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A

CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL
COMMENTARY

ON THE

EPISTLES TO THE PHILIPPIANS
AND TO PHILEMON

BY

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Vincent's famous *Word Studies* have assisted many. His is a true scholar, especially compared to all the fake "scholars" and "doctors" in the church today.

Looking at this essay I was reminded of road trips where one wrong turn necessitated many more turns in order to simply return to the previous starting point.

The church today is so far from the Scriptural patterns that controversies about church government have become endless. And as he observes, most of our study is undertaken merely to validate our own opinions and systems.

Across the centuries things have become much more complicated (and expensive) than the apostles themselves could have ever imagined.

prians are partakers with him of *grace* (vs. 7. Comp. Acts v. 41). The aorist points to the original bestowment of the gift. (See Mt. v. 11; Mk. x. 38, 39.)

τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ: 'on behalf of Christ.' Τὸ belongs to πάσχειν, but the connection is broken by οὐ μόνον . . . πιστεύειν, after which τὸ is repeated. With the whole passage, comp. 2 Thess. i. 4-10.

30. ἔχοντες: 'you having,' or 'so that you have.' Characterising ὅτι ὑμῖν ἔχαρ. . . . πάσχειν by the concrete case of their share in his own conflict. The participle agrees with ὑμῖς, the logical subject of the entire clause. (Comp. similar construction in Eph. iii. 17, iv. 2; 2 Cor. i. 7; Col. ii. 2.) Not with στήκετε (vs. 27), making ἦτις . . . πάσχειν a parenthesis, which would be clumsy.

ἀγῶνα: 'conflict.' (Comp. συναθλοῦντες [vs. 27] and Col. ii. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 2; 1 Tim. vi. 12; Heb. xii. 1.) The word applied originally to a contest in the arena, but used also of any struggle, outward or inward. For the latter see Col. ii. 1, and comp. Col. iv. 12. The reference here is to his experience in his first visit to Philippi, and to his latest experience in Rome. Their conflict is the same (τὸν αὐτὸν). They too have suffered persecutions, and for the same reason, and from the same adversaries.

εἶδετε: 'ye saw,' when I was with you at Philippi (Acts xvi. 19; 1 Thess. ii. 2). They saw him scourged and imprisoned.

ἡν ἀκούετε: 'you now hear,' as you read this letter, and listen to the account of Epaphroditus.

ἐν ἐμοί: in my person.

EXCURSUS

BISHOPS AND DEACONS (PHIL. I. 1)

It is evident that these words are related to the large and complicated question of primitive church polity. Do they denote official titles, or do they merely designate functions? What is their relation to the πρεσβύτεροι of the Acts and Pastoral Epistles? Were the offices of bishop and presbyter originally the same, and the names synonymous; or, was there an original distinction? Were the ἐπίσκοποι the direct successors of the apostles, distinct from the πρεσβύτεροι and higher; or, was the episcopate a development from the presbyterate, formed by gradual elevation, and, finally, appropriating to itself the title which was originally common to both, so that the New Testament knows only two orders — presbyters and deacons? What light is thrown on the question by the use of the terms here?

To deal adequately with these questions, and with the voluminous discussion which they have called out, is manifestly impossible within the limits of an excursus, and the result of the most elaborate discussion cannot be decisive, owing to the imperfection of the sources at our disposal.



The theory of the original identity of bishops and presbyters has been a subject of controversy from a very early date. It was opposed to the Roman theory that bishops were the only successors of the apostles, and had from the beginning the divine commission to rule the church. This latter theory was issued as a dogma by the Council of Trent, and the opposite view was declared heretical. The Roman dogma was rejected by the Calvinists and Lutherans. About the middle of the seventeenth century the battle over this question raged between the Anglican church on the one hand, and the English Puritans and the French Reformers on the other. Dissatisfaction with the Roman view developed as the discussion gradually shifted from a dogmatic to a historical basis. The present century has been prolific in attempts to solve the problem. Passing by those of Baur, Kist, Rothe, and Ritschl, the three most significant discussions from 1868 to 1883 were those of Lightfoot in his essay on "The Christian Ministry" in his *Commentary on Philippians*; Hatch, in the Bampton Lectures for 1880 (*The Organisation of the Early Christian Church*), and Harnack's translation and development of Hatch's work (*E. Hatch: Die Gesellschaftsverfassung der christlichen Kirchen im Alterthum, übers. von A. Harnack, 1883*). Harnack's views were further expounded in his *Lehre der zwölf Apostel*, 1884; his Review of Loening's *Gemeindeverfassung* in *Th. LZ.*, 1889, No. 17; in Gebhardt and Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Bd. ii. Heft 1, 5, and in his *Dogmengeschichte*.

Among the most important of the later discussions are: Lechler, *Das apostolische und das nachapostolische Zeitalter*, 3 Aufl., 1885; Kühl, *Die Gemeindeverfassung in der Pastoralbriefen*, 1885; E. Loening, *Die Gemeindeverfassung des Urchristenthums*, 1889; F. Loofs, *Die urchristliche Gemeindeverfassung*, *Stud. u. Krit.*, 1890, Heft 4; Weizsäcker, *Das apostolische Zeitalter der christlichen Kirche*, 2 Aufl., 1892; Rud. Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, Bd. i., 1892; Jean Réville, *Les Origines de l'Épiscopat*, 1894. Harnack is reviewed by Professor Sanday in *The Expositor*, 3d ser. vol. v. This and the succeeding volume contain an interesting group of papers by J. Rendel Harris, J. Macpherson, C. Gore, W. Milligan, G. Salmon, G. A. Simcox, and Professor Harnack.

