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ON THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

IN a previous number of this magazine, Dr. Sanday has expounded and examined recent theories about the origin of the Christian ministry. In doing so he has taken notice of my contributions to the subject, and the manner in which he has done this calls for my warmest thanks. It does indeed afford me the liveliest pleasure to find that so learned and independent an investigator as Dr. Sanday is prepared to accept for the most part the conclusions to which I have attained. In the following pages I do not intend to restate my theory, but rather to advance some proofs in support of that theory which have not been hitherto sufficiently emphasised. I shall, in the first place, gather together the chronological data which we possess for determining the origin and development of the Christian ministry; and in the second place, I shall examine more closely the original documents from which we obtain our first sure information regarding the nature of the office of bishop. These investigations will be likely to cast light upon those points of Dr. Sanday's theory which are not in accordance with mine.

I. THE CHRONOLOGICAL DATA FOR THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

It is certainly a mistake to suppose that an institution in the Church had its earliest origin at that period when first we come to hear of it. Many errors in investigations in the department of Church history arise from identifying the time of the origin of an institution with the time at which we

happen to come across it. But, on the other hand, it is of the utmost importance that we determine carefully how far back it may be possible for us to trace an institution, and in many cases we shall in this way succeed in arriving at its first beginnings. In what follows I shall endeavour briefly to set forth the chronological data which we possess for the origin and the earliest development of the ecclesiastical constitution. This is a very important piece of work, though it has not hitherto been attempted. This problem would receive the most diverse solutions from those occupying different standpoints regarding the origin of certain New Testament and post-Apostolic writings. Any one, for example, who admits the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles will reach quite different conclusions from one who regards them as non-Pauline, and relegates them to the second century. Hence the following collection of passages will have weight only with those who take the same views with me about the date of the origin of the early Christian writings. To prove and establish these views would far exceed the limits at my disposal in this paper.

1. The oldest designation of the Christians is that of "disciples" (*μαθηταί*). It is found in the Gospels, and thirty times in the Acts of the Apostles, and also in the so-called "we"-passages: but it is not used by Paul. It may fairly be regarded as the earliest designation, for when the followers of Jesus called Him Rabbi (*διδάσκαλος*), they evidently regarded themselves as His "disciples." This mode of association, however, could not be of long continuance. Although, according to Matt. xxiii. 8-10, Jesus forbade His disciples to call any one but Himself *διδάσκαλος*, or *πατήρ*, or *μαθητής*, and the Judæo-Christian tradition observed this prohibition,¹ it was yet absolutely

¹ Ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ κληθῆτε Ῥαββεῖ, εἰς γὰρ ἔστιν ὑμῶν ὁ διδάσκαλος, πάντες δὲ ὑμεῖς ἀδελφοί ἐστε· καὶ πατέρα μὴ καλέσητε ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἰς γὰρ ἔστιν ὑμῶν ὁ πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος· μηδὲ κληθῆτε καθηγηταί, ὅτι καθηγητῆς ὑμῶν ἔστιν εἰς ὁ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ μείζων ὑμῶν ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος.

impossible that the circle of the followers of Jesus should remain without organization. During one generation, perhaps, in Palestine the designation "disciples of Jesus" may have prevailed;¹ but even then, alongside of it, other names came into use.

2. Everywhere throughout his Epistles Paul names the Christians "brethren" (*ἀδελφοί*) and "saints" (*ἅγιοι*). These names, as Weizsäcker correctly remarks, are derived from the nature of the community, whereas the name "disciple" expresses a personal relationship which ought not to be applied and in fact is not applied to the relation of the young converts to the Apostles.² The "brethren" and "saints" in one locality, whether in one province or in one house, form "a church" (*ἐκκλησία*); all the brethren of all places collectively form "the Church." The term "Churches" is met with first in Paul's writings.³ But Paul speaks also of "the Churches in Judæa" (Gal. i. 22), as well as of "the Churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. xvi. 4). It is therefore probable that Paul was not the first to use the designation "Church," nor even those of "brethren" and "saints." The Church as a collective name for all Christians ("the Church of God") first appears in the Epistle to the Galatians and in 1 Corinthians, but in addition to it Paul also uses the phrase *αἱ ἐκκλησίαι*.

3. The term "Synagogue" as a designation of the Christian congregation occurs first in James ii. 2; but it is certainly there introduced as a phrase already current. Not only the later Jewish-Christians, but also the Marcionites called their assemblies "synagogues."⁴

¹ Weizsäcker has done a great service in his *Apostol. Zeitalter der christl. Kirche* (1886), p. 36, by pointing this out. On the designation of Jesus as *διδάσκαλος*, which continued down to the second century, see my *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, p. 25.

² Compare Paul's warning in 1 Cor. iii. 3 ff.

³ I do not reckon Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17.

⁴ See my Notes on Hermas, Mand. xi. I set aside the names Galileans, Nazareans, Christians, the Poor.

4. The earliest witness which we possess for the beginning of a constitution of the Christian Church is to be found in Acts vi. 1 ff. It is here declared that the Apostles exercised the *διακονία τοῦ λόγου*, and that persons were chosen by the congregation in Jerusalem about A.D. 34, who should undertake the *διακονία τῶν τραπέζων*.¹ *The distinction therefore between a διακονία τοῦ λόγου and a διακονία τῶν τραπέζων is the earliest datum in the history of Church organization.* This is of extreme importance: Preaching of the Gospel, on the one hand; care of the needy, on the other hand. We meet with this same division in Paul's writings; only with him the *διακονία* alongside of the preaching of the word has a much wider signification.

