

## THE ORDINATION PRAYERS IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH ORDER.

IN the last volume of the JOURNAL (vol. xvi pp. 542 ff) Mr C. H. Turner has raised this problem afresh, and has put forward a new solution of part of it, viz. for that which relates to the ordination prayer for a presbyter. He claims for his solution the merit of simplicity. This may be granted, though the analogy between the rubrical methods of the Gelasian Sacramentary and the ways of the much earlier Eastern Church Order based on the *περὶ χαρισμάτων ἀποστολικῆ παράδοσις* of Hippolytus does not carry us far. The analogy itself is problematical, seeing there is no sign that the prayer there cited is not complete and continuous; nor is there exact parallelism, as there is in the Gelasian rubric, at the assumed second catch phrase, 'respice . . .'. But, beyond this, the theory does not really explain the form in which the prayer is referred to in the 'Canons of Hippolytus'; rather it makes this less intelligible than before. The facts, as he gives them, are these:—

*Latin* (Hauler p. 108).

et dicat secundum ea quae prae-  
dicta sunt, sicut praediximus super  
episcopum, orans et dicens **Deus**  
**et pater domini nostri Iesu**  
**Christi, respice super servum**  
**tuum istum . . .**

*Ethiopic* (Horner p. 143).

and [they] shall pray over him ;  
in the form which we said before  
he (the bishop) shall pray, saying  
**My God, the Father of our**  
**Lord and our Saviour Jesus**  
**Christ, look down upon this**  
**thy servant . . .**

Here the 'Canons of Hippolytus' quote no prayer, but say 'the bishop's prayer shall be said over him (the presbyter-elect) entire, except the name "bishop" only. The bishop is in all respects the equivalent of the presbyter except in regard to the throne and ordination, because he was not given authority to ordain'. No doubt these 'Canons' are a secondary authority in their present form; but they sometimes preserve or presuppose more clearly the original form of the Ancient Church Order<sup>1</sup> lying at the base also of the two other witnesses and certain related documents.

Now Mr Turner's theory is that this common basis ran very much as the Latin and Ethiopic, which are supposed to cite the actual prayer

<sup>1</sup> Not, I think, Hippolytus's *περὶ χαρισμάτων ἀποστολικῆ παράδοσις* itself, but an already modified form of it.

over a presbyter first in its opening words, for reference, and then only in the part where it deviated from the episcopal type of ordination prayer—a view not borne out by the wording, as above; and that the compiler of the Canons misunderstood the passage to direct that ‘the bishop’s prayer shall be said entire’ over the presbyter-elect, though what was actually before his eyes was something quite different in the main. The one difference he specifies is the non-use of the name ‘bishop’ in the prayer to be offered. Surely such an error is inconceivable.

Accordingly, seeing that the two witnesses already cited really give two contradictory directions—*pace* Mr Turner’s explanation and analogy—I suggest that this is due to the substitution of a special ordination prayer for a presbyter, meant to remove the theoretic difficulty of the original text (implied by themselves as well as the Canons), viz. that the prayer over bishop and presbyter was the same. To avoid this anomaly, as it seemed at the date when the addition was made, a largely different prayer was compiled and inserted, so reducing to nullity the original simple instruction to use the same prayer. Assuming, then, that the Ancient Church Order dates from about 250, probably in Syria, this addition was most likely made before 325, to judge from its type of doxology, which has the archaic *παῖς* for Christ.

Further, Mr Turner has justly argued that the form of prayer for a bishop found in our authorities contains language which could not have been applied to a presbyter at any time in the third century; e.g. the function of high-priesthood and propitiation of God, and authority to forgive sins in the high-priestly spirit, to distribute offices, and to loose every bond according to the authority given to the Apostles. But in the light of the above suggestion, the natural inference from this is that the original prayer for a bishop (alluded to in the common basis of our three sources) did not contain such clauses; that they are in fact additions due to a later hand or hands.

