

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

I. RECENT THEORIES.

THE systematic investigation of the origin of the Christian Ministry, which has received a fresh impulse, and has been carried on with renewed activity in recent years, connects itself more particularly with three names: those of Bp. Lightfoot, Dr. Hatch, and Dr. A. Harnack. Each of these names seems to mark a distinct stage in the inquiry. And as a preliminary to attempting something of an estimate of the position in which the question now stands, we cannot do better than look back over the course by which it has proceeded. The present paper will contain such a retrospect; it will be followed by a second, the object of which will be more directly critical.

I. Bp. Lightfoot's views are developed in the Commentary on Philippians, partly in an additional note, *On the Synonymes, "bishop" and "presbyter"* (pp. 93-97, ed. 1), and partly in the elaborate essay *On the Christian Ministry*. The note and the essay must be taken closely together. The note supplies the scientific foundation on which the main positions of the essay are built. It is for want of seeing this, that some of the criticisms on the essay, notably that by the Bishop of St. Andrews (*Remarks on Dr. Lightfoot's Essay, etc.*: Oxford and London, 1879), are really wide of the mark. They fail to go to the root of the position, and are aimed at detached points here and there, without observing how they mutually hang together and are related to each other in logical connexion.

I do not propose to follow Dr. Lightfoot into all the side issues and subordinate sections of his subject. It will be enough if we keep to those main points which lie most in the track of controversy. If we single out four such points, three of them will consist in a marshalling of the facts; the fourth only is a matter of theory.

(1) Bp. Lightfoot starts from the position, which is no new one, but only a restatement of what had been observed by the ancient commentators on St. Paul's Epistles, that in these Epistles, and, as Dr. Lightfoot shows, in other parts of the New Testament and in the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians—the two names "bishop" and "presbyter," are given indifferently to the same persons. It will not be necessary to enlarge upon this, as it has become a commonplace, admitted equally by all schools except from the single point of view of Dr. Harnack, which will be discussed fully in the next paper. Dr. Lightfoot sets forth the biblical evidence at length, and also gives summary references to the patristic (pp. 94-97). It may not be superfluous to note that the commentators of the fourth century, Jerome, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, etc. are not guided by a tradition on the subject (for the recollection of the facts seems to have been lost by the end of the second century), but are simply drawing a critical inference, as we might do now.

(2) The next point is, that the identity of the two offices, which is so distinct in the writings of the first century, no longer exists in the Epistles of Ignatius. At the time when his Commentary on Philippians was written, Bp. Lightfoot had doubts as to the full edition of seven letters; but even the shortest form, the three letters preserved in Syriac, made it clear that Ignatius regards the bishop as standing out from among the presbyters and holding a supremacy over them.

(3) There was, however, another series of facts which

showed that the process by which this supremacy was acquired, proceeded at different rates in different Churches. This Dr. Lightfoot traces very carefully by citing a number of witnesses from different parts of the Christian world. Ignatius himself is witness for Antioch, and for the Churches of the province of Asia. He gives us the names at least of two bishops in those parts: Onesimus of Ephesus, and Polycarp of Smyrna. And the fragmentary literature of the end of the second century ascribes the title freely to others. But when we pass over to Macedonia and Greece, the traces of monarchical episcopacy are far more uncertain. The Epistles of Clement to Corinth, and of Polycarp to Philippi, refer only to presbyters and deacons: there are no allusions to the bishop, though, if there had been a bishop, such allusions could hardly have been wanting. At Corinth the rise of monarchical episcopacy falls somewhere between the letter of Clement of Rome and the letter of Dionysius, c. 170 A.D. The latter writer speaks of Quadratus as "bishop" of Athens, probably in the time of Hadrian. In regard to Rome, the data are somewhat complicated. Towards the latter part of the second century we begin to hear of lists of the "bishops of Rome." Such lists are open to suspicion, because the framers of them do not seem to have realized the difference between Apostolic times and their own, and the relations with which they were themselves familiar are antedated. When we go back to the really contemporary literature, the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians gives no indication of an episcopate in the monarchical sense. In regard to Hermas, Bp. Lightfoot speaks hesitatingly. He thinks that the allusions are too vague to lead to any definite result. If he had had the recently discovered *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles* before him, I doubt if Dr. Lightfoot would have described the word "bishop" in the enumeration, "aposles, bishops, teachers, and deacons,"

as probably used in its later sense. Elsewhere the constitution of the Church seems to be "presbyteral" (Lightfoot, p. 217, n. 1). And the frequent rebukes of those "who would fain have the first seat," who "are at emulation one with another for the first place or for some honour," seem to give a certain amount of colour to Ritschl's view, that the treatise of Hermas marks the point at which the presbyterian form of government is passing into the episcopal. In Gaul, the first bishop of whom we read is Pothinus, who died in the persecution of 177. Of Africa, before Tertullian, we know practically nothing. At Alexandria, we have the remarkable evidence adduced by Bp. Lightfoot (p. 229), that up to the middle of the third century the bishop was not only nominated by the presbyters from their own number, but also consecrated by them.

It appears then, that though in the early years of the second century the monarchical episcopate was setting in with full sail, it was not yet by any means the universal rule in Christian Churches, and the rate of progress was more rapid in some localities than in others.

(4) So far Bp. Lightfoot's essay is simply a statement of facts, which are in themselves fixed and unalterable, though it may be possible to give a greater or less amount of significance to one here or to another there. The more original portion of the essay consisted in the contribution of a theory.

The problem was how to bridge over the gap between the Pastoral Epistles (not to say Clement of Rome) and Ignatius. In the Pastoral Epistles, "bishop" and "presbyter," are still identical; in the Ignatian Epistles they are certainly distinct. How did this distinction arise? To account for it, Bp. Lightfoot had recourse to a modification of a theory of Rothe's. Rothe brought together certain notices in Eusebius, in a fragment attributed to Irenæus, and in the letter of Clement of Rome; and arguing at

once from these and from the critical position of things in the Church at large, he felt justified in concluding that, after the fall of Jerusalem, a council was held of the surviving apostles and of the first teachers of the gospel, at which a constitution was framed for the Church, the keystone of which was episcopacy.

Rothe however, as Bp. Lightfoot pointed out, pressed his evidence too far. The conclusions which he drew from it were more definite than the evidence itself would really warrant. The council, with its wide-reaching deliberations, was the figment of his imagination. The gradualness with which episcopacy was introduced showed that it could not be due to any single authoritative edict, promulgated at once over the whole Church.

But Rothe was right in the epoch to which he assigned the establishment of the episcopate—the last thirty years of the first century. He was right in the causes to which he referred it—the necessity for greater union among the different Churches, and for some more systematic and concerted action in face of growing dissension, and heresies such as Gnosticism. He was right, lastly, in attributing the change to the agency of the surviving Apostles, especially perhaps St. John. While St. John, in the Churches of Asia Minor, was the prime mover in the formation of the episcopate, the type of which had already been supplied by the presidency of St. James over the college of presbyters at Jerusalem, Ignatius was the great champion of the new order; and it was he who launched it upon that career of increasing strength and importance, which the conflicts with Gnosticism and Montanism conspired to help, and which was finally consummated by the commanding personality and organizing genius of Cyprian.

II. Such was the point at which the question was left by Bp. Lightfoot. Now the history of it as a whole is

instructive as showing how, when a thesis is in the hands of really accomplished scholars, it admits of development which does not imply disturbance of what has gone before. A rash or a slovenly writer makes his statements and his inferences in such a way that they are always needing correction; while accurate statement and circumspect inference leave room for accessions of new knowledge, which fit in and harmonize naturally with the old. Any one may see that the researches of Bp. Lightfoot and Dr. Hatch are quite unconnected with each other. The latter writer is indeed conspicuous amongst the scholars of our time for the independence and originality of his work. He goes back straight to the sources, and rears his whole structure on them. And yet there is a continuity in science which appears sometimes with, but sometimes also without, the consciousness of the individual worker.

Dr. Lightfoot made his starting-point the identity of "bishop" and "presbyter." As to the origin of these two titles, and their relation to contemporary non-Christian institutions, he speaks with great caution. The name "presbyter" indeed was clearly borrowed from the constitution of the Jewish synagogue (p. 190); and if the evidence had been sufficient which went to show that the name *ἐπίσκοπος* was given to the directors of the religious and social clubs or guilds which were so common in Gentile communities, he would have been disposed to trace the title to that source (p. 192).