The Pauline epistles, omitting for the present the Pastorals, exhibit church polity in a rudimentary and fluid state in which official designations are not sharply defined, and the offices themselves have not taken permanent and definite shape. The forms of polity are simple, founded upon local conditions, and not uniform over the entire area of the church. The official designations, so far as they have arisen, are the natural and familiar expressions of particular functions. The terms often overlap or are confused, and a term in use in one part of the church does not appear in another part. An apostle, a bishop, a teacher, a deacon, are alike

"servants." An overseer will be likely to be a presbyter, chosen on account of his age and experience. The overseers may be called *προϊστάμενοι*, *ἡγούμενοι*, or *κυβερνήσεις*. The assistants of an overseer may be known as *διάκονοι* or *ἀντιλήμψεις*.

In short, we find within this circle an entire lack of uniformity in the terms applied to church officials, and a marked vagueness in their use. The terms do not wholly explain themselves. Most of them are capable of a functional meaning; and in most, if not all, cases of their occurrence, they may be explained as indicating the peculiar function of an official instead of his official title. This is the case in Acts xx. 28, which is so often cited as decisive of the original identity of presbyter and bishop. *Ἐπίσκοπος* occurs but once in these epistles (Phil. i. 1); *διάκονος* but once in an official sense (Phil. i. 1); *προϊστάμενοι* in Rom. xii. 8; 1 Thess. v. 12, both times functionally. In 1 Cor. xii. 28, we have, besides apostles, prophets, and teachers, *δυνάμεις*, *ἀντιλήμψεις*, and *κυβερνήσεις*, which are abstract terms. *Ἐπίσκοπος*, *διάκονος*, *προϊστάμενος*, however they may be explained in any particular case, denote functions. *Ἐπίσκοπος* is an overseer; *διάκονος* a servant; *προϊστάμενος* one who stands in front. *Διακονία* is applied to religious and churchly ministries of all kinds. In Eph. iv. 11, 12, Paul says that Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to the work of *διακονία* for the perfecting of the saints. Paul and Apollos, Timothy and the secular ruler, are alike *διάκονοι* (1 Cor. iii. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 2; Rom. xiii. 4).

This unsettled state of the nomenclature corresponds with the fact that the primitive church was not a homogeneous body throughout Christendom. While the Jewish-Christian church assumed the connection of all local congregations with the mother-church at Jerusalem, there was no similar bond among the Gentile churches. Paul's *ideal* was one body—the church, as the body of Christ, embracing all Christians of every nationality and social condition. He aspired to found a world-wide society, united neither by national tradition nor by common rites, but by a common faith and a common inspiration (1 Cor. x. 16, xii. 27; Rom. xii. 5; Eph. ii. 14–22). He speaks of "the church of God" (1 Cor. x. 32), and of "the church" (1 Cor. xii. 28). He labored to hold the provincial churches together by his letters and messengers (1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 Cor. i. 1). The boldness of his ideal, and his profound faith in the truth which he proclaimed, are all the more striking when the heterogeneous character of his churches is considered. (See a fine passage in Réville, *Les Origines de l'Épiscopat*, p. 115.) But the Gentile churches were united mainly through their relation to him, and all the churches were not within the sphere of his personal authority and work. Hence a collective Christendom was, as Holtzmann observes, "a genuine, *ideal* whole, identical with the body of the Lord, but not

an actual fact" (*Pastoralbriefe*, p. 193). The primitive Pauline church consisted of a number of little fraternities, composed largely of the poor and of the lower orders of society, holding their meetings in the private houses of some of their members.

These communities were self-governing. The recognition of those who ministered to the congregations depended on the free choice of their members. At Corinth the household of Stephanas is commended by Paul to the church as being the earliest converts in Achaia, and as having voluntarily assumed the work of ministry to the saints (1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16). They were not regularly appointed to office. The church is exhorted to render obedience to them, and also to every one who shall coöperate with them in their ministry. (See Pfeleiderer, *Paulinismus*, 2 Aufl. p. 244.) Phoebe is not a deaconess, but a servant of the congregation, a patroness (*προστάτις*) of Paul and of others (Rom. xvi. 1, 2). The congregation exercises discipline and gives judgment (1 Cor. v. 3-5; 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, vii. 11, 12; Gal. vi. 1). In 1 Cor. vi. 1, Paul recommends to the church to settle their differences by arbitration. The alternative is litigation before heathen tribunals. There is, in short, no hint of any one ecclesiastical office endowed with independent authority. "Paul," to quote the words of Réville (p. 99), "is a sower of ideas, not a methodical administrator; a despiser of ecclesiastical forms and of ritualism; a mighty idealist filled with Christian enthusiasm, and who knew no other church government than that of Christ himself inspiring his disciples with the knowledge of what they ought to say and do."

It is thus evident that within the circle of the generally acknowledged Pauline epistles there is no trace of formally constituted church officers, except, apparently, in the Philippian epistle where bishops and deacons are addressed. Of this presently. Certain functions, however, are distinctly recognised by Paul as of divine institution in the church; and to these, necessarily, pertained a degree of prominence and influence in the congregation.

The measure of this prominence and influence cannot be discussed here. Harnack (on Loening, *Th. L.Z.*, 1889) thinks that the pneumatic functions carried with them a "despotic" authority. (See Loening, *Gemeindeverfassung*, ch. ii.; Loofs, *Stud. u. Krit.*, 1890, p. 622.)