An actual analogy for such interpolation in the bishop’s ordination prayer is furnished by one branch of its transmission, that represented by *Const. per Hipp.* and *Apost. Const.*, in contrast to the others. Mr Turner himself is ‘quite sure’ that these two ‘have got quite off the lines’ in putting in ‘references to *ἐνεργήματα ἱατρικά*, to *λόγοι διδακτικοί*, to *παίδευσις τοῦ λαοῦ*, and to *αἱ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ ἱερουργίαι*, as functions of the presbyter’. This he holds partly because they thereby hark back to New Testament language, esp. the *ἐνεργήματα ἰαμάτων* of 1 Cor. xii 10, 28<sup>1</sup>—and we may see references to the Pastorals in the next two—and ‘partly because, without meaning it, they have betrayed themselves

<sup>1</sup> As does also Lat. (along with them) higher up, with its *ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι καὶ κυβερνᾶν τὸν λαόν σου*, on the model of 1 Cor. xii 28 *ἀντιλήμψεις καὶ κυβερνήσεις*; and

by introducing the sacerdotal ideas (*ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ ἱερουργίαι*) which did not attach to the presbyterate, apart from the episcopate, before the fourth century'. The probable date of these additions, to judge from their witnesses, is the latter part of the fourth century; and one may fairly assign the earlier and more widely attested additions to the episcopal prayer, and the whole of the presbyteral one—as not known to the compiler of the 'Canons of Hippolytus'—to a date *c.* 300–325. It was perhaps after that date that the remoulding of the doxology at the end of both prayers took place, whereby it assumed the embarrassed form in which it appears in our extant witnesses.

These suggestions touching the ordination prayers of presbyter and bishop admit of more detailed proof: and to make surer of our ground let us first consider the manifest changes that have been made in the Hippolytean basis in the case of the ordination of a Deacon. Here our authorities go various ways, both in the introductory matter and in the prayer. As to the former, the primary form of CO<sup>1</sup> in Dr Frere's nomenclature (*viz.* the old Latin version and the Ethiopic, as distinct from the Arabic and Coptic versions), CO<sup>2</sup> (= *Apostolic Constitutions* and *Const. per Hippolytum*), the *Testamentum Domini*, and CH (the *Canons of Hippolytus* in Arabic), all diverge. CO<sup>1</sup> and *Test. Dom.* imply a common form, though with minor later, and probably local, varieties: CO<sup>2</sup> sets even this basis aside, and substitutes something in terms of pure late fourth century conceptions, followed by a quite different prayer: while CH seems independent even of CO<sup>1</sup>, alike in the argumentative introduction distinguishing the diaconate, as purely ministerial, from the presbyterate or higher clerical order ('the bishops and presbyters' whom he is to 'serve in all things'), and in the prayer which follows. In essentials the facts are as follows:—

<i>Canons of Hippolytus.</i>	<i>The basis of the Latin and Ethiopic Versions.</i>	<i>Testament of the Lord.</i>
When a deacon is ordained, let it be done according to the same rules <sup>1</sup> ; and they shall ( <i>man soll</i> ) say the following prayer for him :	Diaconus vero cum ordinatur, eligatur secundum ea quae praedicta sunt, similiter [imponens manus episcopus solus sicuti et praecepimus <sup>2</sup> ].	Let the deacon be appointed, chosen according to the things before spoken of. (Here follow his qualifications.)

this recurs in a part of the section on the ordination of a deacon which will be shown to be secondary.

<sup>1</sup> Riedel, 'nach denselben Canones', i. e. analogously to the procedure laid down in the bishop's case, so far as his election is concerned: compare Lat. and Eth.

<sup>2</sup> Here the secondary 'apostolic' setting of this recension of the Hippolytean basis shews itself. It seems a later one even than that used in *Test. Dom.*, which also refers to the qualities for which the deacon was to be 'chosen'—as in the previous part of CO<sup>1</sup>.

*Canons of Hippolytus*  
(continued).

[However, he is not appointed to the presbyterate, but to the diaconate, as a servant of God. Let him serve the bishop and presbyters in all things, and not only at the time of the liturgy: but let him also serve the sick of the Church who have no one belonging to them.

*The basis of the Latin and Ethiopic Versions* (continued).

In diacono ordinando solus episcopus imponat manus propterea quia non in sacerdotio ordinatur, sed in ministerio episcopi, ut faciat ea quae ab ipso iubentur: non est enim particeps consilii in clero ('and he was not ordained to be the teacher (fellow-councillor, Copt.) of all those who are in orders', *Eth. Ar. Copt.*).

*Testament of the Lord*  
(continued).

Let the bishop alone lay hands on him, because he is not appointed to the priesthood, but for the service of attendance on the bishop and the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Let [his] ministry be thus. First let him do only those things which are commanded by the bishop as for proclamation; and let him be the counsellor of the whole clergy and the mystery of the Church,<sup>2</sup> who ministereth to the sick. . . .]