5. As regards the *διακονία τοῦ λόγου* Paul considers it an acknowledged fact, that God had ordained in the Church first Apostles, then Prophets, then Teachers (1 Cor. xii. 28). The expression "in the Church," that is, in Christendom, makes it quite evident that it is not merely an institution in the Pauline Churches that is referred to, but an arrangement or ordinance of Christendom as a whole. In the Churches of Judæa also must Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers have been acknowledged. This follows from the words of Paul, and is confirmed by the historical record in the Acts. Even the congregation of Jerusalem had its Prophets.² We might here indeed go a step further. The development of the association of Christian disciples in Judæa, who regarded themselves as saints and brethren, into congregations, and the consequent origin of an organization, could take place

¹ It is admitted that the first five chapters of the Acts are beset by many critical difficulties. The section, however, consisting of chap. vi. 1 ff., is distinguished in various particulars from that which precedes. Every reader who studies the Acts of the Apostles with care will observe that when from reading the first five chapters he passes on to the sixth, he here at once enters on historical ground. The narrative in the first five chapters is of a pictorial, panegyric, and vague description; in the section, chap. vi. 1 ff., on the contrary, it is concrete and precise.

² Acts xi. 27; xv. 32; xxi. 10; Matt. x. 41.

only when the conviction was gained that the Holy Spirit, God Himself, was the founder of that organization. But this conviction does lie at the basis of the proposition: οὗς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους. These, however, λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ must have been of very early origin.¹ The Epistle to the Corinthians, which presupposes the existence of such an institution, was written in the year 50. But even so early as the year 40 there were men so described present in Antioch.² It may therefore be assumed that even then there were in the congregation at Jerusalem not only the Apostles but also Prophets and Teachers. There was a "Teacher" in all the larger synagogues; but the Christian community showed itself to be the true Israel of the latter days, because it consisted of holy brethren, because its teachers were filled with the Holy Spirit, and alongside of them stood Apostles and Prophets, called directly by the Holy Ghost. We should perhaps be putting the date rather too far on were we to assume that ten years after the death of Jesus Prophets and Teachers were first brought forward. The passage quoted above from the Epistle to the Corinthians renders it probable that Paul was not aware of any time when the Church had not Prophets and Teachers.³

6. A special position in the Church of Jerusalem is assigned to James by Galatians i. 19; ii. 9, 12; 1 Corinthians xv. 7; Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18, as well as by later tradition. (Compare the Pseudo-Clementine writings, also the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which declares that

¹ As to the Apostles this is self-evident, for the apostolate was founded by Jesus naturally not as an office but as a ministry of preaching. What they were to be for *οἱ ἕξω*, the Prophets and Teachers should be for the Church itself.

² See Acts xiii. 1 f. This again is a passage that also bears the marks of higher credibility.

³ On Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers, see my dissertation in *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. pp. 93-137. Its conclusions have been substantially adopted by Dr. Sanday.

James was the first to see the risen Saviour.) When this began is not precisely indicated ; but that it had not existed from the beginning follows both from the statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians xv. 7, and from the history given in the Acts. According to the narrative of Acts, Peter and John were at the first the heads of the Church, and it is only in chap. xii. 17 that we are told incidentally that now James stands at its head. But Paul reports that James had been favoured with a manifestation of Christ only after Christ had already appeared to over five hundred brethren at once, that is undoubtedly some considerable time after the resurrection, although indeed before the manifestation granted to Paul. But before James had seen the Lord he could not have played a distinguished part in the Church. That he ever did secure such a position was probably owing to his relationship with Jesus. That this was so appears from the fact that after his death another relative of Jesus was chosen as the president of the Church in Jerusalem, as well as from the report of Julius Africanus, that even in other Palestinian Churches the presidency was given to relatives of Jesus.¹ Such preference given to blood relations is nothing unusual in the East ; we know of quite similar occurrences among the Elkesaites and among the Moham-medans. It is nevertheless interesting, as it shows that from the earliest times the tendency to look upon Jesus as the "Teacher" had been surmounted. To give the presidency to the blood relations of a "Teacher" would be simply preposterous. From the high consideration shown to the relations of Jesus it follows that Jesus was Himself revered as the Messiah and therefore also as King. Our original documents, however, do not contain any express statements that would enable us to determine the position of James in Jerusalem more exactly. Of the nature and

¹ See Jul. Africanus, *Ep. ad Aristidem*. Also the quotations from the Egyptian Hegesippus, in Eusebius, *Ecl. Hist.*, ii. iii.

jurisdiction of his office we cannot form the least idea.¹ What is said in the Pseudo-Clementine writings is of no weight at all, indeed it is so worthless that we cannot even learn from them the later Jewish-Christian opinions regarding James. Those writings describe James as a "bishop," even as "bishop of the bishops." But it has not been proved that the Jewish-Christians had as much as a single bishop. Therefore the redactions in which the Pseudo-Clementine writings have come down to us are of Gentile-Christian origin. No stress need be laid on the fact that Eusebius has given the name of "bishops" to the presidents of the Church of Jerusalem down to the time of the destruction of the city under Hadrian.

7. The independent administration of the Churches is presented to us not only in the Pauline Epistles,² but also in the Acts of the Apostles³ as the primitive mode of organization. This perfect independence of the various local Churches is also presupposed in 1 Clement 54, 2.

8. Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers are not congregational office bearers; but persons are chosen and inspired by the Holy Spirit, to whom is entrusted the ministry of the preaching of the word. Alongside of them, however, Paul recognises in the Churches a series of functions which depend upon the operation of the Holy Spirit, and in their manifoldness make the Church into an organism. The various ministries are the consequence of various charisms, and they cause the Church to become *ἐν σῶμα*. Of such charisms or ministrations Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians xii. 28: *δυνάμεις, χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν*. Regarding these too, as well as regarding

¹ According to Hegesippus his office is to be regarded as of a sacerdotal character; but we may well question whether Hegesippus is here relying upon a trustworthy document.

² See especially the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and compare Weizsäcker, *Apostol. Zeitalter*, p. 623 ff.

³ See Acts i. 23; vi. 5; xv. 20; xv. 12, 22 f.; xxi. 22.

Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers, he assumes that they never have been, and never could be, wanting in the Churches. Thus the pneumatical organization of the Churches is just as old as the official organization of the Church. Seeing then that it is evident that there have been particular persons who were endowed with the gift of speaking with tongues, of healing, of working miracles, etc., there must also have been particular persons who were endowed as *ἀντιλήμψεις* and *κυβερνήσεις*. But a particular designation has scarcely yet been given them, otherwise the Apostle would have used their name when referring to them in company with Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers. But even at the time when the independent administration of the Churches was most emphatically maintained, there were functions which always only an individual or a small committee could discharge. "In the first rank," as Weizsäcker correctly remarks in his *Apost. Zeitalter*, p. 630 f., "were certain ministries, which lead to a Church office, demanded by the requirements of the assemblies. Among these might be named the providing a place of meeting and the arrangement of it, looking after the sacred Scriptures, the preparation of the Lord's Supper, as also for the administration of baptism, and the preservation of the Scripture portions which belonged to the congregation. The assemblies, too, would need personal direction to determine the order of lectures and communications, and also for the closing of the meetings. Besides this, the behaviour of members when away from their assemblies, especially in large cities, and of those abroad, would call for a special ministry. In discharging these functions one would naturally pass over into exhortation, comforting and admonition, and the ministry would in this way attain to a higher significance." To this we may add, that attention to the sick and poor and to travellers could not be required of the whole community, but of certain individuals, and so essentially the circle of *ἀντιλήμψεις*

and *κυβερνήσεις* was called into being. These then have been in existence in the Churches from the beginning. They constituted the *διακονίαι*, which those discharged who are called *διάκονοι* in the widest sense of the term.¹

9. The designation "those that are over you" (*προϊστάμενοι*) is first met with in the earliest of Paul's Epistles, 1 Thess. v. 12 f. But their connexion with those who "labour" in the Church, and with those who "exhort,"² as well as the following verse, which urges every member of the Church to discharge the same duties that in a special degree are required of those persons,³ shows that here we have not yet to do with an *office*, but only a work or activity.⁴ This becomes quite clear from Rom. xii. 6-8. In that passage, the *προϊστάμενος* stands between the *μεταδιδούς* and the *ἐλεῶν*, and is described as one endowed with a charism.⁵ Those who were the first workers in the Church—the first converts⁶—who had given the use of their house for the meetings of the congregation,⁷ who had given themselves wholly over to the service of the Church⁸—have

¹ For *διακονία* in this sense see 1 Cor. xii. 5; for *διάκονος*, Matt. xx. 26; Mark ix. 35; v. 43; 1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6; vi. 4, etc.

² The passage reads: *ἐρωτώμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, εἶδέναι τοὺς κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν Κυρίῳ, καὶ νοουθετοῦντας ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἠγείσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπερκερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν.*

³ See the 14th verse.

⁴ Compare the word *ἔργον* in verse 12. The reference is not to official character, but to the work.

⁵ *Ἐχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα, . . . εἴτε προφητείαν, κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων, ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει, ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι.*

⁶ 1 Cor. xvi. 15; Rom. xvi. 5.

⁷ *Ἡ κατ' οἶκον ἐκκλησία*: Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2; also Rom. xvi. 10, 11, 14, 15.

⁸ 1 Cor. xvi. 15: *Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί· οἴδατε τὴν οἰκίαν Στεφανά, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀχαΐας, καὶ εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς· ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑποτάσσησθε τοῖς τοιοῦτοις, καὶ παντὶ τῷ συνεργούντι καὶ κοπιῶντι.* In these few words we have an entire history,—the history of the beginning of a presidentship in the churches. Comp. Rom. xvi. 1 ff.: *Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, ὅσαν διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κερχραῖς, . . . καὶ γὰρ αὕτη προϊστάτι πολλῶν ἐγενήθη, καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ.* A helper she had become by her service

quite naturally had accorded to them a pre-eminence. To such persons the members of the Church are to render obedience just on account of their service.¹ The exhortation of the Apostle here also shows "that it has reference not to a regular office, but to an actually existing relationship, where the duties continue to be discharged voluntarily, and which depends upon the good-will of the congregation."²

In the Epistles of the Apostle Paul which were written before his Roman imprisonment, we do not meet with official persons in the strict sense of the word, nor with terms designating office, nor with Presbyters. Yet there are indeed in the Churches persons who, on account of their special position—that is, on account of their work and service rendered to the Church—are spoken of as those who have the rule. They form alongside of the Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers, an order of rulers.³

10. In the Epistle to the Philippians, chap. i. 1, there are named for the first time, and that indeed in the address, "bishops and deacons." This belongs to about the year 63. The Epistle itself generally, and especially in the 4th chapter, presupposes the same independent system of organization to prevail in the Church as had been usual in earlier times. There cannot, therefore, yet be any reference to an ecclesiastical office of authority over the Church. But there are two points here that are new: (1) The minis-

rendered to the whole Church. Hence in this place *διάκονος* cannot be understood in its later acceptation. It is not an inferior order of the ministry that is intended, but the highest and most comprehensive form of service.

