully to indicate the functions which the primitive bishop had to discharge, and the rank that was assigned him. But before entering on these discussions, there is a preliminary question which calls for special attention. What is the New Testament usage in respect of those words that have come to be technical designations of offices and office-bearers in the Christian Church? We desire to obtain materials for settling the question on which Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Sanday are disagreed, as to the measure of resemblance that exists between the New Testament bishop and presbyter. Lightfoot calls these terms "synonymes"; Sanday says: "It must be wrong to press the identification too closely. . . . The mere

fact of a difference of name points to some difference of origin." We shall return by-and-by to examine this latter statement. Meantime we undertake a review of New Testament passages in which the words bishop, presbyter, deacon occur, in order to discover whether they are used as official designations, or in a mere generally descriptive way. The occurrence of the Greek word represented by our word bishop, both in its verbal and in its substantive form, is not so frequent in the New Testament, but that we may conveniently give a complete history of its usage. It is employed by our Lord Himself of the benevolent visitation of the sick and suffering, implying a general ministry of mercy (Matt. xxv. 36-43). This, too, is the sense in which it is used by James, whose epistle is probably the very earliest of all extant Christian writings (Jas. i. 27). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews employs it with reference to the Christian duty of self-watchfulness or self-inspection (Heb. xii. 15). Then, again, in various places the word is used to describe the manifestation of the Divine care for man as a *visitation* on the part of God (Luke i. 68, 78; vii. 16; Heb. xi. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 12). The passages now quoted exhaust the New Testament usage of the word apart from those instances in which it has immediate reference to the office-bearers of the Christian Church. In all these we find that it has the same meaning of careful attention, on the part of God towards men, and on the part of men towards themselves and others. Is there then any reason why it should be differently understood in those passages that still remain? Peter, having spoken of the past condition of Christians as that of wandering sheep, naturally speaks of the Saviour to whom they have returned as the Shepherd, adding, however, to this figurative designation that of Bishop (*ἐπίσκοπος*, 1 Pet. ii. 25). This second term gives nothing new, beyond what is already contained in the idea of Shep-

herd; for the shepherd has, not only to search for the lost, but to care for the folded members of his flock. The addition of the term Bishop only emphasises that part of the Shepherd's duties which have reference to those within the fold. Both terms are evidently descriptive, and not official designations of Christ the Saviour. Then, again, in Acts xx. 28, we find the word used by Paul in addressing the presbyters of Ephesus in connexion with the same figure of the shepherd and his flock as had been used by Peter. These presbyters are represented as having been made *overseers* (*ἐπίσκοποι*), and the use of this term clearly does not imply any official title, but only a description of the main duties of the presbyterate. They are presbyters in respect of official rank, and so have entrusted to them the *oversight* of the members of their congregations.

In commenting upon these verses, Lechler (*Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, vol. i., p. 164), admits the non-official character of the term overseer as here used, but seeks, as it seems to us quite unsuccessfully, to conserve the traditional application of the passage: "If *ἐπίσκοποι* be here taken at once as an official title, it is clear that in this passage *πρεσβύτεροι* and *ἐπίσκοποι* are identical. Yet it appears as if *ἐπίσκοποι* (v. 28) were not an appellation of office as such, but rather denotes the work to which they were called (oversight of the flock in whose midst they were), and the responsibility which was laid upon their conscience. It was not however from accident that this very expression was chosen. Without doubt it was employed with reference to the official name *ἐπίσκοπος*. 1 Pet. v. 1, etc., . . . has a great similarity to the present passage. *Πρεσβύτεροι* appears to be an official name, whilst the business of the calling is designated in a free way by *ἐπισκοπεῖν*, but even here doubtless with an allusion to the official name *ἐπίσκοποι*." What ground is there for the assumption here made that *ἐπίσκοποι* was already an

official title? It is admitted that it is not so used here. Can any proof be advanced to show that it was employed in contemporary usage as an official designation? Even apart from the withdrawal of the word *ἐπισκοποῦντες* from the text by Tischendorf, as well as by Westcott and Hort, the passage quoted from 1 Peter can afford no help. Should that word be admitted, we have here but a parallel to the passage from Acts now before us; and until definite proof of the use of *ἐπίσκοπος* as an official name is forthcoming, we are entitled to suppose that this term was chosen simply because it suitably described the duties which the presbyters discharged.