This is the side from which the subject was approached by Dr. Hatch, in the Bampton Lectures for 1880. It is not that he added very much to the direct evidence for the use of the word *ἐπίσκοπος* in connexion with the Gentile associations, but he accumulated a vast amount of evidence, bearing indirectly on the nature of those associations, and drawing out the analogies which they presented to the Christian societies. He turns to us the dark

reverse of the seemingly brilliant civilization of the Roman Empire in the first two centuries. By the side of great display and lavish expenditure, on the part both of municipalities and individuals, there were financial unsoundness, oppressive public debt, grinding taxation, and great distress and suffering among the poor¹ (*Bampton Lectures*, pp. 32-35). Emperors like Trajan sought to alleviate this by founding charitable institutions; but more sustained and more effectual than the efforts of even the best of the emperors was the zealous beneficence of the Christian Church, penetrating into all the chinks and crannies of society, and working on no mechanical and wholesale methods, but with the touch of living and personal sympathy. Of all this Dr. Hatch gives a very graphic picture. We seem to see the Church, like that figure of womanly charity, which painters from Giotto downwards have been so fond of portraying, stoop with tender hand to raise the sick and afflicted, minister to the needs and sorrows of the poor, the widow, and the orphan, and hasten to provide food and shelter for the persecuted or wandering brethren.

Out of these societies, Dr. Hatch thinks, grew the use of the term *ἐπίσκοπος* as a designation of the chief officer in the Church. As it was his duty to distribute, so also was it his duty to receive, the alms and offerings of the people. We learn from Justin Martyr, that these offerings were solemnly made to the presiding officer at the eucharistic service. It was therefore natural and usual, though—as it would appear from the *Didaché*, which speaks of the service as sometimes conducted by the prophets (c. 10 *ad fin.*)—not absolutely necessary that the bishop should preside at these services. This gave him a most

¹ Is there not a slight shade of pessimism in the colouring here? I imagine that Friedländer, Schiller, and Mommsen strike the balance rather differently: see Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte Roms*, ii. p. 3 ff., iii. pp. 98-100 (especially the concluding remarks); Schiller, *Gesch. d. röm. Kaiserzeit*, i. p. 404 ff., 419 ff., 674, etc.

important footing in the central rite of Christian worship, and soon caused it to be assigned definitely to him or to his representative¹ (Ignat. *ad Smyrn.* 8, i.).

In all his functions there was a close connexion between the bishop and the deacons. The common grouping is, bishop and deacons on the one hand, presbyters on the other. The position of the deacons was not so subordinate as it afterwards became. But throughout the changes which have taken place in the functions and status of the three orders, the primitive tradition of the intimate association of bishop and deacon still survived. And it was by virtue of his place as head of the college of deacons that the "arch-deacon" became, what he is to this day, the *oculus episcopi*.

If the term *ἐπίσκοπος* was of Gentile, the term *πρεσβύτερος*, on the other hand, was of Jewish origin. In this general statement Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Hatch would be agreed; but Dr. Hatch at once traces the roots of the institution farther back, and insists upon a distinction which is apt to be overlooked. The *πρεσβύτεροι* were not, strictly speaking, officers of the synagogue, but of the *συνέδριον*, or local court, the constitution of which was parallel to that of the synagogue. This distinction is brought out with great clearness and precision: "It may be gathered from the Talmud that out of the elders or chief men of every community a certain number had come to be officially recognised, and that definite rules were laid down for their action. Side by side with the synagogue of a town, but distinct from it, was the *συνέδριον*, or local court. The former was the general assembly or 'congregation' of the people; the latter was the 'seat' of the elders. The two institutions were so far in harmony with one another that

¹ I have made use of the *Didaché* to add slightly to what Dr. Hatch has said on this subject (see esp. pp. 39 f., 116). I shall have occasion to return to it later.

the meetings of the local court were held in the synagogue, and that in the meetings of the synagogue for its own proper purposes the elders of the local courts had seats of honour,—the *πρωτοκαθεδρίας* which our Lord describes the Pharisees as coveting; and hence the word synagogue is sometimes used where the word synedrion would be more exact" (*B. L.* p. 56 f.).

The chief duty which fell to the *πρεσβύτεροι* was the exercise of discipline. The Romans allowed great liberty to the Jewish communities in this respect, of which they took full advantage. They had indeed all the privileges of self-government. The committee of presbyters formed a point of contact with the Gentile associations, which were also managed by committees. This was the case both with the municipalities and also with the clubs or guilds. And among the Gentiles, as well as among the Jews, the committee bore a name derived from the idea of seniority—*γερονσία*, and its members were called *πρεσβύτεροι*.

It has been seen that the functions of the *ἐπίσκοπος* in receiving and distributing alms, or rather in the exercise of charity in the widest sense, had a special importance, and formed a distinctive feature in the primitive Christian societies; and the same was true of the *πρεσβύτερος*. The early generations of Christians were truly an *élite*. They set themselves a standard of morality higher than that of the world around them; and it was essential to their very existence that they should live up to this standard. A vigilant watch was kept upon the members of the Church by its officers; and discipline was strictly enforced. After a time, as the Church increased in numbers, as infant baptism became more general, and many were *born* Christians instead of embracing Christianity by a deliberate act, the primitive standard was relaxed; and the question how far it was to be relaxed forms one of the great battle-grounds of the third century. At the end of the first and beginning

of the second century, discipline was administered in all its rigour. And the officers by whom it was administered naturally took a foremost place.

As to the process by which the chief power gradually became concentrated in the hands of the single *ἐπίσκοπος*, Dr. Hatch takes practically the same view as Bp. Lightfoot. First, there was the tendency which existed throughout the associations of the ancient world for the committee of management to have its president, and to take for president its principal officer, with the corresponding tendency, which is the same at all times, for the powers of the committee to gravitate towards its head. And then, specially in the case of the Christian Church, the controversies of the second century showed that it was necessary to have some one depositary of doctrine. Jerome had long ago pointed out this: "Before factions were introduced into religion by the prompting of the devil," the Churches were governed by a council of elders; "but as soon as each man began to consider those whom he had baptized to belong to himself, and not to Christ, it was decided throughout the world, that one elected from among the elders should be placed over the rest, so that the care of the Church should devolve on him, and the seeds of schism be removed"; and again: "The well-being of the Church depends upon the dignity of the bishop; for if some extraordinary power were not conceded to him by general consent, there would be as many schisms in the Churches as there were priests" (See Lightfoot, p. 204; Hatch, p. 98).

III. Dr. Hatch's Bampton Lectures at once made a marked impression both in England and on the Continent. In England they called forth some hostile criticism¹; in

¹ Notably in an able, but hasty and, it must be said, distinctly unfair, review in *The Church Quarterly*, vol. xii. p. 409 (July, 1881). It is perhaps worth while, by way of caution, to notice some of the confusions into which the reviewer has fallen. (1) The Bampton lecturer is accused of maintaining the

Germany they met with a more general current of approval. Among the most eminent of those who gave assent to their conclusions was Dr. Harnack, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Giessen (now Marburg), happily not a stranger to the readers of the EXPOSITOR.

Dr. Harnack was so much struck by the lectures that he himself undertook to translate them and present them to German scholars in a German dress. At the same time he added valuable excursuses. This translation was published at Giessen in 1883.

It may have been observed that, in the summary just given, the relation of the *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβύτερος* is not exactly defined; neither is the process quite made clear by which the *ἐπίσκοπος* came to appear as president of the Church committee. Dr. Harnack passed this criticism; and he proceeded to supply the want.

In doing so he struck at the root of the assumption made by Bp. Lightfoot, of the practical identity of "bishop" and "presbyter," and the gradual emergence of

"non-essentialness of the Church." He is quoted as appealing to certain well-known passages of Ignatius to prove that "all Christians did not regard membership of the Church as essential" (p. 414). Substitute "a Church" for "the Church," and the result will be a harmless proposition which will far more truly represent the lecturer's meaning and argument. It was inevitable that in the first beginnings of such a scattered society there should be individual Christians who were, so to speak, "unattached," or members of the Church at large without having joined themselves to any particular local community. (2) The statement that the "alms and oblations" were received by the bishop in the Eucharistic service, is interpreted as if it meant that the Eucharist *itself* "was a means of charitable relief" (p. 421). So it is to this day, in a certain sense. The real question is as to the relation of the Agape to the Eucharist; and of this the reviewer is very far from having disposed in the few sentences that he has given to it. (3) A string of passages is quoted (p. 417) as bearing upon "the functions of the Christian episcopus or presbyter" in the Pastoral Epistles, *every one of which* turns out to have reference neither to episcopus nor to presbyter, but to Timothy and Titus. This is the more strange as the question as to the "episcopal" character of these apostolic delegates had a moment before been expressly set aside. Equally irrelevant are the surrounding pages which dilate on the functions of the Apostles. Of the very mistaken conception of Montanism I shall have occasion to speak later.

