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ART. I.—“THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.”

The Apostolic Fathers: Revised Texts with Introductions, Notes, Dissertations, and Translations. By J. B. LIGHTFOOT, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Bishop of Durham. London: Macmillan and Co.

THE age which produced the sacred writings of the New Testament was followed by an age of which the literary products, such as have come down to us, are small and scanty. It is scarcely possible not to desire that we might have a fuller and more distinct view of sub-Apostolic Christianity. The after-ages stand before our eyes in a light comparatively clear. And we cannot fail to recognise some change in the aspects or clothing of the Christian Church since the date of the Apostolic writings. Some such changes were necessary, and some others were natural. But the interval of obscurity is one which we desire to penetrate. There are many questions we should like to ask, the answers to which are hidden in its shade, or very imperfectly seen in its mist. It is no wonder, then, that the so-called Apostolic Fathers should be scanned with something of a microscopic examination. They have, of necessity, an importance and an interest peculiarly their own. We may, indeed, very well believe that the break which followed the last writing of the Beloved Apostle was designed, in the providence of God, to mark the supremacy of value which belongs to the inspired Scriptures of the New Testament. But it is unavoidable that a special interest should attach, and a special attention be due, to the few scattered pages which form almost the only connecting link between the epistles of Apostles and the writings of Christians who followed after the lapse of generations—speaking roughly, between the Church of the first century and the Church of the third century.

The foremost place among these writings is occupied by the Epistles of St. Ignatius. And we have no hesitation in expressing our opinion that the scholarly edition of Bishop

Lightfoot will be found to mark an epoch in the literature which belongs to these Epistles. If we may venture without presumption to say so, some questions concerning them we believe it has settled; and of others it will be found to have helped towards the solution. The Bishop's work strikes us as eminently characterized by thoroughness. There is an absence of anything like a parade of learning. But everywhere the student will recognise that he is being led on by one who is not only master of his subject, and of all that pertains to it, but has brought to its consideration habits of well-disciplined thought and judicial investigation. These are qualifications which we need hardly say tend to make an edition of the "Patres Apostolici," at the present time, eminently valuable. Matters here discussed will doubtless, some of them, yet remain matters of controversy; and conclusions arrived at, or opinions expressed, may probably yet have to pass through an ordeal of searching and sometimes unfavourable criticism. But even so, the positions maintained will always be found to be entrenched by argument not easily to be overthrown; and the strongest opponents must be sensible of the force which they have here to withstand.

It is no small matter if the Bishop has established the genuineness of the *middle*, as distinguished from the *shorter* and the *longer*, forms which have claimed to be the Epistles of the Martyr. Most persons, we think, will agree that in this matter little room now remains for question. The shorter form appears to have been merely an abridgment.¹ The longer form exhibits almost certainly an interpolation, bearing much the same relation to the genuine Ignatius as that which the so-called Apostolic constitutions bear to the "Teaching of the Apostles." The interpolations in both are the work,² possibly (as Professor Harnack supposes), of the same hand—a hand not altogether above suspicion of heretical tendencies.³

But if the genuineness of this middle form of the Epistles must be allowed, their most important bearing on some questions pertaining to the Christian ministry cannot be questioned.

¹ Bishop Lightfoot says: "One who maintains that the seven Epistles of the middle form were produced by interpolation from the Curetonian letters, postulates in his pseudo-Ignatius a prodigy of minute observation, of subtle insight, of imitative skill, of laborious care, which is probably without a parallel in the history of literary forgeries, and which assuredly was an utter impossibility among the Christians in the second and third centuries" (vol. i., p. 301).

² Bishop Lightfoot, putting down the interpolations of Ignatius to the latter half of the fourth century (vol. i., p. 260), regards the constitutions as of earlier date (p. 253).

³ See Lightfoot, vol. i., pp. 254-260; and Ffoulkes's "Primitive Consecration," pp. 183, 196.

Since the publication of Dr. Lightfoot's edition of the "Epistle to the Philippians," this is a subject which has engaged increasing attention. The very able and learned excursus "on the Christian Ministry" which appeared in that edition could not fail to attract observation. By some it was thought to have surrendered too much in the matter of the claims of Episcopacy. By others, if we mistake not, it was supposed to have yielded more than it was ever intended to concede. To ourselves it always seemed that some expressions in the early part of the essay, seeming to present the true ideal of the Christian Church as that of a society without a ministry, were, if not misleading, capable of being understood in a misleading sense. And though they were accompanied with words of caution against misunderstanding, we were never fully satisfied that they were quite sufficiently safeguarded. Since then, considerable learning has been expended on theories concerning the origin of the Christian ministry, with scarcely commensurate results.