We have now only three New Testament passages remaining (Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1; Tit. i. 7), in all of which reference is made immediately to the holders of the office of presbyter in the Christian Church. In the passage from Philippians it would seem that *ἐπίσκοποι* are referred to absolutely, as though they bore this title in the same way in which the *διάκονοι* bore their designation. Now if it could be shown that already *διάκονος* had come to be the official designation of a certain class of office-bearers in the Church, then we should feel obliged, from the manner in which they are conjoined in the verse before us, to admit that this also was the case with the term *ἐπίσκοπος*. Throughout the New Testament the words *διακονέω*, *διακονία*, *διάκονος* are used very frequently in the general sense of service; then, of service under and for God; then, in Acts and Paul's epistles, of help rendered to the people of God, and particularly to workers for God. Beyond this the New Testament usage of the term does not take us. In Acts vi., where the institution of that office, which has often been assumed to be that of deaconship, is recorded, we find the first holders of the office described as serving or ministering at tables, and the functions of the apostolic office still wholly retained by the Apostles as a *διακονία*

τοῦ λόγου (v. 4). The historical development of this word within apostolic times was from the general sense of service rendered to God to the more particular sense of service rendered to the servants of God. It does not therefore appear that in such a passage as the one before us (Phil. i. 1) the word *διάκονοι* has any other meaning than that of helpers to the *ἐπίσκοποι*; who again, in reference to the *διάκονοι*, are those who have committed to them the main charge and superintendence of the Church. The Apostle addresses his letter to those who have the oversight of the Church at Philippi, and to their assistants in this work.

Nor is the case really different with the passages in the Pastoral Epistles that refer to the qualifications of bishops and deacons (1 Tim. iii. 1 ff, 8 ff; Tit. i. 6 ff). The bishops are emphatically rulers, preserving order and exercising discipline, and are required to present models of orderliness and propriety in their own lives; they must also be capable and efficient teachers; and finally, they must bear an unblemished reputation throughout the district in which they reside. Of the deacons, it is required that they possess not some but all of these qualifications. There is no mention of any restriction of their activity to one department rather than another. Though evidently subordinate to the bishops, their qualifications are such that they may rule and teach as well as the superior office-bearers. They are further clearly regarded as functionaries who are by no means indispensable to the proper equipment of a congregation. In the older and more extensive and complicated communities of Asia Minor they are found, while in the more recently founded and simpler organizations of Crete and other such places visited by Titus the need for them has not arisen.

The attempt made by Lechler (*Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, i., 166 f) to show that while the *ἐπίσκοποι* mentioned in Philippians i. 1 are identical with the *πρεσ-*



*βύτεροι* elsewhere named, "these names of officers were not arbitrarily exchanged," must be pronounced an utter failure. He does not succeed in showing any principle upon which the one term was used rather than the other. It is evident that in the Churches of Asia Minor the name of *πρεσβύτερος* was in use, and indeed, with the exception of the Church at Philippi, we cannot point to any Christian community of that age where that name may not have been in use, at least alongside the name *ἐπίσκοπος*. No attempt to associate the term *ἐπίσκοπος* with the Gentile Churches, and the term *πρεσβύτερος* with the Jewish Churches, possibly can succeed. I agree heartily with Lechler in his statement that "these names of offices were not arbitrarily exchanged"; but I find for that statement very different explanation than that which he offers. He is also clearly right in assuming that *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι* constitute the entire number of office-bearers in the community, and that, together with the ordinary membership designated "the saints," they formed the whole of the congregation of the Church addressed. Why then has no mention been made of the presbyters? Lechler, Lightfoot, etc., say, because they are identical with the *ἐπίσκοποι*. Hatch would probably agree with this answer, inasmuch as he does not seem to dispute the identity of presbyter and bishop during the period of the formation of the New Testament canon. Harnack, however, insists upon distinguishing presbyters as officers of discipline from bishops and deacons as administrative officers, and he regards this as a fundamental distinction, one which existed at the very origin of these offices. We shall call attention immediately to his attempted explanation of the fact, that in Philippians no mention is made of those who occupied so important an office as that of supervising the life and morals of the community. But in connexion with the other and generally adopted view, that the omission of any mention of pres-