the bishop from the presbyteral college. Dr. Hatch had already shown that the two offices were distinct in their origin. Dr. Harnack insists strongly upon this, and denies that at any point in their history they could rightly be identified. He observes that while bishops and deacons are constantly associated together, where these are mentioned presbyters are not mentioned, and *vice versâ*. So in Phil. i. 1, St. Paul gives greeting to the Philippian Church, "with the bishops and deacons." So again in 1 Clem. *ad Cor.* c. 42, the Apostles are represented as appointing bishops and deacons in every city. In the Shepherd of Hermas bishops and deacons on the one hand are kept distinct from presbyters on the other. In 1 Tim. iii. 1-13 there are detailed instructions about bishops and deacons, but presbyters are introduced in a different context (v. 17-19). [This is not an exhaustive enumeration of the passages from the New Testament: we will point out the omissions in the evidence when we come to speak as critics.]

Dr. Harnack accordingly contends that bishop and presbyter represent two distinct forms of organization: the bishop being concerned primarily with the administration of the offerings, therefore also with their reception, and through their reception with public worship; and the presbyter having in the first instance nothing to do with worship, but being responsible for discipline and exercising among Christians a sort of consensual jurisdiction. Dr. Hatch had already laid down this in principle, but Dr. Harnack carries it out with more uncompromising logic,¹ and attempts to trace the distinction in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic literature.

On another side Dr. Hatch's conclusions had been challenged. It was urged that he did not sufficiently

¹ There was something that looked a little like a concession to the older view in *Bamp. Lect.*, p. 38.

account for the prominent part assigned to the bishop in acts of public worship. Dr. Harnack tried to lay somewhat more stress upon this. But it was felt that there was a real gap here in the circle of proof. The materials were insufficient.

Shortly after the appearance of the Hatch-Harnack volume, by a strange piece of good fortune, the missing link seemed to be supplied.

The *Didaché*, or *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, first published by Bryennios at Constantinople towards the end of 1883, seems destined to throw a flood of light on the institutions of the primitive Christianity, and on none more than on the ministry.¹ The first thing that strikes the reader of it will be the prominence that is given to two offices not otherwise largely represented in early literature, those of the apostle (not in the sense in which that term was limited to the Twelve, but as applied to a larger body) and the prophet, while bishop and presbyter, of whom more is usually heard, retreat into the background. In this the *Didaché* links on directly to St. Paul's Epistles. In an additional note to his edition of *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Bp. Lightfoot had done for the name "apostle" what he did in his edition of *The Epistle to the Philippians* for "presbyter" and "bishop." He vindicated for it the wider sense which it already bore besides its traditional limitation to the Twelve, and he restored to their true meaning places like Rom. xvi. 7, where interpreters had been led astray by the

¹ The value of the *Didaché* as a witness to facts is a distinct question from its value as a religious treatise. It seems to me to be more easy to exaggerate the latter than the former, though in this respect too, we must, no doubt, beware of assuming that every usage which it describes was of universal application. From a religious point of view it appears to represent the average common sense of an honestly Christian but not very advanced community with Jewish antecedents or affinities. Into the very interesting investigations of Prof. Warfield and others, as to the history of the *text* of the *Didaché* and its allied documents this is not the place to enter.

usage with which they were most familiar. The name "prophet" was less equivocal. Besides repeated allusions in the Acts, the striking descriptions in 1 Cor. xii., xiv., could leave no doubt as to the part played by the prophets in the primitive Church. In two marked passages, apostles and prophets are placed at the head of the list in an enumeration of ministerial agencies: 1 Cor. xii. 28, "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing. . . . Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" And again, Eph. iv. 11: "And He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