¹ See the "*ὑποτάσθητε*" of 1 Cor. xvi. 16.

² See Weizsäcker, *Apost. Zeitalter*, p. 632.

³ The word *ἡγούμενοι* does not occur in Paul's writings. It is met with first in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which thereby proves its extreme antiquity, inasmuch as only the teachers of the Divine word are so named, and no other persons are singled out for honour. See chap. xiii. 7, 17. *Ἠγούμενοι* are further mentioned also in 1 Clement i. 3; xxi. 6, in connection with *πρεσβύτεροι*; in Acts xv. 22, 32, where the Prophets are so designated; and in Hermas, Vis. ii. 2, 6, and iii. 9, 7.

try in the Churches has become divided into a higher and a lower ministry; and (2) Those who discharge these ministries have obtained special designations, in the one case *bishops*, and in the other case *deacons*. The latter name has therefore now received a narrower signification, and designates a lower order of ministry. But this definite naming, "overseers and ministers," is a step in the progressive development of the highest importance. Persons who in a society bear definite names which indicate their functions must by a natural transition pass over into the rank of official persons. We do not learn more particularly from the Epistle what it was that the overseers in Philippi had to superintend. But if we keep in mind that Paul wrote this letter for the purpose of thanking the Church for its present, it may be assumed that the overseers had to superintend the delivery of gifts in the congregational gatherings, and so generally to take charge of the assemblies.¹

All forms of order and constitution not contained under one or other of these ten points belong to the post-Pauline period; that is, they cannot be dated till after the year 64, and most probably did not exist earlier.

11. "Evangelists" are named for the first time in connection with "Apostles" in the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv. 11, that is, in the post-Pauline times, for the Epistle to the Ephesians was not written by Paul, but a considerable time after the Apostle's death. The distinction made between Apostles and Evangelists shows that the expression "Apostle" was beginning to be used in a restricted sense. The word "Evangelist" is in the pre-Catholic literature very rarely found, only indeed in Acts xxi. 8; 2 Tim. iv. 5; and in an ancient documentary source of the so-called *Apostolic Ecclesiastical Ordinances*.³

¹ This will be more fully treated under our second division.

² See *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, 18.

12. It is first in the Epistle of Clement, written about A.D. 96,¹ and in the *Didaché*,² that we meet with "bishops and deacons" as regular officers elected by the Churches. In the latter it is said: *Χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους*; but Clement states that the appointment of bishops and deacons was made *συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης* (chap. xliv. 3), and shows that the *προστασσόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους* constitutes the highest judicature in the Church (chap. liv. 2).

13. But Clement has already advanced the theory that the Apostles had themselves everywhere appointed bishops and deacons, and had further given orders that after the death of those men others should be chosen in their place, who had been approved and designated by their predecessors.³ That this is a theory, devised to meet an emergency that had arisen, appears from the vague and general character of the statement,⁴ the reference to all Apostles,⁵ and the attempt, which is not fully carried out, to give to the bishops the right of appointing their successors.⁶ But we cannot here continue a further discussion of this deeply interesting passage. It is enough to take note here of the fact that the assumption that the Apostles, in accordance with the Old Testament example, had appointed persons to offices in the Churches, had already obtained currency in Rome by the end of the first century. But from the words of the Epistle of Clement, chap. xlii. 4: *Κατὰ χώρας οὖν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν*,

¹ See chaps. xi.-xliv.

² See chap. 15.

³ See chap. xlii. 4 and xliv. 1 f.: *καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἔγνωσαν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι ἔρις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς, διὰ ταύτην οὖν τῆν αἰτίαν πρόβλεψιν εὐλογίαις τελεύσαν κατέστησαν τοὺς προειρημένους (scil. τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν), καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπινομήν ἔδωκαν ὅπως ἐὰν κοιμηθῶσιν, διαδέξωνται ἕτεροι δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν. τοὺς οὖν κατασταθέντας ὑπ' ἐκείνων ἢ μεταξὺ ὑφ' ἑτέρων ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης, etc.*

⁴ See chap. xlii. 4: *κατὰ χώρας καὶ πόλεις*.

⁵ See chap. xlii. 1-4; xliv. 1 ff.

⁶ See chap. xliv. 2, 3. The words will be found printed in full in a previous note.

δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι, εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους τῶν μελλόντων πιστεῦειν, we see clearly that this important conclusion rests upon the foundations of two simple historical facts. It is certainly quite true, in the first place,¹ that the first converts played an important part in the Church; and it is quite true, in the second place, that at the bidding of the Spirit persons were in olden times set apart to the discharge of special functions.² It may be concluded that from these two facts was deduced the belief of the end of the first century, that the Apostles, first of all as vehicles of the Holy Spirit, had been appointed to the first offices. The transition to this idea may be found in the notion that the Holy Spirit, as He appointed Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers for the Church universal, sent forth bishops and deacons into the particular Churches.³ It is, however, important to observe that Clement maintained the Apostolic appointment even of deacons.