That the above is interpolation<sup>3</sup> is shewn by what immediately precedes in CH, which implies that originally a prayer followed at once. As it is, its own interpolation ends with a tag repeating the first reference to a prayer, in a later form: viz. 'But let the bishop lay his hand upon him, and say this prayer over him, saying':

*Canons of Hippolytus.*

O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

*we earnestly beseech Thee to pour out Thy holy Spirit upon Thy servant N. and number him with those*

*The basis of the Latin and Ethiopic Versions.*

Deus, qui omnia creasti et verbo perordinasti, Pater domini nostri Iesu Christi, quem misisti ministrare tuam voluntatem et manifestare nobis tuum desiderium, da spiritum sanctum gratiae et sollicitudinis et industriae in hunc servum tuum, quem elegisti ministrare eccle-

*Testament of the Lord.*

Expanded form of that in the Ethiopic (and Lat.).

. . . give the Spirit of Grace and earnestness (so Eth.)  
. . . . .

<sup>1</sup> Cf. below, 'to minister to Thy Church', alike in Lat. (Eth.) and *Test. Dom.*  
<sup>2</sup> In view of the deacon being called later on 'the eye of the Church' (as whose minister, rather than the bishop's, he appears in *Test. Dom.*), this may mean 'the symbol (representative) of the Church'. It looks as if local feeling in this circle, perhaps also in an older source, was far from minimizing the deacon's initiative.  
<sup>3</sup> The very notion of safeguarding the distinction between presbyter and deacon is foreign to the genius and date of Hippolytus's *περι χαρισμάτων*, and represents later experience.

<i>Canons of Hippolytus</i> (continued).	<i>The basis of the Latin and Ethiopic Versions</i> (con- tinued).	<i>Testament of the Lord</i> (continued).
who serve Thee accord- ing to all Thy good- pleasure, like Stephen and his companions. Fill him with might and wisdom, like Stephen <sup>1</sup> . . . .	siae tuae et offerre [Lat. <i>hiat</i> , Eth. continues] 'in Thy Holy of Holies that which is offered to Thee by Thine ordained Chief Priests to the glory of Thy name.	offering in holiness to Thy holy place those things which are offered to Thee from the inheri- tance of Thy high priest- hood <sup>2</sup> : so that ministering without blame and purely .....
Make his life that it be without sin before all men, and an example for many, whereby he may save a number in Thy Church without fault: and receive all his service through our Lord Jesus Christ.	Thus without blame, in pure life, having served the degrees of ordination, he may attain the exalted priesthood and ( <i>om. b. &amp; c.</i> ) Thy honour (in Thy coun- sel, <i>c</i> ; <i>om. b</i> ), and glorify Thee, through Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.	he may be deemed worthy <sup>3</sup> of this high and exalted office by Thy good will, praising Thee continually through Thy Only-begot- ten Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here it seems fairly clear that :

(1) Where *Test. Dom.* is really parallel with the oldest form of the CO<sup>1</sup> recension, it is more primitive than this.

(2) The features in which CO<sup>1</sup> diverges from *Test. Dom.* are those in which it diverges yet more from CH, where the moral and personal, as compared with the sacerdotal and official, aspects of the diaconate are most marked.

(3) CO<sup>3</sup> for the most part supports the CH type as it stands, save at the end, where the latter's reference to rise in the *cursum ordinum* differs also from what appears in *Test. Dom.* and Eth. (Lat. ?). This suggests that the references to promotion are all secondary, as compared with the simpler form in CH, where no liturgical ministry at all is dwelt on.

(4) These divergences point to the whole discussion of the deacon's duties, and the *caveats* touching the exact nature of his orders, as being secondary. Thus all between the opening words, prescribing his election on the lines already indicated in the case of bishop and presbyter, and the ordination prayer, was lacking in the Hippolytean

<sup>1</sup> *Apost. Const.* and *Const. per Hipp.* support the line of CH's prayer thus far against the other.

<sup>2</sup> Referring apparently to the deacon's part in the offertory of the people's gifts, brought to the bishop for his support, and that of the clergy, and other sacred services. Eth. gives this another turn, tending to emphasize the bishop's part in the offering.

<sup>3</sup> *A. C.* and *Const. per Hipp.* have *καὶ καταξίωσον αὐτὸν εὐαρέστως λειτουργήσαντα τὴν ἐγχειρισθεῖσαν αὐτῷ διακονίαν, . . . ἀμέμπτος, ἀνεγκλήτως, μείζονος ἁγιοσύνης βαθμοῦ, διὰ τῆς μεσιτείας τοῦ χριστοῦ σου, τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ σου.*

basis.<sup>1</sup> This would be natural from the nature of the work and the analogy of the way the two offices forming the higher order, bishop and presbyter, are there treated.