It was clear that at the time when the *Didaché* was written these special forms of Christian activity were still in operation. The apostle and the prophet still hold the foremost place, and next to the prophet comes the teacher. Now it is remarkable that the functions which we should call "spiritual" belong in the first instance to this triad; not only, as it would appear, the preaching of the Word, but the administration of the sacraments. The sacerdotal character belongs to the prophets: "*they are your high priests*" (c. 13). It is not assumed that the prophet will always lead the Eucharistic prayer, but there is an express provision that, if he does so, he is not to be confined to any set form, but is to be allowed to give thanks as he will (c. 10 *ad fin.*). In comparison with the prophets and teachers, bishops and deacons occupy a secondary place; they are in danger of being overlooked, and enjoy a lower grade of honour. And yet they too have a share in the services of the Church, and particularly in the Eucharist. For the regulations in regard to these are immediately followed by instructions as to the appointment of bishops and deacons: "Appoint therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men that are meek and

not covetous, and truthful and approved; for they too perform for you the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore neglect them not; for they are your honoured ones together with the prophets and teachers" (c. 15).

Dr. Harnack was not slow to grasp the significance of this weighty passage. In his edition of the *Didaché* he works it out with his usual boldness and penetration. There were originally two forms or classes of ministry in the Church. The apostles, prophets, and teachers belonged to the one; the bishops, deacons, and presbyters to the other. The work of teaching, exhorting, preaching the word of God, leading in public worship, fell at least primarily to the first; administration, in all its branches, fell to the second.

Corresponding to this difference of function is a difference of *status*. Apostles, prophets, and teachers received the gift which they exercised by direct supernatural endowment. They were appointed by God, not by man (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11). They were not nominated to any one locality, but wandered to and fro, as they would, in the Church at large. Words signifying "election" or "appointment" (*χειροτονεῖν*,¹ *καθιστάνω*) are not used of them. On the other hand, bishops, deacons, and presbyters are appointed to some particular Church. They belong specially to that Church. They are stationary: they

¹ *χειροτονεῖν* originally meant to "elect by show of hands," hence simply to "elect" or "appoint." In the fourth century it had come to be equivalent to *χειροθετεῖν*, and the two words are frequently confused in the MSS. The question as to the "laying on of hands" is not one into which we need enter at present, as the theories that we are discussing are not affected by it either way. The exact nature and intention of this rite is a distinct question from that as to the origin and affinities of the offices to which it was applied. Most of the passages from the New Testament that are quoted in connexion with it have reference to the bestowal of extraordinary gifts or extraordinary commissions, but that does not prevent it from being associated with the regular and more formal ministry. The subject is one of deep interest, to which I shall probably return at a later stage.

do not move about from place to place: they have not the duties of missionaries.

But though there is this clear distinction between the two classes, they are not separated from each other by any impassable barrier. In the apostolic age the condition of things is still fluid. There would frequently be cross-divisions between the different offices. There was nothing to prevent a bishop, or a presbyter, or a deacon from possessing the gift of prophecy, or teaching. The Pastoral Epistles clearly imply, both that some might possess it, and that others did not. "Let the elders (presbyters) that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching" (1 Tim. v. 17). Evidently there were some who taught as well as ruled, and others who ruled only. It is well that a bishop should be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. iii. 2), and "to exhort in sound doctrine."

Besides this, the first supernatural impulse would be gradually withdrawn. The enthusiastic age of the Church must come to an end. And it would not be possible to draw a sharp line where it ended. Ordinary gifts would, after a time, take the place of extraordinary. The *Didaché* distinctly contemplates the case that a Church would have no prophet in its midst. In that case the offerings that would have been given to him are to go to the poor (c. 13). But the absence of a prophet did not necessarily suspend all the services of the Church. In default of a prophet the bishops and deacons were to take them. That seems to be the meaning of the phrase, "for they too perform for you the service (*λειτουργίαν*) of the prophets and teachers."

Here we have the key to the whole position. It was inevitable that by degrees the standing officers of the community would attract to themselves the powers and prerogatives which the extraordinary ministry vacated. The visits of the prophet would become few and far between; and

insensibly bishop, deacons, and presbyters would step into his place. What was at first the exception would pass into the rule. The services of the Church would be conducted by the bishop and his coadjutors, not only when there was no prophet or teacher present to conduct them, but as a regular thing.