Arguments adduced to show that bishops were the reproduction of heathen officials in the Christian Church, and that their office was one pertaining specially to the secular concerns of the community, have now been followed by a special pleading for the position that (apart from the ministry of supernatural gifts) presbyters were the only order of ancient Christian ministers, and that of these presbyters some were bishops, while remaining simple presbyters,¹ and some were deacons while abiding presbyters still.² Of this last notion it is perhaps needless to say that it comes from a Presbyterian pen. The coincidence, no doubt, may evoke a smile. But Christian men, of every school of thought, should be slow to deal severely with the influences of prejudice in matters such as this. Probably few of us dwell in houses which will warrant our throwing heavy stones. Suffice it to say, that the Epistle of Ignatius, if genuine, must be acknowledged to have something conclusive to say on this question. On the

¹ It is quite true that bishops never cease to be presbyters. They were ever recognised as such by the early Church.—See *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1887, pp. 140, 141.

² It is needless to point out how utterly at variance is such a theory with the language of Ignatius. Take, e.g., the following as a sample: *Καθημένου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου εἰς τύπον Θεοῦ, καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων εἰς τύπον συνεδρίου τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῶν διακόνων τῶν ἡμῶν γλυκυτάτων, πεπιστευμένων διακονίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (*Magnes. vi.*). Professor Harnack, who is opposed to the "Episcopal theory," some of whose conclusions appear to us too conjectural, conceives that he has shown in his interesting chronological review that "the assumption is wrong that the ecclesiastical constitution has been developed out of an original presbyterial constitution" (*Expositor*, May, 1887, p. 337). See his note, p. 338.

origin of Episcopacy they give us little information. Though they certainly claim a Divine authority for the Episcopate, they cannot be said to assert distinctly the Divine appointment of Episcopacy.¹ But they unquestionably set before us, in the early part of the second century, an Episcopacy already established and received; and that an Episcopacy which is assuredly not after the model of a municipal *προεδρία*, nor of a club finance-committee—an episcopate which is certainly not Presbyterian, nor yet an Episcopacy for the regulating of diaconal or performing of archidiaconal functions.

The late very learned Dean Goode, whose theological works

¹ There is a passage, however, in *Eph.* vi. which looks very much as if Ignatius recognised such an appointment: Πάντα γὰρ ὃν πέμπει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἰς ἰδίαν οἰκονομίαν, οὕτως δεῖ ἡμᾶς αὐτὸν δέχεσθαι, ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν πέμψαντα· τὸν οὖν ἐπίσκοπον δηλονότι ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν Κύριον δεῖ προσβλέπειν. Bishop Lightfoot compares John xiii. 20 and Matt. x. 40. It is hardly a natural interpretation of the words of Ignatius to suppose that the mission of the bishop is only that of the ministry in general.

Compare *Philad.* i. : "Ὁν ἐπίσκοπον ἔργων ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδ' ἐδὲ ἀνθρώπων κεκτῆσθαι τὴν διακονίαν τὴν εἰς τὸ κοινὸν ἀνήκουσαν, οὐδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγάπῃ Θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Where what Bishop Lightfoot calls the "obvious reflexion" of Gal. i. 1 is what gives special force to the language used. Compare also *Philad.* vii. : Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐκήρυσσεν, λέγοντάδε· Χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν ποιεῖτε. Where Bishop Lightfoot rightly observes : "Ignatius is plainly speaking throughout this passage of a spiritual revelation to himself."

Very noteworthy is the saying in *Ephes.* iii. : Καὶ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὸ ἀδιάκριτον ἡμῶν ζῆν, τοῦ πατρὸς ἡ γνώμη, ὡς καὶ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι οἱ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα ὀρισθέντες ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ γνώμη εἰσίν. Making all allowance for an exaggerated expression, it seems destructive of the theory of Episcopacy being a local institution peculiar to parts adjacent to Proconsular Asia in the time of Ignatius. Cf. *Ps.* lxxv. 9 : οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὰ πέρατα. But it must not be understood as affirming the Divine institution of Episcopacy. Lightfoot writes : "Zahn rightly objects to Pearson's interpretation, 'Episcopatum fuisse ab Apostolis ex voluntate Christi institutum,' adopted also by Rothe and Uhlhorn. Ignatius is speaking here, not of Episcopacy as instituted by Christ, but of the bishops themselves as sharing the mind of Christ."

In *Trall.* iii. we have a distinct assertion, after mention of the three orders of the ministry, *χωρὶς τούτων ἐκκλησία οὐ καλεῖται*, which makes it very difficult indeed for us to believe that there was at this date no Bishop of Rome. Yet it is remarkable that the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans is the only one in which no mention is made of the bishop. And this may show how precarious is the argument, from the absence of any mention of a bishop in the Epistle of Clemens (or rather of the Roman Church) to the Corinthians.—See Lightfoot on *Phil.*, pp. 214-216. It may doubtless be urged that there were circumstances in this case calling for the mention of the bishop, if there were one. But it is also quite conceivable that there may have been special reasons for not mentioning him.

have been strangely overlooked, in his desire to show the sufficiency and completeness of Holy Scripture, has endeavoured to prove the threefold order of the sacred ministry from the writings only of the New Testament.¹ Modern criticism may cast doubts on some points which the Dean has insisted on, but none who have studied his argument as a whole will ever think to make light of it. It can only be at all effectually assailed from the standpoint of those who adopt what may be called the "Special Commissioner" theory—a theory, by the way, unknown, we believe, in the early ages of the Christian Church.²

But if, further, we take into view the facts made known to us in the Epistles of St. Ignatius and the writings of Irenæus, then, whatever interesting questions may remain questions still, there can be, or there ought to be, no question at all about the truth of the statement which the English Reformers have set in the Preface to our Ordinal³: "It is evident, unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture, and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."⁴

We are not sure whether it would be right to say (as some, we believe, have said) that Bishop Lightfoot has in any particular modified the views which he expressed in his edition of the Epistle to the Philippians. He had there taken full cognizance of the evidence afforded by the Epistles of St. Ignatius, and we have failed to discover any sufficient evidence of change.