byters here is due to the fact of their identity with the *ἐπίσκοποι*, the question arises, Is this so-called identity one of thorough equivalence? Dr. Sanday, just like Lechler and Lightfoot, seems to think that there is some reason why in certain circumstances *ἐπίσκοπος* is used rather than *πρεσβύτερος*, and that after all the identity does not imply exact equivalence. The arguments of Hatch and Harnack have shaken Dr. Sanday's allegiance to the Lightfoot theory; but yet he does not seem prepared to adopt these scholars' statement of the distinctive characteristics of *ἐπίσκοποι* and *πρεσβύτεροι*. I venture to assert that Harnack has shown reason why Lightfoot's theory cannot be maintained. He not only calls attention to the obvious fact that bishops and deacons are always associated together, while no mention is made of presbyters alongside of these, but he points out that in 1 Timothy iii. 1-13 the qualifications of bishops and deacons are detailed, while in 1 Timothy v. 17-19 reference to presbyters is made in an altogether different connexion. In regard to this separation of bishop and presbyter, Dr. Sanday says: "I admit that in the passages which Dr. Harnack has enumerated (Phil. i. 1, and 1 Tim. iii. 1-13, v. 17-19) they may be regarded as separable." If so, it matters little though Dr. Sanday should refer to what he claims as a second century reading in 1 Peter v. 1, 2, and to the passages from Acts and Titus which we have already explained, as using *ἐπίσκοπος* as a descriptive and not a technical or official name. If we have no other theory to advance than that of the original identity of *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβύτερος* in the sense of Lightfoot, Lechler, and Sanday, then no assumption of a common Jewish origin, such as Dr. Sanday suggests in the hope of narrowing the breach (pp. 104, 105), will in any measure invalidate Harnack's conclusion.

I venture to propose an altogether different solution. On a review of the entire New Testament usage of the terms

in question, we find that there are no indications of any regular differentiation of offices in the Christian Churches of the Apostolic Age. There is but one ordination or appointment by election, and that is to the office of presbyter or elder (Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 5). In respect of function, the presbyter is designated episcopus, or overseer. In the older Churches, like those of Philippi and Ephesus, which had been at least ten years in existence, and had during that period been remarkably prosperous, before the Apostle wrote his epistles to them respectively, it was necessary, in consequence of their dimensions and circumstances, that the presbyter-bishop should have assistants given him. These assistants had in all probability the same official appointment or ordination as the bishop, and by that ordination they would be constituted presbyters, as he himself had been. In the Churches of the New Testament the presbyter was the one office-bearer present in every organized congregation; while among the many presbyters required in the larger communities two grades were distinguished, as superior and subordinate, and the presbyters so distinguished were named respectively ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι. The conclusion then to which we have reached is this: *In the apostolic Church there was but one office to which individuals were elected (as distinguished from the extraordinary ministry of supernatural gifts represented by Apostles, prophets, etc.), that of presbyter, and if the size or circumstances of the community required gradation among its presbyters, those in full authority were called Ἐπίσκοποι, and their assistants were called Διάκονοι.*