14. The holding of the office of bishop and deacon for life was for the first time maintained by Clement.⁴ Still his Epistle shows that this was not invariably adhered to.

15. The office of bishop and deacon is described in the Epistle of Clement, that is, in the oldest document in which the subject is distinctly referred to, as having to do with the service or worship. The *Didaché* also gives a similar representation.⁵

16. That bishops and deacons also undertook the duties of Prophets and Teachers, that is, the preaching of the word, and thus were included in the same rank of honour as the Prophets and Teachers, is first of all affirmed in the *Didaché*.⁶ In one of the old documentary sources of the

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 15 f.

² Comp. Acts xiii. 1 f.

³ See Acts xiv. 23, and Clemens Alex., *Quis dives salv.*, cxlii.: Ἰωάννης . . . κλήρω ἕνα γέ τινα κληρώσων τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ σημαινομένων. Also Acts xx. 28: ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους.

⁴ See chap. xlv. 2.

⁵ For further treatment of this point, see the second division of this paper.

⁶ See chap. xv.

Apostolic Ordinances, dating from the middle of the second century, the wish is expressed that the bishop should be *παιδείας μέτοχος, δυνάμενος τὰς γραφὰς ἐρμηνεύειν*.¹ In 1 Tim. iii. 2 it is admitted to be desirable that he should be *διδασκτικός*.

17. The expression *λαϊκός* is first found in the Epistle of Clement as the designation of all Church members who do not hold office.² The term *κλήρος* for the rank or order of the office-bearers of the Church is first found—and then indeed in the plural, and not yet as a *term. technicus*—in 1 Pet. v. 3. As *terminus techn.*, it is not used, as far as I know, until the end of the second century.³

18. The distinction between *πρεσβύτεροι* and *νεώτεροι* in the Churches is first met with in 1 Pet. v. 1 f; and after that frequently, that is, soon after A.D. 64. Where *νεοί* or *νεώτεροι* are spoken of alongside of *πρεσβύτεροι*, we may, as a rule, regard the latter not as chosen persons, but as those who on account of their venerable age are entitled to honour and obedience.⁴ Their function consists in exhortation.⁵

19. We meet with chosen or appointed Presbyters for the first time in the second century. The oldest witnesses for them are the Epistle of James,⁶ the Acts of the Apostles,⁷

¹ See *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, p. 9 f.

² See chap. xl. 5.

³ See Clemens Alex., *Quis dives salv.*, xlii.

⁴ See 2 Clem. xvii. 3: *καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀρτι δοκῶμεν πιστεύειν καὶ προσέχειν ἐν τῷ νουθετεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων.*

⁵ See 1 Pet. v. 5: *Νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις*; 1 Clem. i. 3: *ὑποτασσόμενοι τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν καὶ τιμὴν τὴν καθήκουσαν ἀπομένοντες τοῖς παρ' ὑμῶν πρεσβυτέροις νεοῖς τε μέτρια καὶ σεμνὰ νοεῖν ἐπιτρέπετε*. Also xxi. 6: *τοὺς προηγουμένους ἡμῶν ἀιδεσθῶμεν, τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τιμῆσωμεν, τοὺς νέους παιδεύσωμεν τὴν παιδείαν τοῦ φόβου τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Comp. iii. 3, and lvii. 1. Clement has as yet no idea of an ecclesiastical order of regularly appointed Presbyters. Obedience to the Presbyters is also enjoined in 2 Clem. xvii. 5.

⁶ See chap. v. 14. This too is not to be understood of regularly appointed officers.

⁷ See chap. xiv. 23. I pass over what is said in the Acts of the Apostles about the Presbyters of Jerusalem. It seems to me very improbable that the Acts of the Apostles was written during the first century.

the Pastoral Epistles,¹ the original document of the so-called *Apostolic Ordinances*,² and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.³

20. That the Apostles ordained Presbyters is first stated in the Acts of the Apostles.⁴ According to Titus i. 5, they were ordained by Titus, the disciple of the Apostle.

21. That the Presbyters are the rulers of the congregation is stated first in the Epistle of Peter, then in the *Shepherd of Hermas*.⁵ Compare also the original document used in the *Apostolical Ordinances*.

22. That some of the Presbyter-rulers laboured also in word and doctrine, and so performed the same service as Prophets and Teachers, and many of the bishops and deacons (see above, No. 16), is distinctly stated in 1 Tim. v. 17. Compare 2 Clem. xvii. 5.

23. The earliest indication of the qualifications and functions of Presbyters is given in the documentary original source of the *Apostolical Ordinances*.⁶

24. The earliest indication of a privileged position for Presbyters in regard to judicial procedure is given in 1 Tim. v. 19: *κατὰ πρεσβυτέρου κατηγορίαν μὴ παραδέχου, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ δύο ἢ τριῶν μαρτύρων.*

25. It is stated in 1 Clem., chap. xlv., the bishops and deacons were taken from the number of the "aged."

26. That the bishops (*episcopi*) were taken from and belonged to the ranks of the aged is also stated in Acts xx. 17, 28.

27. The *Shepherd of Hermas*, but especially the docu-

¹ See 1 Tim. v. 1, 2; ii. 17-19; Tit. i. 5. I regard the Pastoral Epistles as writings which, in their present form, were composed in the middle of the second century; but older documents are made use of in their composition.

² See *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, p. 10 ff.

³ See *Vis.* ii. 4, 2, 3; iii. 1, 8.

⁴ Acts xiv. 23.

