

would arrive, with six or ten persons, for books, bringing a large bundle of letters, perhaps thirty or forty, written on plantain leaves, and rolled up like a scroll; these letters having been written by individuals who were unable to come and apply personally, and had therefore sent in orders to obtain a copy. One evening a canoe arrived from Tahiti, with five men on this errand; and because they could not be supplied till morning, they rested on the ground near the house, lest some one should get supplied before them! After they were severally supplied, and copies given for the mother of one, and sister of another, for which they had brought payment in cocoa-nut oil, each wrapped his book in a piece of white native cloth, put it in his bosom, wished good morning, and, hastening to the beach, launched their canoe, hoisted their matting sail, and steered, rejoicing to their native land.—*16.*

THE EQUALITY AND IDENTITY OF BISHOPS AND PRESBYTERS IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

In the New Testament the appellations and titles of a presbyter are used indiscriminately and interchangeably with those of a bishop. In proof of this statement we may refer to the following passages:—Acts xv., 17, compared with verse 28; Titus v., 2, 3. From these and other passages we may see that in the same sentence, and generally throughout the writings of the apostles, these are perfectly convertible terms, as different names of the same thing. This fact is very forcibly exhibited in the following summary from the Rev. Dr. Mason:—"That the terms *bishop* and *presbyter*, in their application to the first class of officers, are perfectly convertible, the one pointing out the very same class of rulers with the other, is as evident as the sun shining in his strength." Timothy was instructed by the apostle Paul in the qualities which were to be required in those who desired the office of a *minister* (1 Tim. iii., 1). Paul and Barnabas ordained *presbyters* in every church which they had founded. Titus is directed to ordain in every city *presbyters*, who are to be blameless, the husband of one wife. And the reason of so strict a scrutiny into character is thus rendered: for a *minister must be blameless* (Tit. i., 5). If this does not identify the *bishop* with the *presbyter*, in the name of common sense, what can do it? Suppose a law, pointing out the qualifications of a sheriff, were to say, a *sheriff* must be a man of pure character, of great activity and resolute spirit; for it is highly necessary that a *governor* be of unspotted reputation &c.: the bench and bar would be rather puzzled for a construction, and would be compelled to conclude, either that something had been left out in transcribing the law, or that *governor* and *sheriff* meant the same sort of officer, or that their honors of the legislature had taken leave of their wits. The case is not a whit stronger than the case of a *presbyter* and *bishop* in the epistle to Titus. Again, Paul, when on his last journey to Jerusalem, sends for the *presbyters* of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, and there enjoins these *presbyters* to feed the Church of God over which the Holy Ghost had made them *ministers*, (Acts xx., 17-28). It appears, then, that the *bishops*, to whom Paul refers in his instructions to Timothy, were neither more nor less than plain *presbyters*. To a man who has no turn to serve, no interest in perverting the obvious meaning of words, one would think that a mathematical demonstration could not carry more satisfactory evidence."

Indeed, the original identity of bishops and presbyters is now conceded by Episcopalians themselves, several of whom admit that the terms are used promiscuously by the writers of the new testament, and by the writers of the first two centuries.—*Coleman's Apostolical and Primitive Church.*

AUGMENTED EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE.

Never in so short a time was its external evidence so remarkably strengthened. Remember that there never was a period of research so sifting, of inquiry so unscrupulous, of discovery so unprecedented as the last forty years. Never— if we except the great Reformation upheaval— never was there a time when so many shams have exploded and so many phantoms been torn to tatters—never have so many hoary prejudices been marched off the stage, and so many time-honoured errors been consigned to oblivion, as within our living day; and bewail severe tests of historic accuracy introduced by Niebuhr and the unexpected revelations of antiquity which have rewarded exploring enterprise, much that once passed for history is now no more than historic fable. It has been a nervous time for imposture: it has been a noble time for the Bible. Each fresh discovery has been a new leaf to its laurel—a new gem to its coronet. Lieut. Lynch has floated down the Jordan, and explored the Dead Sea; and his sounding-line has fetched up from the deep, physical confirmation of the catastrophe which destroyed the cities of the Plain. Robinson, and Wilson, and Bartlet, and Bonar, have taken pleasure in the very dust and rubbish of Zion: and they come back declaring that the Bible is written on the very face of the Holy land. Since Laborde opened up the lost wonders of Petra, its stones have cried aloud, and many a verse of Jehovah's Word stands graven there with a pen of iron in the rock for ever. Scepticism was wont to sneer and ask, Where is Nineveh, that great city of three day's journey? But since Botta and Layard have shown its sixty miles of enclosing wall, scepticism sneers no longer. Hidden in the sands of Egypt, many of God's witnesses eluded human search till within the last few years; but now, when Bibles increase, and are running to and fro through the earth, and when fresh confirmations are timely, God gives the word, and there is a resurrection of these witnesses; and from their sphynx-guarded sepulchres old Pharaohs totter into court, and testify how true was the tale which Moses wrote three thousand years ago. "In my youth," said Cavaglia, when Lord Lindsay found him in the East, "I read Jean Jacques and Diderot, and believe myself a philosopher; I came to Egypt, and the scriptures and the pyramids converted me. And even so, a visit to Palestine, the reading of Kent's "Fulfillment of Prophecy"—nay, the mere sight of the Assyrian excavations, has given faith to many a doubter—just as I could scarcely imagine any one reading Dr. Stroud on the "Physical Cause of Christ's Death," or Mr. Smyth on the "Shipwreck of St. Paul," without carrying away the firmest conviction of these historical facts, and consequently, of all those vital truths which the facts by implication involve. And if, during this interval, the rampart has been strengthened, the rock itself has risen higher. It is not only the wall of circumvallation which has received fresh facings, as well as vaster blocks into its fabric, but the citadel itself is become a taller and more defiant stronghold. The outward confirmations have, no doubt, multiplied; but the internal evidence has augmented still more. I do not so much refer to those minute mutual confirmations, which the sagacity of Paley was the first to indicate, and which Blunt and Birks have so acutely followed up; nor to the appearance within these years of the works on internal evidence, so beautiful and so establishing, by Erskine and Gurney; but I mean those demonstrations of the Gospel's divinity which have been given on a larger scale in our own day than in any age since Pentecost—the individuals and the communities among which it has been signalized as the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation."—*Lamp and Lantern, by Dr. James Hamilton.*

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