Now let us see how this theory will stand the test of those passages in 1 Timothy iii., of which Dr. Sanday says that they may indicate a separation between bishop and presbyter. The contention of Harnack, homologated by Sanday (pp. 107, 108), is, that, although at first the

function of preaching and conducting Divine service lay with the Apostles and prophets exclusively, it gradually passed over, not to the presbyters, but to the bishops and deacons. But is there any ground in Scripture for saying so? Are not teaching and preaching from the beginning a part of the official duties of bishops and deacons? And are not presbyters as such required and expected to teach? Let us look at this last question first. Various interpretations of 1 Timothy v. 17 have been suggested. It was insisted upon by Rothe that no unprejudiced mind could possibly understand the Apostle as distinguishing two classes of presbyters as teachers and rulers, that the distinction indicated was between those who applied themselves laboriously to their duties, and others who did not labour so hard. Commentators have since come to an agreement in interpreting the distinction referred to, as one of more or less prominent endowment. There were presbyters who were prominent as teachers, others who were prominent as rulers. The reward or honour spoken of by the Apostle is to be given in acknowledgment of distinguished service, whether this be rendered in one department or in another. Those who rule well are to be highly honoured, but those who, ruling well, also distinguish themselves in teaching are to be especially esteemed. There is nothing here to suggest that any presbyter would be regarded as one who discharged aright his official functions, if he only ruled, and did not teach. It was indeed quite natural that in an age when supernatural gifts abounded, and Churches were still favoured with frequent visits of Apostles and prophets, the administrative and judicial functions should be especially emphasised in the earliest references to stationary and permanent office-bearers. But the supposition is entirely gratuitous that, during the intervals elapsing between the visits of Apostles and evangelists, the congregational services of communities organized like those of Philippi and

Ephesus were dependent upon the irregular and occasional contributions of private members, or that the edification of the general membership was so little considered, that any forward person or ready speaker might find free scope, while the elected office-bearers, tried and trusted men, sat in silence, because, forsooth, it might be that none of them possessed the gift of teaching. On the contrary, all the passages which speak of the qualifications of presbyters, bishops, and deacons make it evident that aptness to teach is just as indispensable a qualification as ability to rule. Kühl speaks of the *wish* that was evidently present in the Apostle's mind when he wrote to Timothy the recommendation, which did not amount to an injunction; but when he paraphrases the passage now under consideration, so as to make it mean that "the presbyters who, besides their wonted duties, undertake in addition the laborious task of teaching, are worthy of twofold and *threefold* honour,"<sup>1</sup> he presses the literal interpretation of the passage to such an extent, that we shall be obliged to understand the Apostle as saying, "that those presbyters who neither ruled well nor engaged in teaching at all were entitled to honour, though only of the first degree." If we say, with Kühl, that the Apostle means to award double honour to those presbyters who distinguish themselves in the performance of *official* duty and rule well, and triple honour to those who, having secured to themselves this good degree, performed the supererogatory work of teaching, we meet with the strange phenomenon of a presbyter *quâ* presbyter being commended and rewarded for doing that which *quâ* presbyter he was not required to do. If ruling were the *ex professo* duty of the presbyter, we should have expected the third degree to be conferred on one who performed this duty superlatively well. It is surely reasonable to suppose that when the Apostle speaks of presbyter's

<sup>1</sup> Kühl: *Die Gemeindeordnung in den Pastoralbriefen*, Brl., 1885, p. 20.

rewards he means that they are to be won by presbyter's work. If this principle of interpretation be adopted, we can, without misgiving, accept the threefold order of merit for those who conscientiously discharged the duties of their office; for those who, neglecting no department, distinguished themselves as rulers; and, finally, for those who, passing through these degrees, excelled in the exercise of that which was the most characteristic and honourable function of their office, that of teaching. The most honoured presbyter is he who does the work of the presbyter best. Yet Dr. Sanday says that 1 Timothy v. 17 expressly excludes the idea that every presbyter had the gift of teaching, and that by it "it is clearly implied that there were elders who did not labour in the word and in teaching." On the ground of a careful examination of the passage, I am now inclined to fall back upon Rothe's view, and to recall my adhesion given on a former occasion (*Presbyterianism*, p. 41) to the contrary view of Ellicott, which has been generally adopted, and is now very emphatically reasserted by Dr. Sanday.