⁵ *Vis.* ii. 4, 3: *μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τῶν προϊσταμένων τῆς ἐκκλησίας.* 1 Tim. v. 17: *οἱ καλῶς προστάτες πρεσβύτεροι.* Irenæus, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 24: *οἱ πρεσβύτεροι οἱ προστάτες τῆς ἐκκλησίας.*

⁶ See *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, pp. 10-17, 32-42. It is evident that they were inspectors, and had to superintend the exercise of discipline.

mentary source used in the *Apostolical Ordinances*,¹ presuppose a sort of *dyarchy* in the Church: on the one hand the Presbyter-rulers, and on the other hand bishops and deacons,²—leaving out of sight the Prophets and Teachers. The bishops preside over the worship and the distribution of gifts, but the Presbyters exercise control even over the bishops.

28. Yet according to that original document referred to, there are no longer in the Churches several bishops, but only one. The earliest witnesses for the monarchical episcopate, besides the one just named,³ are found in Justin Martyr⁴ and the Ignatian Epistles (about A.D. 140).

29. Ignatius is the first to advance the theory that the bishop is the representative of God to the Church, and that the Presbyters surround him as the Apostles surrounded Christ. Instead of a dyarchy, we have here for the first time a complete monarchy. The Presbyters are put under the bishop but are superior to the deacons. But still the deacons have always a special affinity to the bishop.⁵

30. The document used in the *Apostolical Ordinances* is the first to say that deacons may be advanced to the rank of bishops.⁶

¹ *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii, 5, pp. 32-42.

² The deacons are not "*ministri*," in the strict sense of the word, down to the middle of the second century. According to Clement they were chosen from the ranks of the Presbyters. Polycarp, Ep. v. 3, says that obedience is to be rendered unto them just as to the Presbyters; the author of the *Didaché*, chap. 15, counts them among those entitled to honour, and regards them as of one rank with the bishops; the original document used in the *Apostolical Ordinances* says, "that they should be treated by the Church with all honour respect, and fear" (*Texte*, etc., p. 21); Ignatius speaks of them with special warmth and cordiality.

³ *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii, 5, p. 7 ff.

⁴ *Apolog.*, i, 69.

⁵ Only in one passage are Presbyters and deacons mentioned together, Polyc. Ep. ad. Philipp. v. 3. But the Presbyters here named, to whom detailed exhortations are addressed in chap. vi., are in reality bishops. But Polycarp does not so name them because he, as belonging to Asia Minor, is willing to acknowledge and name only *one* bishop in each congregation. In Philippi, however, the monarchical episcopate had not yet been established.

⁶ *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii, 5, 26, 48 f.

31. The same document expressly identifies for the first time the episcopal and the pastoral office.¹ But even in Eph. iv. 11, Acts xx. 28, and Hermas, Sim. ix. 31, by pastors are to be understood bishops.

32. Deaconesses are first mentioned in the Epistle of Pliny to Trajan.

33. There were *readers* in the Churches at latest by the end of the second century.² Exorcists were in existence still earlier.

34. The first instance of distant congregations decidedly taking to do with the condition of other congregations occurs in the case of Clement, who writes his letter from Rome about A.D. 96. The oldest witness to bishops discussing in personal conference debated questions, is found in the journey of Polycarp to Anicetus at Rome. The earliest accounts of episcopal synods proceed from Asia Minor, during the time of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.

35. The theory that the bishops appointed by the Apostles are successors of the Apostles and discharge the apostolic office, is first found in Irenæus. I refrain from adding more to this chronological review. It will show more convincingly than many words could do, that the episcopal theory is not correct, but that also the assumption is wrong that the ecclesiastical constitution has been developed out of an original presbyterial constitution. The development has been very complicated, because the forces under whose influence the Churches stood were from the first numerous, and because the Churches themselves were not merely religious sects, but also social bodies in the most comprehensive sense of the word.³

¹ *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, 13, 26.

² See my Excursus on the Origin of the Readership, in *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, 57 ff. It is of special importance to observe that the source used by the so-called *Apostolical Ordinances*, which is one of the oldest witnesses for the arrangement that gives but one bishop, has enumerated along with Presbyters, —Readers, Deacons, and Widows.

³ Dr. Sanday remarks at p. 103 f that I have made the separation between

II. ON THE ORIGINAL NATURE OF THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE.

Dr. Sanday has treated in an interesting manner of the name and office of the ἐπίσκοπος.¹ I shall not directly combat what is there said, but I am not disposed to assign any special significance to the LXX. in this connexion. It is in general certainly quite proper to attempt the derivation of Christian institutions, as far as this can be done, from the Old Testament and from Judaism. But it appears to me that in this case this way is not available, because the designation ἐπίσκοπος undoubtedly emerged from a purely Gentile Christian ground. The primitive bishops may certainly be compared in many respects with the *Archisynagogi*; ² but the name Archisynagogus is not found in the Gentile Christian Churches, and the name bishop is not found among the Jews. It would be well therefore, in the