Apostles, prophets, and teachers are declared by Paul to have been set by God in the church, and to these are added *δυνάμεις, ἰάματα, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν* (1 Cor. xii. 28; comp. Eph. iv. 11, 12; and see Réville, p. 124 f.).

I do not agree with Réville that the *προϊστάμενοι* of 1 Thess. v. 12 (comp. Rom. xii. 8) are to be regarded as charismatically endowed.

These do not represent offices resting on the appointment of the church. Their warrant is a special divine endowment or *χάρισμα*. Apostles, prophets, teachers, do not signify three official

grades in the church. The same man could be both a prophet and a teacher. Whatever authority they possessed depended upon the church's conviction that their charisma was of divine origin.

In Paul's two lists in 1 Cor. and Eph. of those who have been divinely commissioned in the church, neither *ἐπίσκοποι*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, nor *διάκονοι* appear. Nor do they appear anywhere in the acknowledged epistles of Paul with the exception of the greeting to the bishops and deacons in the Philippian letter. But in the Ignatian epistles (100–118 A.D.) we find a clear recognition of three orders of ministry, — bishops, presbyters, and deacons, — without which it is asserted that a church is not duly constituted (*Trall.* iii.). This ministry is the centre of church order. The bishop is distinguished from the presbyter as representing a higher order. He is to be regarded as the Lord himself (*Eph.* vi.); to be obeyed as Christ and as God (*Trall.* ii.; *Mag.* iii.). Nothing is to be done without his consent (*Polyc.* iv.). He is to be followed as Jesus followed the Father (*Smvr.* viii.). The presbyters are to preside after the likeness of the council of the apostles (*Mag.* vi.). Obedience is to be rendered to them as to the apostles of Jesus Christ (*Trall.* ii.). The deacons are to be respected as Jesus Christ (*Trall.* iii.). In short, we have in these epistles the strongly marked beginnings of the monarchical episcopacy.

See Lightf. *Ignatius*, vol. i. p. 389 ff.

Somewhat earlier, in the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians (about 96 A.D.), we find a greater variety of names applied to church functionaries. Besides *ἐπίσκοποι*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, and *διάκονοι*, occur the titles *ἡγούμενοι*, *προηγούμενοι*, *πρεσβύτεροι καθεσταμένοι*, and *ἐλλόγμοι ἄνδρες*. But it is also distinctly asserted (xlii., xliv.) that the apostles appointed bishops and deacons to succeed them because they knew through Christ that strife would arise over the name of the bishop's office (*ἐπισκοπή*). It is to be noticed that presbyters are not mentioned.

Assuming the Philippian letter to have been written in 61 or 62 A.D., we have less than forty years to the time of Clement's epistle, and less than sixty to the time of the Ignatian letters. A great development has taken place in those years from the rudimentary conditions of church polity which we have been considering. This change did not come at a leap. Its elements must have been long in solution in the fluid and more democratic polity of the earlier time. The important and difficult question is the process by which the earlier and crude forms of polity developed into that system which is more than foreshadowed in Clement, sharply defined in Ignatius, and an accepted fact in Irenæus, Tertullian, and Cyprian.

Here a difficulty arises as to our sources. *Ἐπίσκοποι* and

διάκονοι appear in Phil.; ἐπίσκοποι, πρεσβύτεροι, and διάκονοι in the Pastoral Epistles; ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι in the Acts and 1 Pet.; πρεσβύτεροι in Jas., 1 Pet., 2 and 3 Jn., and the Apocalypse. Harnack places the Pastorals in the middle of the second century; Holtzmann, in its former half. The modern radical criticism of the Acts pushes its date forward into the second century (so Harnack) besides impugning its reliability on various grounds.

See Weizsäcker, *Apost. ZA.* 84 ff., 167 ff., 199 ff.; J. Jüngst, *Die Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, 1895; C. Clemen, *Die Chronologie der paulinischen Briefe*, 1893.

The point to be observed is, that if the later date of the Pastorals be accepted, they must be held to represent an advanced stage in the development toward the episcopal polity. Only let it be noted that Harnack's date brings us within the circle of the Ignatian polity, and warrants us in expecting a far more precise use of terms in the three epistles than we actually find. There is a great distance between the episcopate of the Pastorals and that of the Ignatian epistles. (See Réville, p. 304.)

If, on the other hand, the Pastorals be accepted as late products of Paul's hand, and the Acts as composed within the first century, we have in these, along with the Epistle to the Philippians and the Catholic epistles, traces of the transition from the looser to the better defined polity. We have evidence of the existence of πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι in the church contemporary with Paul, without our being compelled to admit either that the ἐπίσκοπος was a regularly ordained ecclesiastical officer, or that πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι are synonymous. We have simply what we have reason to expect; namely, that the three titles, ἐπίσκοποι, πρεσβύτεροι, and διάκονοι, fall within the period of unsettled polity and loose nomenclature. The fact that all these names may represent functions without designating official titles accords with this view. The process of crystallisation is going on. These different designations emerge here and there in the church as local developments, just as the terms προϊστάμενοι and ἡγούμενοι. It may be admitted that one term might, on occasion, have been loosely used for another; but the recognised and habitual identification of ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι is precluded by the very assumption that these functions had assumed the character of regularly constituted church offices or orders of the ministry. If such had been the case, such looseness and confusion in the use of the names of formally appointed and recognised church officers is inconceivable. I think that the indications of the nature of church polity furnished by the Pastorals are far fewer and less definite than is often assumed, and much too scanty to warrant the positive inferences based upon them as to the later date and

the non-Pauline authorship of the letters. Harnack's admission that older documents have been used in the composition of the Pastorals is an important concession, which makes against the theory of their testimony to a later stage of ecclesiastical polity.

According to our view of the case, therefore, the mention of bishops and deacons in the Philippian letter furnishes no exception to the statement that, within the circle of the acknowledged Pauline letters, there is no evidence of regularly constituted church officers representing distinct orders in the ministry. While the greeting to bishops and deacons is unique, it does not imply a polity differing substantially from that exhibited in 1 Cor. and 1 Thess. It will be observed that the greeting is first to the church, and that the letter is addressed to the whole church. The special mention of the bishops and deacons by way of appendage is explained by the fact that the letter was called out by the pecuniary contribution of the Philippian church to Paul, of the collection and sending of which these functionaries would naturally have charge. It will also be noticed that the address assumes several *ἐπίσκοποι*, showing that the right of administration is possessed by no single one.

At the same time, I think it must be granted with Harnack (*Expositor*, 3d ser. vol. v. p. 330) that while there cannot yet be any reference to an ecclesiastical authority over the church, the greeting of the Philippian letter implies a development of polity, in that the ministry has become divided into a higher and a lower ministry, and that its functionaries have obtained special designations, so that the name *διάκονος* has received a narrower signification, and designates a lower grade of ministry. The church at Philippi, at the time when Paul wrote this letter, had been in existence for ten years, and was the oldest Pauline church in Europe. It would not have been strange if its polity had become somewhat matured and more sharply defined, especially since it had suffered less distraction than other churches from conflicts with the Jews.

The Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles is most important in its bearing on this subject. This brief church manual or directory, composed, probably in Syria, about 100 A.D., is a valuable contribution to the literature of the period between the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) and the middle of the second century, the least-known period of church history. Its special value consists in marking the transition-period from the apostolic to the later church polity, in which the spiritual functions pass over from the apostles, prophets, and teachers to the local officers — the bishops and deacons. On the one side it is linked with the apostolic polity. The principal offices are still the charismatic offices. The apostle, who is to be received as the Lord (xi. 4), is a travelling missionary, and is not to remain for more than two

days in a place (xi. 5). The prophet speaks by divine inspiration, and is not to be tried or proved, as if for appointment to his office (xi. 7). The prophets are the chief priests (xiii. 3). Comp. the emphasis on prophecy in 1 Cor. xii. 28, xiv. 1-37. Presbyters are not mentioned, though it does not follow from this that they did not exist in some of the Syro-Palestinian churches. (See Réville, p. 259.) But bishops and deacons are distinctly recognised. They are local officers. They are elected to office (xv. 1), and on occasion they are to perform the ministry of the prophets and teachers (xv. 1); that is to say, the distinctively spiritual functions of the prophets may be discharged by them when the prophet is not present (xiii.).

The testimony of the Didache, therefore, does not bear out the original prominence which is claimed for the bishop. He is a secondary officer. He falls into the background behind the apostles, prophets, and teachers. The testimony, further, goes to show that spiritual functions did not originally attach to the offices of bishop and deacon. The evidence prior to the Didache that bishops or presbyters exercised such functions is very slight. The principal point insisted on is the laying on of hands (1 Tim. iv. 14 [see especially Loening, p. 75 ff.]) and the allusions to the gift of teaching or preaching as a qualification of presbyters or bishops (1 Tim. iii. 2, v. 17; Tit. 1. 9). As to ordination, it will be observed that the charisma described as imparted to Timothy is given through the medium of prophecy (*διὰ προφητείας*). As to teaching or preaching, 1 Tim. v. 17 shows that even if this function was occasionally exercised by presbyters or bishops, it did not pertain to the office as such. "The elders who rule well" are to be accounted worthy of double honor, *especially* those who labor in word and teaching, which clearly implies that there were elders who did not labor in word and teaching.

In the Didache the spiritual functions belong, as in 1 Cor., to the prophets and teachers. The prophet is to discharge them when he is present. The prophet alone is allowed the free use of extemporary prayer (x. 7). In other respects the teacher is on the same footing with him. In the absence of the prophet or teacher, his ministry may be assumed by the bishops and deacons (xiii., xv. 1). In other words, the evidence of the Didache is to the effect that, as the special supernatural endowments subside, as the visits of the prophets become less frequent, the ministrations of worship devolve more and more upon the subordinate and local officers.

This view is carried out by Harnack in his discussion of the *Apostolical Ordinances or Canons* (*Tt. u. Unt.* ii. 5). One portion of this formed a considerable part of the Didache. Two more parts, dating from forty to eighty years later than the Didache, mention the church officers in the following order:

bishop, presbyter, reader, deacon. The bishop is the shepherd of the flock. The presbyters, two in number, form the council of the bishop, oversee church discipline, and take part with the bishop in the celebration of the Eucharist. The deacon has charge of the church charities, and keeps an eye upon disorderly members. The reader discharges the duties of an evangelist. He is a preacher or expounder, succeeding the evangelist, who belonged originally to the class of charismatically endowed teachers (comp. Eph. iv. 11); thus showing how formally appointed officials gradually succeeded to the functions of those who were supernaturally endowed by the Spirit.