Lightfoot admits that the work of teaching *must* have fallen to the presbyters *from the very first*, and have assumed greater prominence as time went on, while the idea that government was the first conception of the office is allowed to be a mere probability.

In connexion with this same point, the fact that teaching was a duty attaching to the office of presbyter from the very first, I think objection may fairly be taken to the way in which Dr. Sanday, as well as Hatch and Harnack, refers to the terms relating to teaching among the qualifications of the *πρεσβύτεροι* and *ἐπίσκοποι*. Referring to 1 Timothy iii. 2, v. 17, Titus i. 9, he speaks of the gift of teaching as a *desirable* qualification in a presbyter or bishop (p. 107). Similarly Dr. Hatch seeks to minimise the importance of the teaching gift, while exalting that of administration,

describing the one as desirable, the other as indispensable. Now, if we turn to 1 Timothy iii. 2, Titus i. 9, we shall find the teaching gift referred to in such a way that no unprejudiced reader could for a moment reach any other conclusion than this, that whatever importance was attached to the other gifts enumerated was also attached to it. If it be necessary that the bishop be hospitable and free from covetousness, as Hatch and Harnack so heartily admit, so also, according to those passages, it was in the same degree necessary that he should be apt to teach. This has been disputed in the interests of the theory that represents a distinct order of presbyters as a comparatively late institution of a teaching and preaching office, and of that which regards presbyter and bishop as two primitive and originally distinct offices of discipline and administration, during an age of unrestricted "liberty of prophesying" among the members of the Christian Church. By boldly maintaining that *διδασκτικός* does not really mean apt to teach, Kühn takes the only course fairly open to those who would maintain that the exercise of the teaching gift was not originally demanded of the regular office-bearers of the Christian Church. He endeavours, in an elaborate note, to show that the termination *ικός* points simply to the possession of a certain quality; so that *διδασκτικός* means one who has himself a knowledge of doctrinal truth, and is thus the custodian of sound doctrine (2 Tim. ii. 24). In 1 Timothy iii., according to this view, the bishop is not required to teach, but to be a referee in doctrinal questions, and so v. 17 represents the qualification of the presbyter for pastoral dealing with his flock. Well, let us understand it so. Then the presbyter's highest excellence—that in which highest distinction may be gained—is the cure of souls. In all respects, therefore—in respect of ruling, teaching, and administering affairs—the New Testament notices afford us no means of distinguishing presbyter, bishop, and deacon.

Then, again, those three names are never found together in any New Testament passage as they are in later Christian literature. Presbyter and bishop are indeed used (Acts xx. 17, 28; Tit. i. 5, 7) in such a way as to imply thorough identity; but there evidently presbyter is the official term, and bishop only a description of presbyterial functions, employed to introduce an enumeration of official duties and responsibilities. Then, again, deacon is never coupled with presbyter, nor is the one term ever used in a writing where the other is employed. I can find no other explanation of this than that which our hypothesis supplies, that presbyter is the one official designation, while both bishop and deacon are terms descriptive of presbyterial functions. Where only one order of the ministry exists, *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος* are used indiscriminately; where not only *ἐπίσκοποι*, but also their assistant *διάκονοι* exist, the introduction of the term *πρεσβύτερος*, which answers not to one, but to both, would evidently be confusing. If Acts vi. be regarded as giving an account of the establishment of the presbyterate—a view entertained by many, for which much may be said—we have here the institution of the one ordinary and localized office which was destined to be for particular Churches what the Apostles and their assistant evangelists had been to the Church universal.

