

his Epistles; and that Ignatius and Polycarp flourished before the death of that eminent Apostle. And yet though Clement was a fellow laborer with Paul for the truth, though Polycarp, if tradition be true, suffered martyrdom in the amphitheatre at Rome for that truth, and for it Ignatius died a martyr's death; and though these men had caught from the Apostles own lips and teachings their spirit and zeal and knew how the Churches should be and were governed; and though their writings reveal most clearly what the nature of that government was; yet they are to be set aside as of no weight because not just canonical. If these writings be entitled to as much credence even as those of Tacitus or Cornelius Nepos—and I believe that most learned Theologians are agreed in the main as to their genuineness—nothing in my opinion but the most emphatic Scriptural contradiction of their teachings should govern one in rejecting them; for, admitting that they may have greatly erred in expounding many of the deeper doctrines and mysteries of the Christian Faith, they could not have erred, without being guilty of the most wilful perversion of *facts* before their eyes, in describing the form of government existing in those Churches in which they and the last Apostles labored.

I must not omit in concluding this hastily written letter, to put one question to you which has a most significant bearing upon the matter in hand. If Congregationalism flourished when John wrote his

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