The office of the *ἐπίσκοπος* thus acquired a different character when it assumed the teaching function. This does not yet appear in Clement. The function is described as *λειτουργεῖν* and *προσφέρειν τὰ δῶρα* (xliv.), yet the position is different from that of the Pauline period. With the passing away of the apostles, the authority of the bishop has increased. Its recognition no longer depends so exclusively on the approval of the members. Clement proclaims the apostolic origin and authority of the office, and at least suggests its life-long tenure (xliv.), a theory, as Harnack justly says, which has the appearance of being devised to meet an emergency; while some remnant of the earlier democratic sentiment is apparent in the ejection of the church authorities which was the occasion of Clement's letter.

The bishop's office, therefore, was originally not spiritual but administrative. He had a local function in a particular community. The question as to the precise nature and range of this function cannot be answered decisively; but some modern critics have, I think, narrowed it too much. Hatch, following in the track of Renan, Foucart, Lüders, Heinrich, and Weingarten, derives the term *ἐπίσκοπος* from the financial officers in the heathen municipalities or in the confraternities or guilds which were so common in the Roman Empire (see note on *τῆ κατ' οἶκον σου ἐκκλησία* [Philem. 2]), and regards the original *ἐπίσκοπος* as simply a financial officer.

Sanday justly remarks that the evidence, on this theory, is rather better for *ἐπιμελητής* than for *ἐπίσκοπος* (*Expositor*, 3d ser. v. p. 98). See also on this point, Réville, *Les Origines de l'Épiscopat*, p. 153 f. The subject of the relations of the Christian official nomenclature to that of the heathen guilds is ably discussed by Loening, *Gemeindeverfassung*, pp. 12, 20, 64. See also Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, p. 87, and Salmon, *Expositor*, 3d ser. vi. p. 18 ff.

In favor of this view it is also urged that the earliest authorities concur in demanding that bishops should be free from covetousness. Thus the Didache requires that bishops and deacons shall be *ἀφιλάργυρους* (xv. 1). So in 1 Tim. iii. 3, a bishop must be *ἀφιλάργυρος*, and a deacon (vs. 8) *μὴ αἰσχροκερδής*. It is also

claimed that Tit. i. 7 is to the same effect, the bishop being described as *θεοῦ οἰκονόμος*. It is assumed, in short, that such expressions were determined by the special temptations which attached to the financial function of the bishop.

It seems to me quite possible to lay undue stress upon these indications. Without denying that the episcopal function included, and was possibly largely concerned with the financial interests of the church, it could not have been confined to these. It must have extended to the social relations of the community, to inspection of the performance of social duties, to guardianship of those rules and traditions which were the charter of the infant organisation, and to representation of the community in its relations with other Christian churches or with the outside world. It can hardly be supposed that, in associations distinctively moral and religious, one who bore the title of overseer should have been concerned only with the material side of church life. (See Réville, p. 306 ff.).

Sohm, whose *Kirchenrecht* is among the very latest and strongest contributions to this discussion, holds that, though the original character of the bishop's office was administrative, the teaching function attached itself naturally to his duty of receiving and administering the offerings of the congregation presented at the celebration of the Eucharist. He claims that the episcopal office grew, primarily, out of this celebration, and that the bishop's distribution of the offerings to the poor involved a cure of souls and the consequent necessity of teaching. See also Réville, pp. 178, 309.

But though it cannot be shown that the Christian title *ἐπίσκοπος* was formally imitated from the Pagan official, we are not thereby compelled to deny entirely the influence of the Pagan nomenclature in determining it. No doubt its adoption came about, in both cases, in the same natural way; that is to say, just as *senatus*, and *γερονσία*, and *πρεσβύτερος* passed into official designations through the natural association of authority with age, so *ἐπίσκοπος* would be almost inevitably the designation of an overseer. The term was not furnished by the gospel tradition; it did not come from the Jewish synagogue, and it does not appear in Paul's lists of those whom God has set in the church. The process of natural selection, however, would be helped by the familiar employment of the title in the clubs or guilds to designate functions analogous to those of the ecclesiastical administrator. (See the interesting remarks of Réville, p. 160 f.) The title can hardly, I think, be traced to the Old Testament. The usage there is predominantly functional. There are but two passages in the LXX where *ἐπίσκοπος* has any connection with religious worship (Num. iv. 16; 2 K. xi. 18). It is applied to God (Job xx. 29), as it is applied to Christ in the New Testament (1 Pet. ii. 25). It is used of officers in the army, and of overseers of workmen. The prevailing meaning of *ἐπισκοπή* is "visitation," for punishment,

inquisition, or numbering. In any case, little light can be thrown on the question by the derivation of the word, until we clearly understand the functions of the Christian officials.

Into the complicated question of the origin of the presbyterate it is not necessary to enter. It may be remarked that modern critical opinion has largely abandoned the view maintained by Rothe, Baur, Lightfoot, Hatch, and others, that the original Christian church polity was an imitation of that of the synagogue. This is largely due to the investigations of Schürer into the Jewish church constitution.

See *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 2 Aufl. Bd. ii., 1866, Eng. trans., 2d divis. vol. ii. p. 56 ff.; *Die Gemeindeverfassung der Juden in Rom in der Kaiserzeit*, 1879.