But we certainly think it possible that some of those who

¹ "Rule of Faith," vol. ii., p. 236 *seq.* Dean Goode in this is but following in the steps of our great divines, and maintaining that which has been freely admitted by many of the best divines of the foreign Reformed Churches. See p. 242.

² On this subject see Bishop Charles Wordsworth's "Remarks on Bishop Lightfoot's Essay" (Parker), pp. 38, 39.

³ The three orders are mentioned together by Ignatius twelve times. In *Magnes.* 2 and again 6 and 13; *Trall.* 2, 3, 7; *Philad.* Pref., 4, 7; *Smyrn.* 8, 12; *Polyc.* 6. He regards a church without its bishop as deprived of its pastor: *Μνημονεύετε ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ ὑμῶν τῆς ἐν Συρίῳ ἐκκλησίας, ἥτις ἀντὶ ἐμοῦ ποιμεῖν τῷ Θεῷ χῆται μόνος αὐτῆν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐπισκοπῆσαι καὶ ἡ ὑμῶν ἀγάπη.*—*Rom.* ix.

⁴ "To the Apostles in the beginning, and to the bishops always since, we find plainly both in Scripture and in all ecclesiastical records, other ministers of the Word and Sacraments have been subordinate. Moreover, it cannot enter into any man's conceit to think it lawful that every man that listeth should take upon him charge in the church; and therefore a solemn admittance is of such necessity that without it there can be no Church polity."—Hooker, "Eccles. Pol.," book iii., ch. xi., § 20, vol. i., pp. 413, 414, edit. Keble.

made much of the Bishop's earlier argument, may find themselves somewhat disturbed at the position which he occupies in his more recent work. It has already been assailed by the learning of Professor Harnack. But we fail to see that the Bishop has stated more than is sufficiently warranted by the text of his author. Thus he writes :

The name of Ignatius is inseparably connected with the championship of *Episcopacy*. "Everyone," he writes, "whom the Master of the house sendeth to govern His own household we ought to receive as Him that sent him : clearly, therefore, we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself" (*Ephes.* 6). Those "live a life after Christ" who "obey the bishop as Jesus Christ" (*Trall.* 2). "It is good to know God and the bishop. He that honoureth the bishop is honoured of God ; he that doeth anything without the knowledge of the bishop serveth the devil" (*Smyrn.* 9). He that obeys his bishop obeys "not him, but the Father of Jesus Christ, the Bishop of all ;" while, on the other hand, he that practiseth hypocrisy towards his bishop, "not only deceiveth the visible one, but cheateth the Invisible" (*Magn.* 3). "Vindicate thine office," he writes to Polycarp, "in things temporal as well as spiritual" (*Polyc.* 3). "Let nothing be done without thy consent, and do thou nothing without the consent of God" (*Polyc.* 4). Then turning from Polycarp to the Smyrnæans, he charges them, "Give heed to your bishop, that God also may give heed to you" (*Polyc.* 6). Writing again to these same Smyrnæans, he enjoins, "Do ye all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father" (*Smyrn.* 8). "As many as are of God and of Jesus Christ," he writes to another church, "are with the bishop" (*Philad.* 3). The members of a third church again are bidden to be "inseparate from [God] Jesus Christ, and the bishop, and the ordinances of the Apostles" (*Trall.* 7). The Ephesians again are commended, because they are so united with their bishop, "as the church with Jesus Christ and as Jesus Christ with the Father." "If," he adds, "the prayer of one or two hath so much power, how much more the prayer of the bishop and of all the church" (*Ephes.* 5). "Wherever the bishop may appear, there let the people ($\pi\lambda\eta\tilde{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$) be, just as where Jesus Christ may be, there is the universal Church" (*Smyrn.* 8). Consequently, "Let no man do anything pertaining to the church without the bishop" (*ib.*, comp. *Magn.* 4, *Philad.* 7). "It is not lawful either to baptize or to hold a love-feast without the bishop ; but whatsoever he may approve, this also is well pleasing to God, that everything which is done may be safe and valid" (*Smyrn.* 8). Those who decide on a life of virginity must disclose their intention to the bishop only ; and those who purpose marrying must obtain his consent to their union, that "their marriage may be according to the Lord, and not according to concupiscence" (*Polyc.* 5). In giving such commands he is not speaking from human suggestion, but "the Spirit preached saying, Do nothing without the bishop" (*Philad.* 7). The prominence and authority of the office are sufficiently clear from these passages. Its extension may be inferred from others. He plainly regards himself as Bishop of Antioch, for he describes himself as "the Bishop belonging to Syria" ($\tau\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\kappa\omicron\pi\omicron\nu\ \Sigma\upsilon\rho\iota\alpha\varsigma$, *Rom.* 2) ; and he speaks of the Antiochene Church, when deprived of his presence, as having no other pastor but God, no other bishop but Jesus Christ (*Rom.* 9). He mentions by name the Bishops of Ephesus (*Ephes.* 1), of Magnesia (*Magn.* 2), and of Tralles (*Trall.* 1) ; and he refers anonymously to the Bishop of Philadelphia (*Philad.* inscr. 1). Not only in the letters addressed to the Smyrnæans (§§ 8, 12) and to himself, but elsewhere also (*Magn.* 15) Polycarp is spoken of as bishop. Writing to the