The peculiar value of the *Didaché* consists in this, that it reveals to us the process in the moment of transition. It brings down the bird, as it were, upon the wing. The sentence which I italicized a page or two back explains why the permanent officials of the Christian Churches did not possess at first all the functions which they possessed later, and how they came to acquire them. They did not possess them, because the more prosaic duties which they themselves discharged were supplemented by that extraordinary wave of spiritual exaltation which swept over the whole of the primitive Church. In that age the wish of Moses was well-nigh fulfilled, that "all the Lord's people were prophets." The difficulty was not to incite to the attainment of such gifts, but to regulate and control them. One by one they became rarer, and disappeared. The apostolate was the first to go. Prophecy lasted until it was finally discredited by Montanism. The class of teachers survived still longer into the third century; indeed, it would hardly be wrong to regard the Catechetical School of Alexandria as a systematizing of this office, with learning and philosophy substituted for the primitive enthusiasm.

I must not make Dr. Harnack responsible for the exact form in which I have stated his theory. I imagine that in accounting for the gradual transference of powers from the wandering possessors of extraordinary inspiration to the regular officers of the local Churches, I have laid a little more stress than he has done on the *stationary* and *permanent* character of the latter. Instead of this, he speaks of it as "lying in the nature of the administrative and patri-

archal office, that it should draw away from others, and draw to itself the ministry of the Word"; a *sequitur* that I am not sure that I quite understand. However this may be, the main position is certainly his. He emphasizes forcibly the fact that bishops and deacons did discharge the duties of teachers and prophets; and he rightly seizes on this as the turning-point in the development of the Christian ministry to its later forms. If, in reproducing his argument, I have slightly altered any of its proportions, it is entirely from data which Dr. Harnack has himself supplied.

I have before referred to the way in which new matter fits in with old, where the old has been carefully sifted and digested, and it is only fair to point out that many of the elements of the theory elaborated by Dr. Harnack with the help of the *Didaché*, are already to be found in the works of his predecessors. Bp. Lightfoot defines with great clearness the difference between the functions of the apostle and the bishop. "The apostle," he says, "like the prophet or the evangelist, held no *local* office. He was essentially, as his name denotes, a missionary, moving about from place to place, founding and confirming new brotherhoods" (*Philippians*, p. 194). Again, in reference to the presbyters or bishops, he says: "Though *government* was probably the first conception of the office, yet the work of *teaching* must have fallen to the presbyters from the very first, and have assumed greater prominence as time went on. *With the growth of the Church, the visits of the apostles and evangelists to any individual community must have become less and less frequent, so that the burden of instruction would be gradually transferred from these missionary preachers to the local officers of the congregation.* Hence, St. Paul in two passages, where he gives directions relating to bishops or presbyters, insists specially on the faculty of teaching as a qualification for the position. *Yet even here*

this work seems to be regarded rather as incidental to, than as inherent in the office. . . . There is no ground for supposing that the work of teaching and the work of governing pertained to separate members of the presbyteral college. As each had his special gift, so would he devote himself more or less exclusively to one or the other of these sacred functions" (*Ibid.* pp. 192, 193). Putting the *Didaché* for a moment out of sight, is it not remarkable how nearly the conclusions which it suggests are anticipated? Dr. Hatch is even more explicit in the way in which he insists on the separability of teaching from administration. "It is clear that the presbyters of the primitive Churches did not necessarily teach. They were not debarred from teaching, but if they taught as well as ruled they combined two offices. In the numerous references to presbyters in sub-apostolic literature there is not one to their being teachers, even where a reference might have been expected; as for example in the enumeration of the duty of presbyters which is given by Polycarp in the form of an exhortation to fulfil them" (*B. L.*, p. 76). Dr. Hatch adds to this, that the presbyters, as such, took no part in the Eucharistic service. "They probably had no more than the place which the Jewish presbyters had in the synagogue—seats of honour and dignity, but no official part in the service" (p. 78). The bishops, it is true, *had* such a part; they received the offerings which were distributed by the deacons. Hence there was the more reason why, in the absence of the prophet, they should take the lead throughout. It is easy to understand how both these scholars must have felt that the *Didaché* put into their hands the very clue for which they were seeking.