The secular and religious authorities of the Jewish communities, at least in purely Jewish localities, are shown by Schürer to have been the same (comp. Hatch, Lect. iii.),—a fact which is against the probability that the polity was directly transferred to the body of Christian believers. The prerogatives of the Jewish elders have nothing corresponding with them in extent in the Christian community. Functions which emerge later in the Jewish-Christian communities of Palestine do not exist in the first Palestinian-Christian society. At the most, as Weizsäcker observes, it could only be a question of borrowing a current name. The use of *συναγωγή* for a Christian assembly occurs but once in the New Testament, and that by James, whose strong Jewish affinities are familiar. The regular designation of the Christian assembly was *ἐκκλησία*. The Christian society regarded itself as the inaugurator, not of a new worship, not of an ecclesiastical organisation, but of a new society representing the beginnings of the kingdom of God on earth, the institutions of which would soon be definitely and permanently established by the return of the Son of Man in his glory. Such a society would not be satisfied with forming a separate synagogue merely, nor would the mere reading and exposition of the law and the prophets interpret their fresh Christian sentiment.

See Holtzmann, *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 217.

However they originated, in the Acts and the Pastoral Epistles presbyters appear as a factor of church government, forming a collective body in the congregation. Whatever may have been their original functions, in these documents the office of teaching pertains to both them and the bishops. (See 1 Tim. iii. 2, v. 17; Tit. i. 9.) It is at this point that the tendency to confound and identify the two distinct offices reveals itself. It would be strange if the two were synonymous, and that two names should be given to the same functions. Yet Hatch (Lect. ii. p. 39, note) declares

that this identity is so well established that it has been practically removed from the list of disputed questions. Such certainly is not the testimony of later critical discussion in which this question bears a prominent part. The reasons which make against the identity, moreover, are not trifling. **Acts xx. 17, 28, which is so often urged as conclusive, proves absolutely nothing, or rather favors the opposite conclusion.** Either it may be said that the word *ἐπίσκοπος* is not titular, but expresses function, describing the body of presbyters generally as "overseers" of the flock of God; or that the *ἐπίσκοποι* regarded as officers are represented as belonging to the class of presbyters and appointed from their number, which does not imply the identification of the official titles.

Bishops and deacons are habitually associated, while no mention of presbyters occurs along with them. It is a begging of the question to affirm that presbyters are not mentioned because they are identical with bishops. It cannot be proved for instance that there were not presbyters at Philippi when Paul wrote to that church; and the probability is that if they had held a rank identical with that of the bishops or equal with it, notice of them would not have been omitted.

Turning to the Pastoral Epistles, in 1 Tim. iii. 1-13, we find the qualifications of bishops and deacons described, with no mention of presbyters. These are referred to in 1 Tim. v. 17-19, but in an entirely different connection, — as worthy of a double maintenance, and not to be accused except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **In the Epistle of Clement (xlii.) the apostles are declared to have appointed bishops and deacons, not presbyters.** Passing on to a later date (140?), the *Shepherd* of Hermas distinguishes bishops and deacons from presbyters (3 Vis. v. 1; Sim. ix. 27, 2. Comp. 2 Vis. iv. 2 f; 3 Vis. i. 8, ix. 7; Mand. xi. 12).

The testimony of Clement's letter to the Corinthians is of special importance. It was written on behalf of the Roman church, rebuking the church at Corinth for ejecting its rulers from office. (See Lightf. *Clem.* i. p. 82.) The passages in point are in chs. i., iii., xxi., xlii., xlv., lvii., lviii.

At first sight it appears as if Clement uses *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβύτερος* as synonymous terms (see especially xlv., lviii.); but in chs. i., xxi. the *ἡγούμενοι* and *προηγούμενοι*, by whom the bishops are meant, are placed side by side with *πρεσβύτεροι* as distinct, *πρεσβύτεροι* in both cases being contrasted with the young. In short, a more careful examination of the epistle goes to show that if the bishops are apparently designated as presbyters, it is because they have been chosen from the body of presbyters, and have retained that name even when they have ceased to hold office. For this reason the deceased bishops are called presbyters (xlv.). As the presbyters are not designated by Clement

among those appointed by the apostles as their successors, it appears that "presbyter" signifies, not an office, but a class or estate. The presbyters are church members of long standing, who have approved themselves by their good works and pure character. The leaders of the church are to be sought among these; but "the aged" as such are not described as office-bearers regularly appointed, but merely as a body of persons distinguished by ripe wisdom and approved character. Thus the exhortation "Submit yourselves to the presbyters" (lvii.) tallies with the same expression in 1 Pet. v. 5, where the younger are bidden to be subject unto the elder. "The office-bearers belong to the *πρεσβύτεροι*, but the *πρεσβύτεροι* as such are not office-bearers. The bishops are reckoned as *πρεσβύτεροι*, not because the presbyter as such is a bishop, but because the bishop as such is a presbyter" (Sohm). The "appointed presbyters" (*πρεσβύτεροι καθισταμένοι* [liv.]) are not the *πρεσβύτεροι* collectively, but a smaller circle within the *πρεσβύτεροι*. It is the bishops who are appointed (xlii., xliv.), and who count with the "aged" from whose ranks they proceed. They are summoned to a specific official activity as *ἐπίσκοποι*.

A linguistic usage of the second century which appears in Irenæus goes to confirm this view,—the use of *πρεσβύτερος* to denote the authorities for the tradition, the survivors of the preceding generation (Iren. *Hæc.* ii. 22, 5, iv. 27, 1, 2, 30, 14, 32, 1, v. 5, 1, 33, 3, 36, 1). (See Weizs., *Ap. ZA.* p. 618.) The bishops would therefore be called *πρεσβύτεροι* (*Hæc.* iii. 2, 1, 3, 1), in so far as they successively vouched for the tradition, and thus reached back into the preceding age.