Philadelphians likewise, he says that the churches nearest to Antioch have sent thither bishops to congratulate the Antiochenes on the restoration of peace. It is plain, therefore, that in those parts of Syria and Asia Minor, at all events, with which Ignatius is brought in contact, the Episcopate, properly so called, is an established and recognised institution. In one passage, moreover, he seems to claim for it a much wider diffusion: "The bishops established in the farthest parts (οἱ ἐπίσκοποι οἱ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα ὑρισθέντες) are in the counsels of Jesus Christ" (*Ephes.* 3).

In all such language, however, there is no real difficulty. The strange audacity of writers like Daillé, who placed the establishment of Episcopacy as late as the beginning of the third century, need not detain us, for no critic of the Ignatian Epistles, however adverse, would venture now to take up this extreme position. The whole subject has been investigated by me in an essay on "The Christian Ministry," and to this I venture to refer my readers for fuller information. It is there shown, if I mistake not, that though the New Testament itself contains as yet no direct and indisputable notices of a localized Episcopate in the Gentile Churches as distinguished from the moveable Episcopate exercised by Timothy in Ephesus and by Titus in Crete, yet there is satisfactory evidence of its development in the later years of the Apostolic age; that this development was not simultaneous and equal in all parts of Christendom, that it is more especially connected with the name of St. John; and that in the early years of the second century the Episcopate was widely spread and had taken firm root, more especially in Asia Minor and in Syria. If the evidence on which its extension in the regions east of the Ægean at this epoch rests be resisted, I am at a loss to understand what single fact relating to the history of the Christian Church during the first half of the second century can be regarded as established, for the testimony in favour of this spread of the Episcopate is more abundant and more varied than for any other institution or event during this period so far as I recollect. Referring to the essay before mentioned for details, I will content myself here with dwelling on some main points of the evidence:

Irenæus was a scholar of Polycarp, and Polycarp was a scholar of St. John. Irenæus remembered well the discourses of his own master, as Polycarp did those of the Apostle. Both these Fathers delighted to recall such reminiscences of their respective teachers. Irenæus was probably the most learned Christian of his time. He certainly had an acquaintance with heathen as well as with sacred literature. He had travelled far and wide. He was born and schooled in Asia Minor; he resided some time during middle life in Rome; he spent his later years in Gaul. He was in constant communication with foreign churches on various subjects of ecclesiastical and theological interest. The intercourse between Gaul and Asia Minor more especially was close and constant. An appreciation of the position of the man is a first requisite to the estimate of his evidence. Historic insight is the realization of the relations of persons and events.

The view of Irenæus respecting the subject before us is unmistakable. The Episcopate, as distinct from the Presbyterate, is the only Episcopate which comes within the range, not only of his personal acquaintance, but even of his intellectual and historical cognizance. This is so far the case that he entirely overlooks the identity of the terms "bishop" and "presbyter" in the New Testament, which later Fathers discerned. This appears from his mode of handling the interview with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, who are called "presbyters" in one place and "bishops" in another (*Acts* xx. 17: *πέμψας εἰς Ἔφεσον μετεκαλέσατο τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας*; verse 28, *τῷ ποιμνίῳ ἐν ᾧ ὑμεῖς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετό ἱπισκόπους*). Ignorant of the New Testament usage, he regards St. Paul as "summoning the bishops and presbyters who were from Ephesus and

the other neighbouring cities" (*Haer.* iii. 14, 2: "Convocatis episcopis et presbyteris qui erant ab Epheso et a reliquis proximis civitatibus"). To this Father, accordingly, it is an undisputed fact that the bishops of his own age traced their succession back in an unbroken line to men appointed to the Episcopate by the Apostles themselves. To this succession of bishops he appeals again and again as the depositaries of the Apostolic tradition against the Gnostic and other false teachers. "We can enumerate those," he writes, "who were appointed bishops by the Apostles themselves in the several churches, and their successors even to our own day, who neither taught nor recognised any such madness as these men maintain." Since it would be a tedious business, he continues, to enumerate the successions of all the churches, he singles out the Church of Rome founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul. Accordingly he gives the sequence of the Roman bishops from the Apostolic age to Eleutherus, who occupied the See when he wrote. From Rome he turns to Smyrna, and singles out Polycarp, who had "not only been instructed by Apostles and conversed with many that had seen Christ, but had also been appointed by Apostles in Asia as bishop in the Church of Smyrna" (*ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὸ ἀποστόλων κατασταθεὶς εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐν τῇ ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐπίσκοπος*), "whom," he adds, "we ourselves have seen in our early years" (*ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμῶν ἡλικίᾳ*). To this Apostolic tradition "all the churches in Asia bear witness, and [especially] the successors of Polycarp, to the present day" (*καὶ οἱ μέχρι νῦν διαδεγμένοι τὸν Πολύκαρπον*). So also the Church of Ephesus, where John survived to the time of Trajan, is a trustworthy witness of the Apostolic tradition (*Haer.* iii. 3, 1 *sq.*). Later on again he writes, "We ought to listen to those elders in the Church who have their succession from the Apostles, as we have shown, who, together with the succession of the Episcopate, have received the sure gift of the truth according to the good pleasure of the Father" (iv. 26, 2). In a third passage also, speaking of the heretical teachers, he writes, "All these are much later (*valde posteriores*) than the bishops to whom the Apostles committed the Churches, and this we have shown with all diligence in our third book" (v. 20, 1). After every reasonable allowance made for the possibility of mistakes in details, such language from a man standing in the position of Irenæus, with respect to the previous and contemporary history of the Church, leaves no room for doubt as to the early and general diffusion of Episcopacy in the regions with which he was acquainted.—(Vol. i., pp. 375-9.)

The importance of this passage must be our apology for so long a quotation.

We can scarcely understand how it is possible to escape the evidence of the early existence of a real Episcopacy. And with the evidence which we have of the Episcopate in Asia Minor in the early years of the second century, "more especially connected with the name of St. John," we venture, with submission and diffidence, to think (in spite of what the Bishop has written, *Phil.*, pp. 197-8), that it is most natural to suppose (with Archbishop Trench and Bishop Wordsworth) that bishops are meant by the angels of the churches addressed in the Seven Epistles from the ascended Saviour¹—an explana-

¹ If, with Bishop Wordsworth, we reckon the date of the Apocalypse at about 96 A.D. (Introduction to *Rev.*, p. 152), it will be only about fourteen years before the probable date of the Ignatian Epistles. "The

tion which (as Bishop Lightfoot himself truly states) is "as old as the earliest commentators."

At the same time it is to be carefully noted that there is not to be found in the Apostolic Fathers the slightest trace of a sacerdotal¹ character assigned to the Episcopate. And this is true also of the Ignatian interpolator. Bishop Lightfoot says:

There is not throughout these letters the slightest tinge of sacerdotal language in reference to the Christian ministry. The only passage in which a priest or high-priest is mentioned at all is *Philad.* 9: "The priests likewise are good, but the High-priest is better, even He to Whom is entrusted the holy of holies, Who alone hath been entrusted with the hidden things of God, being Himself the door of the Father," etc. Here a careless exegesis has referred the priests to the Christian ministry; but the whole context resists this reference. The writer is contrasting the old dispensation with the new. He allows the worth of the former, but he claims a superiority for the latter (*ἱξαιρέτων δὲ τι ἔχει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον . . . τὸ δὲ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπάρτισμά ἐστιν ἀφθαρσίας*). Plainly, therefore, by the "priests" here is meant the Levitical priesthood, the mediators of the Old Covenant; while the High-priest is Christ, the Mediator of the New. Nor, again, is there any approach even to the language of Irenæus, who, regarding the Episcopate as the depositary of the doctrinal tradition of the Apostles, lays stress on the Apostolical succession as a security for its faithful transmission. In these Ignatian Epistles the Episcopate,

authority of St. Irenæus," says Wordsworth, "who was probably an Asiatic by birth, and who had conversed with St. Polycarp, the scholar of St. John, seems almost sufficient of itself to determine this question of date. It is also confirmed by other evidences."

On the subject of the "angels" of the churches, see Goode, "Rule of Faith," vol. ii., p. 243. Goode says: "In this portion of Scripture, then, we have a distinct recognition on the part of our Lord Himself of the office which we call the *Episcopal* office; and beyond the mere recognition of such presidents of the churches by the Epistles being addressed to them, we must observe that they are described as *stars* in His right hand" (p. 244).

¹ 'Οι ἱερεῖς in *Philad.* 9 have indeed been understood as Christian ministers. But Bishop Lightfoot rightly observes: "The contrast here is between the Levitical priesthood and the great High-priest of the Gospel, *i.e.*, between the old and the new dispensations." The interpolator has led the way to a misinterpretation. But, rightly understood, the passage furnishes a valid argument against anything of a sacerdotal character being attributed to the ministry of the Gospel.

The word *θυσιαστήριον* is used five times by Ignatius, but never to signify the Lord's Table. In *Ephes.* 5, ἐν τῷ τῷ *θυσιαστηρίῳ* is within "the enclosure in which the altar stands;" *i.e.*, metaphorically, "the Church of Christ, the *θυσιαστήριον* ἔμψυχον, as St. Chrysostom terms it." In the other places also (*Philad.* 4, *Trall.* 7, *Magn.* 6, *Rom.* 2) the word is used metaphorically. See Lightfoot's note, vol. ii., § 1, pp. 43, 44.