And now we pass beyond the limits of the New Testament canon to inquire as to the mode of designating Church office in the Post-apostolic Age. Between A.D. 90 and A.D. 150 we have a series of writings—the *Epistle of Clement of Rome*, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Ignatian Epistles*, the *Epistle of Polycarp*—whose references to the matter under discussion are of supreme importance. What strikes us first of all is the extreme paucity of direct statements in the entire extracanonical Christian literature regarding the details of Church government and organiza-



tion. The EPISTLE OF CLEMENT is of special interest, because it clearly falls within the life-time of the last surviving Apostle. In it there is no single statement regarding the office-bearers of the Church that would imply the slightest development in organization beyond the point reached in the Pastoral Epistles. It is said (xlii. 4) that the Apostles appointed *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι* in all the districts and cities where they preached; which corresponds to the statement of Acts xiv. 23, that the Apostles appointed elders or presbyters in every Church. Then, again, the term *πρεσβύτεροι* is used especially in connexion with an enumeration of Church parties: *οἱ ἡγούμενοι, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, οἱ νέοι, αἱ γυναῖκες*. Mr. Manley, in his excellent Hulsean Essay, has understood this passage as affording an exhaustive classification of the constituents of the Christian Church, in which no separate mention is made of any order of office.<sup>1</sup> He supposes the first term to be applied to the order of grace or the extraordinary officers, *e.g.* Apostles, prophets, etc., and *πρεσβύτεροι* to the older members of the Church, among whom would be included any ordinary officers that might there and then exist. He would thus understand all the terms here used, with the exception of the first, as applying to the membership of the Church—the elder and younger male members, and the female. On the contrary, I think the writing should rather be regarded as addressed to the active members of the Church, who had conspicuously taken part in the rebellion against the presbyters. They, therefore, the male members, would not be mentioned in a list of those unto whom they were required to act in specified ways. To the *ἡγούμενοι* they are to render obedience, to the presbyters honour, to the catechumens all needful service in teaching, and to the women or female members help in protecting

<sup>1</sup> *A Dissertation on the Presbyterate before the Time of Cyprian.* By W. G. Manley. Cambridge, 1886.

them from evil influences and developing the beauty of a holy life. We have here, as it seems to me, under the term *πρεσβύτεροι*, the very same set of office-bearers as is afterwards described as consisting of two divisions, *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι*. Then, again, those who are spoken of as *πρεσβύτεροι* in xlvi. 6 and liv. 2 evidently are the same who are spoken of in xlii. 4 as *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι*, terms which are clearly used to designate the entire ministry of a Christian community.

It will not be necessary to speak in detail of the *Didaché*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, and *Shepherd of Hermas*. The *Didaché* speaks of *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι*, but makes no mention of *πρεσβύτεροι*, which, in a tract meant for Jewish converts, would surely be strange if *πρεσβύτεροι* were of Jewish and *ἐπίσκοποι* of Gentile origin, and the one synonymous with the other, or practically so. Further, their service to the Church—that is, not of *ἐπίσκοποι* alone, but of *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι*, answering to the *πρεσβύτεροι*—is described (*Didaché*, p. 15) as the same as that of the prophets and teachers. There is nothing at all to warrant Harnack's deduction that they were administrative officers, especially financial. The *Epistle of Barnabas* no more than the *Epistle to Diognetus* makes any allusion to the ordinary office-bearers of the Church. This may be explained either from the individual tendencies of these writers, or the immediate purpose of their writings. In *Hermas*, again, the *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι* are spoken of in such a way as to show that their duties were essentially the same, and so they together corresponded to the *πρεσβύτεροι*. From evidence adduced by Uhlhorn and others it may, I think, be assumed that the *Shepherd of Hermas* was not written before A.D. 130. Down to this period then we find no notice in any Christian writing to suggest any change having been made on the simple Church organization of New Testament times. "There were *ἐπίσκοποι* in the

Church, but no ἐπίσκοπος.”<sup>1</sup> The extraordinary ministry is passing away. Hermas speaks of apostles and teachers, but no longer can point to any recognised prophets. But this decay of the order of grace does not lead to the supplementing of the order of office.