The qualifications which distinguish a presbyter are indicated at the close of Clement's epistle in the description of the three commissioners from the Roman church who are the bearers of the letter. They are "old, members of the Roman church from youth, distinguished by their blameless life, believing, and sober" (lxiii.). No official title is given them.

To the same effect is the testimony of the Pastoral Epistles. 1 Tim. iii. treats of the officers of the church, but only of bishops and deacons, concluding with the statement that this is the direction concerning the ordering of the church as the house of God (vs. 14, 15). The offices are exhausted in the description of bishops and deacons. Nothing is said of presbyters until ch. v., where Timothy's relations to individual members of the church are prescribed (v. 1); and in Tit. ii. 2 ff. these church members are classified as old men (*πρεσβύτας*), old women, younger men, and servants. Similarly, in 1 Pet. v. 1, the apostle describes himself as a "fellow-elder" (*συνπρεσβύτερος*); and the church is divided into elders who feed the flock of God, and the younger (*νεώτεροι*) who are to be subject to the elders. In 1 Tim. v. 17

mention is made of "elders who rule well" (οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι). Assuming that elders had an official position identical with that of bishops, a distinction between two classes of bishops would be implied, — those who rule well and those who do not. Whereas the distinction is obviously between old and honored church members collectively considered, forming the presbyterial body, and certain of their number who are worthy to be appointed as overseers. All of the presbyters do not fulfil equally well the duty of ruling. All are not alike worthy to be chosen as overseers. Only those are to be accounted worthy of double honor who have approved themselves as presbyters to be worthy of the position of ἐπίσκοποι. The following statement in vs. 19 refers to the rights of the presbyters generally. The presbyters as such are not invested with office. There is no formal act which constitutes an elder or a well-ruling elder. The bishops are reckoned among the elders, but the elders as such are not officers.

Thus are explained the allusions to "appointed" elders. Titus (Tit. i. 5) is enjoined to appoint elders in the Cretan churches, men who shall be blameless, husbands of one wife, having believing children who are free from scandal. Then follows, "For the bishop (τὸν ἐπίσκοπον) must be blameless," etc. The qualifications of the elders are thus fixed by those of the bishop; and the injunction is to appoint elders to the position of overseers, for the overseers must have the qualifications of approved presbyters. Similarly the ordination of presbyters, in Acts xiv. 23, is to be understood as setting apart elders to the position of superintendents.

The ecclesiastical eldership is, therefore, not identical with the episcopate, though in the unsettled state of ecclesiastical nomenclature, the names might, on occasion, be interchanged, and though, in the later stage of ecclesiastical development, the assumption of the teaching function by both classes, through the gradual subsidence of charismatic endowments, tends to confuse them. The presbyterate denotes an honorable and influential estate in the church on the ground of age, duration of church membership, and approved character. Only bishops are "appointed." There is no appointment to the presbyterate.

The special office of deacon occurs in the Pastorals, and nowhere else in the writings attributed to Paul; for the deacons in Phil. i. 1 do not stand for an ecclesiastical office, although, as has been already observed, they mark an advance towards it. They appear as regular church officers in Clement and in the Didache, and Clement asserts their apostolic appointment. The testimony does not bear out the older view of the origin of the diaconate in the appointment of the seven (Acts vi. 1-6). The terms διάκονος and διακονία are common expressions of service, either to Christ or to

others. Paul habitually uses them in this way, applying them to his own ministry and to that of his associates. *Διακονία* is applied to the service of the apostles (Acts i. 25, vi. 4), and *διάκονοι* is used of the ministers of Satan in 2 Cor. xi. 15. The appointment of the seven grew out of a special emergency, and was made for a particular service; and the resemblances are not close between the duties and qualifications of deacons as detailed in 1 Tim. and those of the seven. The word *διάκονος* does not occur at all in the Acts; and when Paul and Barnabas brought the contribution for the poor saints to Jerusalem, they handed it over to the elders.

Our evidence on this question is, at best, incomplete. Loening does not put the case too strongly when he describes the sources from which alone our knowledge can be drawn as *lückenhaft*. Such as the evidence is, however, it seems to be fatal alike to the Roman and to the Presbyterian theory of an apostolic norm of church polity. There can be no doubt that discussions of this subject have too often been unduly influenced by ecclesiastical preconceptions, and conclusions reached in which the wish was father to the thought. To be able successfully to vindicate for any system of ecclesiastical polity an apostolic origin and sanction is to put into the hands of its representatives a tremendous lever. Investigation of this subject, if it is to lead to the truth, must be conducted on purely historical grounds apart from all dogmatic or ecclesiastical prepossessions. In the conduct of such investigations we shall do well to heed the caution conveyed in the words of Réville. "The prolonged and minute analysis of the smallest texts, in which one thinks to find an echo of the first Christian ecclesiastical organisation, tends to a forcing of the meaning and to an exaggeration of the value of each trace that we discover; because we cannot be satisfied without reconstructing a complete organism, in which all the parts are logically related and mutually adjusted like the wheels of a perfect machine. Not only is the mechanism not complete, but, properly speaking, there is yet no regular mechanism. The organisation of these humble communities which were still unnoticed by the great world, or noticed only to be despised, was not the result of sage legislative labor. . . . The functions, the dignities, the spiritual magistracies of primitive Christianity emerge little by little by organic growth" (*Les Origines de l'Épiscopat*, p. 330).