the bishop and the presbyter too great. In this connection he refers to Acts xx. 17, 28; 1 Pet. v. 1 f; Tit. i. 6-7; and the Epistle of Clement. But Acts xx. 17, 28, says only that the bishops appointed by the Holy Ghost were at the same time Presbyters, which I have never denied. 1 Pet. v. 1 f refers to age, and the reading ἐπισκοποῦντες has not been established. Tit. i. 5-7 I cannot accept as a valid proof, because I believe that i. 7-9 was interpolated into the received text by the redactor. See Otto Ritschl, *Theol. Lit. Ztg.*, 1885, No. 25. Finally, as to the Epistle of Clement, I would refer to my brief notes on it above, as also to Weizsäcker, *Apost. Zeitalter.*, p. 637 ff. Weizsäcker had formerly believed in the complete identity of Presbyters and bishops (see *Theol. Lit. Zeitzg.*, 1883, No. 19); but he has been convinced by my treatises. He now writes: "The view hitherto prevalent that bishops and Presbyters were the same is no longer satisfactory. It is right only in so far as the former are taken from the Presbyters and do not in their very nature constitute a superior rank. But the theory is wrong that the same persons are sometimes called Presbyters and sometimes Bishops, though often this is apparently so." This appearance is in my opinion strongest in the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians. But even if one should demonstrate from this passage that there were no bishops in Philippi (see on the contrary Paul's Ep. to the Phil. i. 1), this would really prove nothing. Why Polycarp has not named bishops, I have endeavoured to explain above. It is well known, too, that Irenæus here called the bishops "the ancients," or the elders. I will not deny that in many small congregations at the beginning those who were recognised as presbyters would be one and the same with the bishops.

¹ EXPOSITOR for Feb., pp. 98-103.

² See Schürer, *Hist. of Jew. Peo. in Time of Chr.*, Div. ii., p. 63 ff. Edin., 1885.

first instance, to look away from the Jewish constitution and the Old Testament.

But also researches into the etymology of the word *ἐπίσκοπος* or inquiries about the place and character of such an office in civil constitutions do not afford any solution of the problem. No other meaning can be given to the word than that of "overseer"; but what sort of an oversight such overseers exercised cannot be more precisely determined. Further, whether a parallel can be insisted upon between the ecclesiastical overseers and the civil or municipal overseers, can only be determined after one has already learnt the special functions of the ecclesiastical overseers. Hence the only true method of investigation is to consider carefully the oldest passages in early Christian literature, in which we not only meet with the name bishop, but also a statement of his functions. This we shall attempt in the remainder of this paper.

I. 1. In Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, bishops are named in the address. What their functions are is not stated. The entire Epistle, however, makes it probable that they were named because they had to do with the sending of the contribution. But this was a present from the whole congregation. The contribution, however, could only have been raised in the congregational assembly, and stood in immediate connection with the delivery of gifts by the congregation. Thus it is probable that the bishops were overseers in regard to the congregational rendering of gifts.

I. 2. The Epistle of Clement was written in order to obviate disturbances in the Corinthian Church. These troubles are characterized generally as a revolt of the younger against the elder,¹ but specially as a contention about the episcopal office.² In chap. xl.-xliv. this office

¹ See chap. iii. 3; xlvii. 6; liv. 2; lvii. 1.

² See chap. xlv. 1; *οἱ ἀποστόλοι ἐγνώσαν, ὅτι ἐπις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς.*

of bishop (and deacon) is now more exactly defined as indeed exclusively one that had to do with the worship; the bishops and deacons correspond to the Old Testament priests and Levites. They are charged with maintaining the unity of the Church in worship. The congregation is under obligation to assemble only where the bishops and deacons are. They have to see that everything is done *κατὰ τάξιν*. Their service is a *λειτουργία*.¹ But this *λειτουργία* is more exactly described as *προσφορὰς καὶ λειτουργίας ἐπιτελεῖσθαι* (chap. xl. 2), or as *ποιεῖν προσφορὰς* (xl. 4), or as *προσφέρειν θυσίας* (xli. 2), or as a *προσφέρειν* in a particular place (xli. 3), or finally, in the most definite way as a *προσφέρειν τὰ δῶρα*.² In the last named passage this phrase is expressly given as indicating the *contents* of the *ἐπισκοπή*, that is, of the office of bishop. No other particular, however, in regard to the functions of the bishop is to be found in the whole range of the epistle. Hence there can be no doubt that according to the Epistle of Clement the bishops preside over the worship, the function of the bishop is *προσφέρειν τὰ δῶρα*. But such an office may be described as that of an overseer, because all the believers bring their gifts. This contributing the bishops have to superintend in order to present the gifts unto God. Because they are the offerers *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, they are honoured with a ministerial office (xliv. 6), and have a definite place assigned them in the Church (xliv. 5).

I. 3. The same result is obtained from the *Didaché*, for the subject of the 14th chap. is the offering of the congregation (*θυσία*). This is immediately succeeded by the

¹ See chap. xl. 2, 5; xli. 1; xliv. 2, 6. *Λειτουργός*, xli. 2; *Λειτουργεῖν*, xliii. 4; xliv. 3.

² Chap. xliv. 3 f.: *Τοὺς οὖν . . . λειτουργήσαντας ἀμέμπτως τῷ ποιμνίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ ταπεινοφροσύνης, ἡσύχως καὶ ἀβαναύσως, μεμαρτορημένους τε πολλοῖς χρόνοις ὑπὸ πάντων, τοῦτους οὐ δικαίως νομίζομεν ἀποβάλλεσθαι τῆς λειτουργίας· ἁμαρτία γὰρ οὐ μικρὰ ἡμῖν ἔσται, ἐὰν τοὺς ἀμέμπτως καὶ ὁσίως προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἀποβάλωμεν.*

words (15, 1): *Χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους.* This *οὖν* proves that bishops (and deacons) should be appointed *because* in the Church an offering is made on Sunday. But when it is made the most particular qualification of these bishops that they be *ἀφυλάργγοροι*, it follows for this requirement that the bishops, in regard to the gifts brought by the congregation, had generally to receive and to distribute them. This is in perfect agreement with what we have examined in reference to the Epistle to the Philippians.