In the case of Dr. Harnack the *Didaché* supplied something more than a temporary stimulus. As I am writing, there comes into my hands a new part of the valuable *Texte und Untersuchungen*, edited by Dr. Harnack jointly

with O. von Gebhardt, in which so many of the problems of early Christian literature are receiving a critical examination. In this latest part (Band II. Heft 5) Dr. Harnack continues an investigation which he had begun of the composition and contents of the *Apostolic Ordinances* (*Αἱ διαταγαὶ αἱ διὰ Κλήμεντος καὶ κανόνες ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων*, sometimes called the *Apostolic Canons*, to be carefully distinguished from the *Apostolic Constitutions*). This work is analysed into its component parts, one of them consisting of a considerable portion of the *Didaché*. Two more of these parts are now subjected to a close examination. They are both dated about 140–180 A.D., and they are found to contain some important statements.

(1) The order in which the several offices are mentioned is unusual and remarkable: bishop, presbyters, *reader*, deacons. This appears to be the only instance in which the reader is placed above the deacons, in the ranks of the higher clergy; he is usually numbered among the lower orders—subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, doorkeepers.

(2) The bishop appears in the character of ποιμήν, “shepherd” of his flock; it is a necessary qualification that he must be φιλόπτωχος, “a friend of the poor,” which points to his administration of the alms; he represents the community to the outside world; and he takes the lead in the services of the Church, which begin to be described in language taken from the “mysteries.” There are some important statements as to the election of bishops, with which however we need not at present be concerned.

(3) The presbyters are two in number (the *Apostolic Ordinances* in its present form has *three*, but Dr. Harnack shows that the number in the original document must have been *two*; I quite agree with his reasoning on this point). They must be advanced in age; they form the council of the bishop, with especial charge of discipline; they also take part with him as his συμμυσταί, in the Eucharistic

service, in regard to which some interesting particulars are given.

(4) The number of the deacons has dropped out, but appears to have been originally three. They are to mix with the congregation, and must be persons of tact and temper, not regarding the rich more than the poor, with skill in inciting to secret deeds of charity, privately admonishing those who are inclined to be disorderly.

(5) The reader (*ἀναγνώστης*, *lector*) has a peculiar importance in this document. Besides the natural qualifications of a reader, he must be *διηγητικός*, "apt in exposition," for which the reason is assigned that he "does the business of an evangelist" (*εἰδὼς ὅτι εὐαγγελιστοῦ τόπον ἐργάζεται*). We are reminded at once of the passage in the *Didaché*, where bishops and deacons are described as "performing the service of the prophets and teachers." Dr. Harnack sees in this another trace of the process by which the extraordinary "gifts of the Spirit" gradually gave place to the formal appointment of regular officials. The "evangelist" had belonged to the class of "gifted" persons; and the reader had originally belonged to the same class. In further confirmation of this, Dr. Harnack adduces an ancient prayer of consecration, preserved in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (viii. 22), which invokes upon him "the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of prophecy." As the bishop, presbyters, and deacons rose in the scale, the possessors of the extraordinary gifts sank lower in it. The reader's is now being constituted into a permanent office: he may still be called upon to "preach" or "expound" (*διηγητικός*); and Dr. Harnack finds an example of a sermon delivered by a reader in what is commonly called the Second Epistle of Clement of Rome (c. 19, 1). By the third century these higher functions were lost, and the readership was reduced to the merely mechanical office of reading the lessons.

These are a few of the points in Dr. Harnack's latest

contribution to the subject, which add some finishing touches to the theory which I have been describing. I must now take leave of it for the present. In the next paper I hope to offer something in the way of criticism, and to speak more directly in my own person.

W. SANDAY.

CANON WESTCOTT.

THE Church of England has witnessed, within the last four or five years, an almost total subsidence of the vehement internal controversies which, forty, five and twenty, or even fifteen years ago, divided large portions of it into two or three bitterly hostile parties. And while this change of feeling has been felt to modify the methods of the Church's practical work—while its social, pastoral, and missionary activity has gained whatever it can gain from more united action—the change has affected the field of purely theological study too. The greatest Anglican theologian of the former generation was popularly made the eponymus of a party, and as such was denounced by many who knew nothing, and defended by many who knew hardly anything, of the real greatness of his writings, character, and influence; friends and enemies staked his reputation upon his disputed orthodoxy, not on his unquestioned learning. The greatest theologians of the present generation have a reputation and an influence based upon their learning in the first instance. Their orthodoxy has no doubt contributed to their popularity among the orthodox, but it is their intellectual eminence that has won respect for them, not their personal charm nor their advocacy of certain opinions; and it is when the strife of opinion is quieted, that the respect felt for them is most fully realized.