When we turn to the *Ignatian Epistles* we meet with an entirely different state of affairs. It seems to me that nothing has been advanced to show that these epistles must have been written earlier than A.D. 130; but even when that date has been assigned them, it is still no easy task to conceive of their contents as written by a contemporary of Hermas. All the more care should therefore be taken to admit no exaggeration of the difficulty. The ἐπίσκοπος has certainly become prominent, and his authority and rank are insisted upon in the most emphatic manner; but the very emphasis employed, and the unwearied injunctions to reverence and obey him, seem clearly to show that the institution is not yet well established, but a novelty struggling for existence. It is admitted that the episcopate secured a footing first in Asia Minor. The *Epistle of Ignatius to the Church of Rome* is distinguished from all the rest by the absence of every allusion to bishops; and from other sources it is well established that in Alexandria at a still later period nothing was known of monarchical episcopacy. The phenomenon, then, presented in the Ignatian Epistles is simply this: owing to some local cause, probably the prevalence of various heresies within the borders of the Churches of Syria and Asia Minor leading to schismatical divisions in the several Christian communities, the faithful and orthodox members found it necessary to rally closely around the most capable and trustworthy of their local Church officers, and he who in each community thus won the confidence of his fellow members obtained, at first without any formal appointment, the position of ἐπίσκοπος. In other districts, we

<sup>1</sup> Manley's Hulsean Essay, p. 47.

may suppose, a similar development took place, when the Churches there came to be beset with like dangers. This would become still more general, and indeed strict and uniform Church organization would be enforced, when the unregulated enthusiasm of the Montanist movement threatened the overthrow of all Church organization and order. Then in Ignatius we find a man who is possessed of one idea—the need of perfect unity among the members of a Church as a preservative against false doctrine. On his way to the stake, conscious therefore that his last opportunity for exhortation had come, he unweariedly reiterates his counsel to show unwavering loyalty toward the bishop. The personality of Ignatius should count for much. He had evidently secured a position as bishop in Antioch very different from that which Polycarp and the other bishops of Asia had in their Churches. But the Epistle assumes that what the bishop was in Antioch, that also he was in Smyrna and Ephesus. If about A.D. 130 the episcopate was established in Antioch, and more or less shaping itself in the Churches of Asia, we have here the early and gradual emerging of the *ἐπίσκοπος* from among the *ἐπίσκοποι*. It must be observed, however, that here Ignatius speaks of those from among whom the individual *ἐπίσκοπος* has been promoted, not as *ἐπίσκοποι*, but as *πρεσβύτεροι*. In this, as it seems to me, lies the special significance of Ignatius in the history of the development of the Church constitution. The recognition of one pre-eminently capable man among the presbyters or ordained office-bearers of the Church would have taken place naturally, apart from the interference of any powerful and impressive personality. The natural course of progress, as the Church grew and spread, would be to have the congregational pastor recognised as the representative of the congregation in the Church councils, and the other office-bearers as limited in their jurisdiction within the bounds of their own commu-