I. 4. In the original document used in the so-called *Apostolic Ordinances* the bishop appears as the director of the worship, who stands at the altar (*παρεδρεύουσι τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ*). The presbyters have to assist them in the worship. He is the *μύστης*, they are the *συμμυσταί*. He appears further as caring for the poor, and must therefore be *φιλόπτωχος*. Finally, he is the representative of the Church to those who are without. All these functions form a unity. The bishop is the head of the Church engaged in worship, and in so far as he is such, he is also the administrator of the finances of the Church: he is its business head, and its head toward those without. But—so strictly are the qualifications determined—in regard to order, discipline, and jurisdiction, he is yet not the sovereign head. In this connection he rather stands himself under the supervision (*προνοία*) of the council of Presbyters.¹

I. 5. Even in the *Shepherd of Hermas* bishops are still strictly distinguished from the Presbyters. In the only two passages in which they are referred to their functions are not directly mentioned (*Vis.* iii. 5. 1; *Sim.* ix. 27. 2). But when it is said in the latter passage: *Ἐπίσκοποι καὶ φιλόξενοι, οἵτινες ἠδέως εἰς τοὺς οἴκους ἑαυτῶν πάντοτε ὑπεδέξαντο τοὺς δούλους τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνευ ὑποκρίσεως; οἱ δὲ ἐπίσκοποι πάντοτε τοὺς ὑστερημένους καὶ τὰς χήρας τῇ διακονίᾳ ἑαυτῶν*

¹ This is more fully treated in *Texte und Untersuch.*, ii. 5, pp. 32–42.

ἀδιαλείπτως ἐσκέπασαν καὶ ἀγνώως ἀνεστράφησαν πάντοτε,—one side of their activity is made prominent which would necessarily be soon developed out of their functions in regard to worship (see above, the φιλοπρωχός). Justin, too, described bishops to the Emperor as directors of the worship and ministers to the poor.

These most ancient witnesses are in my opinion beyond question. Bishops are originally the directors of the worship, the offerers κατ' ἐξοχήν. They are called overseers insomuch as they direct or superintend the assembly met for worship. Out of this function all others have been necessarily developed. There have naturally grown out of this: (1) the administration of the gifts generally; (2) the administration of the property of the congregation; (3) the charge of the poor and needy; (4) the care of visitors and strangers; (5) the representing of the Church to those without. In performing their service in connection with worship, they necessarily and in increasing measure had to proclaim the word of God and edify the Church.

So began they, as the *Didaché* says, "to perform the service of Prophets and Teachers." At the first the function of the Presbyters was sharply distinguished from this service. They were the persons of authority; they exhorted the young and sinners; they were honoured and obeyed. Even in public worship, where the bishops presided, the presbyters had to step forward if disorders or disturbances arose, and they had to superintend the distribution of gifts,—at least in the Churches from the midst of which the source used by the *Apostolical Ordinances* proceeded. Besides their exhortations, too, under certain circumstances they wrought ἐν λογῶ καὶ διδασκαλία. But already their future over against that of bishops was an uncertain one, because bishops themselves were taken from them, or at least in respect of honour were reckoned among them. These had, therefore, a διπλῆ τιμή, and so the Presbyters were of neces-

sity gradually brought into a subordinate position, especially after they had assumed the position of "Teachers."

II. Until, however, this had taken place the relation of the two was necessarily a vacillating one. It cannot be denied that the functions of presbyters and bishops were not always distinguished *in praxi*, nor could be. This is shown perhaps most strikingly in the use of the term ποιμήν (ποιμαίνειν). It might as well be used of the bishops as of the presbyters. In the Epistle to the Ephesians bishops are indeed to be understood by pastors.¹ It is so undoubtedly in Acts xx. 28: τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. On the other hand, the elders of 1 Pet. v. 1, who are set over against the younger members, are designated shepherds.² In the Epistle of Clement (liv. 2) the Pastor and Presbyter are named together;³ but the καθεστάμενοι πρεσβύτεροι (xliv.) are most probably the bishops and deacons. In the *Shepherd of Hermas* (Sim. ix. 31) the *pastores* are not to be identified with the bishops. But quite certainly in the source used in the *Apostolical Ordinances* the bishop is called ὁ ποιμήν, and the episcopal office ὁ ποιμενικὸς τόπος. So too we read in the old document at the basis of the *Apostolical Constitutions*: τὸν ποιμένα τὸν καθιστάμενον (Bk. ii. 1). No sure conclusion can be drawn from the use of so general a word as ποιμήν. But I trust that the proofs advanced above about the original functions of bishops are so certain that it will not be necessary to question Jews or Gentiles in order to learn what was the original nature of the episcopal office.

ADOLF HARNACK.

¹ Eph. iv. 11: ἀπόστολοι, προφῆται, εὐαγγελισταί, ποιμένες, διδάσκαλοι. The *Shepherd of Hermas* mentions ἐπίσκοποι in the place where ποιμένες are named in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

² Πρεσβυτέρους ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ . . . ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον τοῦ Θεοῦ. But it is worthy of notice that in this Epistle (ii. 25) Christ is called ὁ ποιμήν καὶ ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ψυχῶν.

³ Τὸ ποιμνιον μετὰ τῶν καθεσταμένων πρεσβυτέρων.