On the expression in Clemens Romanus, ch. xlv. *προσευχόμεντας τὰ δῶρα* (cf. Heb. viii. 3), see Lightfoot's note. We incline to think that by the *δῶρα* should be understood primarily the contributions to the Sacred Supper, before the separation of the Eucharist from the *agape*.

On the general subject, see Lightfoot on *Philipp.*, pp. 247-253.

or, rather, the threefold ministry, is the centre of order, the guarantee of unity in the Church. "Have a care for union" is the writer's charge to Polycarp (*Polyc.* 1), and this idea runs throughout the notices (*Ephes.* 2-5, 20; *Magn.* 6, 13; *Trall.* 7; *Philad.* inscr. 3, 4, 7, 8; *Smyrn.* 8, 9). Heresies are rife; schisms are imminent. To avert these dangers loyalty to Church rulers is necessary. There is no indication that he is upholding the Episcopal against any other form of Church government; as, for instance, the Presbyteral. The alternative which he contemplates is lawless isolation and self-will. No definite theory is propounded as to the principle on which the Episcopate claims allegiance. It is as the recognised authority of the churches which the writer addresses that he maintains it. Almost simultaneously with Ignatius, Polycarp addresses the Philippian Church, which appears not yet to have had a bishop, requiring its submission "to the presbyters and deacons" (*Philad.* 5). If Ignatius had been writing to this church he would doubtless have done the same. As it is, he is dealing with communities where Episcopacy had been already matured, and therefore he demands obedience to their bishops.—(Vol. i., pp. 381, 382).

And again, we need to be cautioned against supposing that the Episcopate spoken of by St. Ignatius is to be understood as connoting all the ideas which belong to the Episcopacy of a later date.

It is worthy of notice [writes Bishop Lightfoot] that, though the form of government in these Asiatic churches is in some sense monarchical, yet it is very far from being autocratic. We have seen already that in one passage the writer in the term "the council of the bishop" (*Philad.* 8) includes the bishop himself as well as his presbyters. This expression tells its own tale. Elsewhere submission is required to the presbyters as well as to the bishop (*Ephes.* 2, 20; *Magn.* 2, 7; *Trall.* 13); nay, sometimes the writer enjoins obedience to the deacons as well as to the bishop and presbyters (*Polyc.* 6; comp. *Magn.* 6, *Trall.* 3, *Philad.* 7, *Smyrn.* 8). The "presbytery" is a "worthy spiritual coronal" (ἄξιόπλοκου πνευματικοῦ στεφάνου) round the bishop (*Magn.* 13). It is the duty of everyone, but especially of the presbyters, "to refresh the bishop unto the honour of the Father, [and] of Jesus Christ, and of the Apostles" (*Trall.* 12). They stand in the same relation to him "as the chords to the lyre" (*Ephes.* 4). If obedience is due to the bishop as to the grace of God, it is due to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ (*Magn.* 2). If the bishop occupies the place of God or of Jesus Christ, the presbyters are as the Apostles, as the council of God (*Magn.* 6; *Trall.* 2, 3; *Smyrn.* 8). This last comparison alone would show how widely the idea of the Episcopate differed from the later conception, when it had been formulated in the doctrine of the Apostolical succession. The presbyters, not the bishops, are here the representatives of the Apostles.—(Vol. i., pp. 382, 383.)

It would appear, too, that there was nothing strictly diocesan in connection with the Episcopate of this date. "Of a diocese, properly so called" (says Bishop Lightfoot), "there is no trace. It is quite a mistake to suppose that Ignatius is called 'Bishop of Syria'¹ in Rom. iv. (see the note 4, p. 201). Episcopacy

¹ Bunsen argued from this expression as an anachronism. "But," says Bishop Lightfoot, "the anachronism would be as great in the third or fourth century as in the second" (vol. ii., § 1, p. 201).

has not passed beyond its primitive stage. The bishop and presbyters are the ministers of a city, not of a diocese" (vol. i., p. 383).

There is nothing whatever in the language of Ignatius to support the suggestion that his insistence on what is due to the bishop may be accounted for by his consciousness of the novelty of the bishop's position and his desire to shield the new office—possibly his own child—from the opposition of those who preferred old ways to new. There is not the slightest indication of any opposition to the Episcopal office as such.¹ There is not a word to support the idea of its being regarded as a novelty at all.

Those who attach a very high value to the so-called "Teaching of the Apostles" will be disappointed to find nothing in the Epistles of Ignatius to tell of any class of ministers like "peripatetic prophets."² If the "Teaching" must be held to represent truly an earlier state of things in the Christian Church, it would seem probable that at the date of the martyrdom of Ignatius, a change, not inconsiderable, had come over the assemblies of the saints. But of this we have not sufficient data to warrant our speaking with any confidence.