The forms of church polity were gradual evolutions from primitive, simple, crude modes of organisation shaped by existing conditions. Official titles were naturally suggested by official functions. The church was not one body, but only an aggregate of local communities; and the features of organisation and government in any single community and the official titles which their administrators bore were not the same in other communities.

Nothing is clearer than the absence of any uniform system of ecclesiastical nomenclature in the church of the Pauline period. We see at first a loose, democratic organisation, in which leadership depends upon spiritual endowment and its recognition by the spiritual community. The early enthusiasm gradually passes away. The apostle, prophet, and teacher recede, formal election takes the place of general recognition of the gifts of prophecy or tongues; the spiritual functions pass from the charismatic leaders to the administrative functionaries; gradually the official polity crystallises as the church grows stronger and its intercourse with the outside world and among its several branches extends. The tendency observable in the history of all organisations towards the concentration of authority in fewer hands develops; and by the time the first half of the second century is reached, the episcopal polity has defined itself in the Ignatian letters, and the tide is setting towards the monarchical episcopacy.

NOTE ON *πραιτωρίω* (I. 13)

It is impossible to determine with certainty the place of Paul's confinement in Rome. The explanations of *πραιτώριον* (*prætorium*) are the following:

1. The prætorian camp at the Porta Viminalis (Kl., Lips., Mey., Weiss, Hack.).
2. The whole prætorian camp whether within or without the city (Ellic.).
3. The prætorian barracks attached to the Neronian palace (Alf., Con. H., Weisz. [*Ap. Zeit.*], O. Holtzmann [*Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*], Merivale [*Hist. Rom. under the Emp.*]).
4. The prætorian guard (Lightf., Lewin, De W., Beet, Mangold [*Bleek's Einl.*]).

I do not think that Lightf.'s note (*Comm.* p. 99) has ever been successfully answered or his conclusion shaken. He has shown that there is no sufficient authority for applying the term 'prætorium' to the imperial residence on the Palatine; and his view on this point is confirmed by Mommsen (*Römisches Staatsrecht*, 3 Aufl. ii. p. 807). After stating that the word was used to denote the headquarters of the emperor, Mommsen goes on to argue against Hirschfeld's assertion that the imperial palace itself was regarded as a camp. "Against this," he says, "are both tradition and theory. When the emperor was absent from Rome he was 'in prætorio,' and so Juvenal (iv. 34) rightly calls Domitian's Albanum a camp. But the palace in the city is never called so; for such a designation would be against the existence of the Augustan principate, and Augustus' tendency to conceal military domination."

Livy, xxvi. 15, xxx. 5; Tac. *Hist.* i. 20, ii. 11, iv. 46; Suet. *Nero*, 9; Pliny, *N. H.* xxv. 2, 6, with the testimony furnished by inscriptions, are decisive for the use of 'prætorium' to denote the prætorian guard.

So Marquardt (*Römische Staatsverwaltung*, ii. pp. 460, 464), and Mommsen

(*Köm. Staatsr.* ii. 865, 3 Aufl.), who says of the prætorian troops: "Their collective designation was *praetorium*, as appears in the expressions *praefectus in praetorio*, *mittere ex praetorio*, *decedere in praetorio*. The name of the emperor was not usually added, though Vespasian speaks of the soldiers who have served *in praetorio meo* (*Corp. I. Lat.* p. 583)."

Professor Ramsay (*St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, p. 357) says that 'prætorium' means "the whole body of persons connected with the sitting in judgment—the supreme imperial court; doubtless in this case the prefect or both prefects of the prætorian guard, representing the emperor in his capacity as the fountain of justice, together with the assessors and high officers of the court." For this explanation he cites the authority of Mommsen, but without giving any references. I must confess that this definition of 'prætorium' is new to me, and I am unable to reconcile it with Mommsen's statements. Mommsen says (*Köm. Staatsr.* ii. p. 959) that the first emperors, for the most part, personally conducted the imperial court. On p. 972 he says: "From the penal sentences of the provincial governors, the appeal, about the middle of the third century, lay to the prætorian prefects; and, as accused persons from the provinces, sent to Rome for judgment, were, in the earlier period, committed to the prætorian prefects as guards (here he cites the case of St. Paul), so, *in the third century*, the judgment of such persons passed over to them."

The unquestionable fact that 'prætorium' was used to denote the prætorian guard makes it unnecessary to assume that the apostle in this passage refers to any place, and furnishes a simple explanation and one entirely consistent with the narrative in Acts xxviii. Paul was permitted to reside in his private lodging under the custody of a prætorian soldier. As the soldiers would naturally relieve each other in this duty, it would not be very long before Paul could say, as he does here, that the entire body of the prætorians had become aware that the imprisonment was for Christ's sake. This explanation, moreover, agrees with *καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν*, which, on the other interpretations, is exceedingly awkward.

II 1-4. EXHORTATION TO UNANIMITY, LOVE, AND HUMILITY

If therefore there is any power of exhortation in your experience as Christians; if your mutual love affords you any consolation; if you are in true fellowship with the Spirit of God; if there are any tender mercies and compassions in your hearts—I beseech you to complete my joy by your unanimity and your love to each other. Do not act from a spirit of faction or vainglory, but each of you account his brother as better than himself, and study his interests in preference to your own.