That there should be successive modifications in the ideal of the diaconate, is what we should expect from our other evidence. The change as between the Syrian *Didascalia* (c. 250-275) and its revision in the *Apost. Constitutions* (esp. iii 20) is markedly in the same direction. In the *Apostolic Church Order* or *Ecclesiastical Canons* the phenomena are even more similar to the above. For there we get a supplemental section (xxii), separated from the first and main section on Deacons by one on Widows, and assigned to another apostle. In this less important functions are assigned to the office as compared with what had before been laid down. Finally, comparison with early Western Orders, both Roman and Gallican, where the prayer of blessing ('Eucharistic' Duchesne styles such prayers of consecration, alike for deacon, presbyter, and bishop) is quite parallel in idea to that of CH in the actual supplication for the ministerial grace requisite to the office :

'Emitte in eos, Domine, quaesumus, Spiritum sanctum quo in opus ministerii fideliter exsequendi munere septiformi tuae gratiae roborentur. Abundet in eis totius forma virtutis, auctoritas modesta, pudor constans, innocentiae puritas . . . In moribus eorum praecepta tua fulgeant, ut suae castitatis exemplo imitationem sanctae plebis acquirant, et bonum conscientiae testimonium praeferentes in Christo firmi et stabiles perseverent, dignisque successibus de inferiori gradu per gratiam tuam capere potiora mereantur.'

Here, while we have the reference to future promotion which appears in CO generally, as distinct from CH, there is close parallelism with CH as to the conception of the diaconate as a ministry in which character and purity of life are the essentials. The reference to sacerdotal functions occurs only in the elaborate invocatory preface, which may well be of relatively late origin, especially when we compare it with that in the Gallican ordinal, where moreover the reference to sacerdotal ministry is but slight and may also be secondary :

'Domine sancte, spei, fidei, gratiae et profectuum munerator, qui in caelestibus et terrenis angelorum ministeriis ubique dispositis per omnia elementa voluntatis tuae defendis affectum,

hunc quoque famulum tuum, *Illum*, speciali dignare illustrare aspectu, et tuis obsequiis expeditus sanctis altaribus minister purus ad crescat et, indulgentia purior, eorum gradu quos Apostoli tui in septenario numero, beato Stephano duce et praevio, sancto Spiritu auctore elegerunt, dignus existat, et virtutibus universis quibus tibi servire oportet instructus compleat.'

<sup>1</sup> As also in *A. C.* and *Const. per Hipp.*

Here we have again, not only the same emphasis on the moral and spiritual qualities which fit for God's service, but also the reference to Stephen as the prototype of a true deacon, which may well go back to Rome in the days of Hippolytus, and so persist in the first Syrian recension of his work *περὶ χαρισμάτων*.

One may conclude, then, that Hippolytus's *περὶ χαρισμάτων ἀποστ. παράδοσις* read simply: 'When a deacon is ordained (or appointed),<sup>1</sup> let it be done according to the same rules; and they<sup>2</sup> shall say the following prayer for (or, over) him: O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>3</sup> &c.'

With this experience gained in the case of a Deacon, we can consider more briefly, but with some confidence, the case of a Presbyter.

CH.	Latin.	Test. of the Lord.
<p>And when a presbyter is ordained, let it be done in his case just as in that of the bishop, excepting the name 'bishop'. The bishop is in all respects like the presbyter, save regarding the throne and ordination; because he was given no authority to ordain.</p>	<p>Cum autem presbyter ordinatur, imponat manum super caput eius episcopus, contingentibus etiam presbyteris, et dicat secundum ea quae praedicta sunt, sicut praediximus super episcopum, orans et dicens:</p>	<p>Let a presbyter be ordained, being testified to by all the people, according as we have said before (then follow qualities requisite). Then let the appointment (<i>κατάστασις</i>) be thus [much as in Latin].</p>

Then follows a prayer which, as already shewn, is *not* the same sort of prayer as that for a bishop—which yet is cited as its type—but conforms rather to the deacon's prayer in CH, (1) as regards its simple invocation

Deus et pater domini nostri Iesu Christi;

(2) the order of what follows, viz. prayer for the Spirit in a certain characteristic form defining the essence of the office (here that of counsel, to aid and govern God's people with a pure heart); an analogy to such office and the corresponding grace for it (here that of the Elders associated with Moses, the bishop or chief Shepherd, as it were, of God's chosen people); a petition for the constant supply of grace to fulfil the appropriate ministry in a worthy manner, to the glory of God through Jesus Christ:

<sup>1</sup> *κατάστασις* is the idea in question both in CO<sup>2</sup> and in *Test. Dom.*, which uses the same word also in the case of a presbyter. This is the word used for all offices in the *Ecclesiastical Canons*.