We are far from desiring to treat lightly the interesting questions which are now being brought so prominently before our notice. We are thankful for any additional light which can be thrown on questions which still remain to be solved. But it not uncommonly happens that when very interesting subjects such as these are being discussed, more is thought to be in question than ought really to be questioned at all. And what we are now concerned to insist upon is this, that, if only the Epistles of Ignatius as printed by Bishop Lightfoot are genuine,³ no solution of the problems proposed can possibly alter the fact that Episcopacy must have had fast hold of the Christian Church in the period closely or im-

¹ There appear to have been some who had the name of bishop constantly on their lips, but were very regardless of him in their practice (*Magnes.* 4). Bishop Lightfoot, in his note, aptly quotes from the late Bishop of London's Charge, 1866 (p. 12): "Is it too much to hope that some at least of those who . . . profess an almost inordinate respect for the bishop's office in the abstract, will listen to that practical exercise of its functions which warns them of the danger of the course on which they have entered?"

² For the prophets spoken of in *Philad.* 5 seem almost certainly to be the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. Bishop Lightfoot compares Justin M. Apol., i. 67: τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκεται.

³ Episcopacy appears even in the three Syriac letters.

mediately following the Apostolic Age,¹ and this most conspicuously in the parts especially connected with the closing years of the last of the Apostles.

Yet, let it not be supposed that the maintenance of this position requires us to treat as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel all Christian Churches which are not under Episcopal regimen. We could heartily wish that an un-biassed examination of the arguments in favour of Episcopacy might lead many non-Episcopalians Christians to reconsider their position. Is it too much to hope that at some future time a modified Episcopate—an Episcopate less after the mediæval and more after the primitive type—an Episcopate with more of Episcopacy and less of prelacy—an Episcopate thoroughly true to the principles of the Reformation—may yet be a centre of union for those who are now so sensible of disunion?

But meanwhile we feel assured, that even if it could be clearly shown that Episcopacy was distinctly and directly a Divine appointment, great allowances should be made for those who have had to choose, or have been persuaded that they had to choose, between Episcopacy (with sinful terms of

¹ The date most commonly assigned to the martyrdom of Ignatius is A.D. 107. Bishop Lightfoot (vol. i., p. 30) says: "His martyrdom may with a high degree of probability be placed within a few years of A.D. 110, before or after." Macpherson (*Expositor*, April, 1887, p. 299) thinks there is no sufficient evidence of an earlier date for the Ignatian Epistles than A.D. 130. And Harnack would allow it latitude even as far as A.D. 138. But the fact that the Agape had apparently not been separated from the Eucharist when Ignatius wrote would of itself be strong evidence of an earlier date, even if the arguments of Bishop Lightfoot in his elaborate note (vol. ii. § 1, pp. 433-470) were less forcible than they are. He concludes by saying of the earlier date: "If it comes to us on the authority of Africanus, it is highly valuable, because Africanus lived in a neighbouring country, and must have been born within a single lifetime of the alleged date. However this may be, we have the indisputable testimony of a contemporary of Africanus to the same effect. Origen (Hom. in Luc. c. 1, op. iii., p. 938 A) speaks of 'Ignatius, who was second Bishop of Antioch after the blessed Peter, and during the persecution fought with wild beasts in Rome.' From this statement the date of the martyrdom may be inferred approximately. Origen, it should be observed, had himself resided at Antioch before this (Euseb. H. E., vi. 21; about A.D. 226, see Clinton, *Fast. Rom.*, i., pp. 239, 241). If, in addition to these facts, we bear in mind that common tradition assigned the martyrdom to the reign of Trajan, we shall be doing no injustice to the evidence by setting the probable limits between A.D. 100-118, without attempting to fix the year more precisely" (p. 470).

Some additional evidence against the later date may be seen in the *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1887, p. 125.

communion) and the truth of the Gospel. We may not, indeed, make light of any Divine ordinance, but a sanctified common-sense which distinguishes between God's ordinance of mercy and God's ordinance of sacrifice will never fear rebuke from Him Who said, "If ye had known what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." We feel sure it was wisely done, and we have no doubt that it was designedly done, done out of a spirit of Christian charity, that the Articles of the Church of England have not been made to say a word about Episcopacy in their definition of a Church or their teaching concerning ministering in the Congregation.¹ And ably and well as our theologians have upheld the Episcopacy of the Church of England, it will be found, we believe, that our great Reformed Divines, before the Restoration (with very few, if any exceptions), never maintained that Episcopacy was absolutely of the essence of a Church. There is a broad line of distinction to be drawn between a desire strictly to adhere to, and faithfully to maintain, an order which we may believe to have arisen under Apostolic authority guided by the Holy Spirit, and a readiness to condemn those who from circumstances or from prejudice have failed to retain such a form of government. It is quite possible to uphold as a basis of our Churchmanship the historical continuity of the Christian Church, and to regard a ministerial succession² as the backbone of this historical continuity, and to recognise this

¹ Hooker says: "Although I see that certain Reformed Churches—the Scottish especially and French—have not that which best agreeth with the Sacred Scripture—I mean the government that is by bishops, inasmuch as both those Churches are fallen under a different kind of regimen; which to remedy it is for the one altogether too late, and too soon for the other during the present affliction and trouble; this their defect and imperfection I had rather lament in such case than exagitate, considering that men, oftentimes without any fault of their own, may be driven to want that kind of polity or regiment which is best, and to content themselves with that which either the irremediable error of former times or the necessity of the present hath cast upon them."—"Eccles. Pol.," book iii., ch. vi., § 16; "Works," vol. i., p. 409; edit. Keble.)