nity. The *ἐπίσκοπος* would have then become thoroughly identified with the *πρεσβύτερος*. Ignatius, however, clings to the names previously in use, and seeks to differentiate the *ἐπίσκοποι* of the congregation from the *ἐπίσκοπος* by assigning to them the name of *πρεσβύτεροι*. There had been a tendency before to subdivide the presbyterate into an episcopate and a diaconate, though everywhere bishops and deacons were so closely joined that their real identity in the presbyterate was scarcely lost sight of. So long as the terms presbyter and deacon were allowed to retain their primitive meaning, so long as they were not definitely appropriated to designate special offices, the appropriation of the term *ἐπίσκοπος* to the one supreme office-bearer of the congregation could not be secured. And so we find Ignatius bringing to bear all the pressure that his intellectual gifts, intense spirituality, and heroic self-sacrifice might well be supposed capable of effecting, in order to secure a free space in which the powers of the *ἐπίσκοπος* might be exercised and developed. To lessen the risk of his fellow *episcopi* disputing his supremacy, Ignatius assigns to them the name that had previously been common to them and to the deacons; and so, instead of one order of two degrees, we have three orders distinct from and co-ordinate with one another. According to this interpretation of the Epistles, we have in them not a representation of the actual organization of any actual community of Ignatius' own time, but a sketch of the ideal unto which he hopes the Churches of Christ would yet attain.

Throughout the second century it would seem that no uniformity of organization was reached. Before the end of the century probably each congregation had its recognised pastor; but the other office-bearers, not only varied in number, but also in function and distribution, according to the varying circumstances of the several congregations. In the *Apostolic Ordinances*, edited by Harnack, and re-

ferred to by Dr. Sanday, we find, *e.g.*, a prominence given to the office of *reader*, which evidently reflects some local peculiarity of constitution. In this treatise, however, which is more or less dependent upon documentary sources belonging to the end of the second century, we find the Ignatian idea reiterated. Harnack points out the resemblances between its account of the ecclesiastical ordinances and that of the Pastoral Epistles, and reaches the conclusion (p. 52 *f*) that they are independent recensions of one common primary source. But instead of supposing, as Harnack does, that the author of the Pastoral Epistles and the author of the document belonging to the second half of the second century, which is incorporated in the *Apostolic Ordinances*, were contemporaries, because the state of the Church constitution represented in both is similar, we may rather conclude that, from the later years of the Apostolic Age down to A.D. 150, notwithstanding variations in the use of names and the introduction of local peculiarities, there was but little change in the arrangements for worship and administration in the Christian Churches.

The theory which we have sought to maintain throughout, according to which presbyters, either as *ἐπίσκοποι* or *διάκονοι*, were originally the only regular order of office-bearers in the Church, will explain another point, the significance of which, as it seems to me, Harnack has failed to grasp. At p. 36 *ff*, he calls attention to the manner in which the relation of the presbyters to the bishops is described in the *Apostolic Ordinances*. The presbyters are to care for, consult with, and have a superintendence over the bishop. It would seem that the *ἐπίσκοπος* stands out distinct from the *πρεσβύτεροι* only as representative of the Church among those who are without. Harnack evidently fears that this may play into the hands of those who maintain the original identity of presbyter and bishop. He notices, too, that widows are referred here to the *πρεσβύ-*

τροι as elsewhere to the ἐπίσκοπος, as in the case, not only of the Epistle of James, but also of that of Polycarp. All that he can say in reply is, that the conflict between presbyters and bishops had not yet been decided, but that such an indeterminate state of matters must soon have come to an end. I venture to apply here the theory of the original institution of the presbyterate. The assertion here of the supreme authority of the presbyters is a reminiscence of primitive times, when they stood alone as the one recognised order of Church office-bearers.

In conclusion, two points may be repeated and enforced.

1. It should be always remembered that the primitive bishop, during the first six centuries, was simply pastor of a congregation, and in consequence of this position, entitled to a voice in ecclesiastical councils (Sanday, p. 113). The *Apostolic Ordinances* explicitly declare that even so small a Christian community as cannot furnish twelve male members may have a bishop, for the election of whom the neighbouring congregations must supply assessors.

2. The evidence of ecclesiastical writers later than those referred to on these questions is of little importance. It matters little whether Hegesippus calls James of Jerusalem bishop, as Eusebius reports him to have done, or later writers give to early presbyters of the Church of Rome the name of bishop; we must suppose that they simply give to those of whom they speak the title by which the holders of such positions would be known in the days in which they wrote.

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