<sup>2</sup> i. e. those acting in the matter, bishop and presbyters, as in the previous case, that of a presbyter. This is borne out by the prayer itself, 'we earnestly-beseech Thee'.

<sup>3</sup> This simple title, used in the opening of the bishop's prayer, persists throughout the deacon's prayer in CH.

All this is distinctly not on the lines of the bishop's prayer, and is Syrian rather than Roman in wording.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it is to be noted that even this relatively late prayer (not earlier than A. D. 300 or so) makes the bishop and presbyters, who together pray it over the candidate ask for a continuance of the grace of the presbyterate in themselves. This suggests that the difference between the bishop and presbyter was only one of rank and presidential function, not of order or grace; and that is just what CH states explicitly. Further, when this document, whose credit as nearest to the Hippolytean basis has so far been confirmed throughout, says not only that the same prayer was to be used for a presbyter as a bishop, but also that the whole ordination was to be similar in form, it is probable that originally 'contingentibus etiam presbyteris'—which is here specified in CO<sup>1</sup> generally (including *Test. Dom.*)—applied also to a bishop's ordination.<sup>2</sup>

When, in the light of all this, we approach the prayer for the ordination of a Bishop in this group of authorities, we may fairly do so with the presumption that CH will be nearest the original or Hippolytean form. And here at once Mr Turner's strongest point, his sense that such a prayer as CO<sup>1</sup> contains could not have been used for a presbyter, finds justification. Neither CH nor *Test. Dom.*, which have hitherto yielded our oldest forms, has any reference to the right of conferring orders (*διδόναι κλήρους κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμά σου*). CH has simply 'Give unto him, O Lord, the episcopate, and a mild spirit and authority to forgive sins', a form which quite suits its statement of the rule for the ordination of presbyters. It has no reference to 'high-priesthood', either there or above; but where CO<sup>1</sup> as a whole has *ἀρχιερατεῖν σοι ἀμέμπτως λειτουργούντα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, ἀδιαλείπτως τε ἰλάσκεσθαι τῷ προσώπῳ σου καὶ προσφέρειν σοι τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἁγίας σου ἐκκλησίας*, it has first a petition for his moral pre-eminence over all his flock, and then simply the following (which reminds one of the type of thought in the deacon's ministry in CH): 'and accept his prayers and oblations which he presents to Thee day and night, and let them be to Thee a strong savour'. The sacrifice is the personal one of the bishop's own prayers and alms; but the phrases used are such as easily to suggest another and more liturgical turn as time went on, and as these aspects

<sup>1</sup> In particular, *πνεῦμα . . . συμβουλίας τοῦ ἀντιλαμβανέσθαι καὶ κυβερνᾶν τὸν λαόν* *son* agrees closely with the language touching the presbyteral order as sharing with the bishop 'the common and like Spirit' (so Lat.; its addition of *cleri* is not supported by the Eth. and other Eastern versions), found in the section which we saw reason to believe secondary and Syrian in the prayer for a deacon—being absent alike from CH, *Test. Dom.*, and *Apost. Const.*

<sup>2</sup> There are suggestions of this in the varying and rather embarrassed language of our authorities at that point itself.



of a bishop's ministry became more emphasized. Such moral and personal emphasis as marks CH has its justification in the invocation of God as *καρδιογνώστη*, the aspect on which in all our sources He is asked to look upon His servant, the ordinand. Finally, when we turn to the Western Orders, we there find large agreement with its distinctive emphasis on personal and moral gifts, especially in the actual graces invoked for the bishop. Of course there are also much the same prerogatives as are asked in CO<sup>1</sup> generally: but there is no reference to the giving of orders as characteristic of his office, while in the actual petitions for him, as distinct from the invocatory preface, sacerdotal or liturgical functions are absent.

On the whole, then, there seems good cause to regard the original form of the Ancient Church Order, as it took shape in Syria about the middle of the third century or rather later, and so of Hippolytus's *περὶ χαρισμάτων ἀποστολική παράδοσις* on which it was based, as best represented by CH in the ordination sections for bishop and presbyter, as well as for deacon. This view would be further confirmed by a comparison of the matter in the several sources with the view of these offices found in the Syrian *Didascalia*, the document most akin to CO<sup>1</sup> in date and provenance. Finally, the genetic relations of all the Eastern documents cited in this study would, in my opinion, be found to accord with these results, though they cannot here be worked out and exhibited in their totality.

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