² Clemens Romanus most distinctly asserts that the Apostles themselves not only appointed a ministry in the churches, but made provision for a *succession* of approved persons to fulfil the office of the ministry [*ὁπως, ἵαν κοιμηθῶσιν, διαδέξωνται ἕτεροι δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν*, ch. xlv.]. The presbyters at Corinth, who had been ejected from their office, had some of them been appointed directly by the Apostles, and some by the persons thus immediately connected with the Apostles (see Lightfoot's *Clemens R.*, p. 137). Their office is called (p. 138) *ἐπισκοπή*. And Rothe (the able Presbyterian advocate of Epis-

succession as normally a succession of bishops, without attempting to defend the position—a position very difficult indeed to maintain—that the succession must always and everywhere be traced only through Episcopal consecration. Some, indeed, of those Anglican Divines who have been regarded as the strongest in their assertions on the subject of Episcopacy (including such men as Andrewes, Bramhall and Cosin) will be found to be very cautious indeed not to be understood as seeming to excommunicate the Reformed Churches on the Continent. It may be worth while just to refer to the case of Bishop Overall, who has sometimes been regarded as most uncompromising in maintaining the claims of Episcopacy, but of whom we have most satisfactory evidence that he was willing to admit to an English benefice one who had been ordained by the Presbytery at Leyden.¹

There are other and more important matters to which we should like to call attention. The descent of Christ into Hades; the ministry of women; the Lord's Day in relation to the Sabbath; the Eucharist in relation to the Agape—all these subjects of much interest at the present time have something bearing upon them in the Epistles of Ignatius. And upon all these Bishop Lightfoot has something to say. But we must confine ourselves now to this one observation—that, though there is not very much in the Apostolic Fathers bearing directly on what is now called the Soteriology of the New Covenant,² yet there is implied in their teaching a doctrine concerning the salvation of Christ, in which the Incarnation is clearly subordinate to the Atonement, and the Atonement is subservient to the Evangelical method of justification. On this latter point we may refer to the oft-quoted passage in the First Epistle of Clement, chapter xxxii., where he says "We, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by the faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

On the former point (the relation of the Incarnation to the

copacy) assumes on insufficient grounds that Clement here is describing the establishment of Episcopacy properly so-called. This view is not accepted by Lightfoot (see *Philipp.*, p. 203).

¹ See Birch's "Life of Tillotson," p. 185.

² Very important in its bearing on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the passage found in the newly-discovered portion of St. Clement's Epistle, which had been quoted by St. Basil ("De Spir. San.," 29): *Ὁ γὰρ ὁ Θεός, καὶ ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον* (ch. lviii.). See Lightfoot's edition, pp. 271, 284; also p. 168.

doctrine of Atonement) we refer to a passage in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians (ch. xix.), a passage not found in one of the Syriac MSS., on which we are thankful to quote from the valuable note of Bishop Lightfoot, "It is not the fact of the death, but the significance and effects of the death, to which Ignatius refers. The prince of this world instigated the death of Christ, not knowing that it was ordained to be the life of mankind. Thus the deceiver was himself deceived. . . . Indeed, the mention of the 'Death of Christ' is required by the context. Here, as elsewhere in Ignatius, the *πάθος* is the centre round which his thoughts revolve. The Incarnation has its importance mainly in the fact that it leads up to the Passion. It is only the *beginning* of the end. The whole passage opens and closes with the death of Christ" (vol. ii. § 1, pp. 77, 78). The importance of this in its bearing on some present matters of controversy is obvious.

We can but, in conclusion, express our deep sense of the value of Bishop Lightfoot's labours, and of the debt which the Church of England owes to him for his edition of the Apostolic Fathers.

AN ENGLISH PRESBYTER.



ART. II.—I JOHN i. 7.

"And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

MY purpose is not at all to discuss or expound the general context of this clause, a passage precious indeed to the Scripture student who studies that he may not only solve expository problems, but may know Christ and be found in Him. My concern in this brief essay is with the precise bearing of the words of the clause I quote. Some reference to the general context will doubtless be called for as we proceed; but it will be incidental only.

May this, as every study in the heavenly Word, be carried through as before Him with Whose Name it is concerned. Let us never suppose that the exegetical and the devotional can be safely separated, when the exegesis is of the Word of God.

The thesis, so to speak, which I seek to establish is that the words quoted have a reference, direct and single, to the Lord's atoning and propitiatory work; to "His meritorious cross and passion." I hold that they refer to the "purging of iniquity" by "sacrifice and offering" (1 Sam. iii. 14), the "cleansing" of