

His career was one of splendid success. But he did not become bishop of Pontus or of any large division of Pontus: he ended where he began, simply as minister of Neocaesarea. In a few large cities, as Rome and Alexandria, the Christians became numerous, in spite of persecution, and their bishops acquired a corresponding influence. But such a position was exceptional. And it was not made normal, in the times referred to, by creating an order of rural prelates who should have an equally large population under their care. The diocesan system is of later date than the time of Eusebius, and so is the use of the word diocese in its ecclesiastical sense. The introduction of the word into his history, before the thing came into existence, would have been an anachronism. Dr. McGiffert did well to steer clear of it.

The question whether Nyssa or Nazianzus should be called a parish or a diocese may seem of little moment. But it has a very direct bearing on the historicity of the prelatical order. So far as the three-foldness of the ministry is concerned, there need be no trouble. Every presbyterian or congregational minister is a bishop—the kind of bishop referred to by Ignatius. He is the overseer of a congregation—not of fifty or a hundred pastors of congregations. He is inspector of a flock, not of an army of shepherds. The diocesan as distinguished from the congregational bishop represents a *fourth* order of clergy unknown to the Ante-Nicene Church. If it represents the Apostolate, where was the Apostolate throughout the second and third centuries? Apostles there were, in the sense of itinerant missionaries to the heathen, when the second part of the Didache was written; but these apostles claimed no authority over the bishops of settled churches. If an apostle was inclined to loaf on the hospitality of the church, he was to be furnished on the third day with some bread for his journey, and told to move on. But there were bishops? Plenty of them: such as his Lordship the Right Reverend Maris, of the new Town of Emelape, on the river Zarb, appointed at the request of Maria Cassobolita. Probably Maria's family constituted the greater part of his diocese. But he may have converted the heathen? No doubt. When Gregory of Neocaesarea died there were only seventeen heathen left in the town. A small congregation had grown into a very large one, perhaps as large as that of Spurgeon, or Talmage, or Abbott: