

founded and organized? or, what manner of offices and orders did they recognize as subsisting in their visitations and epistles to these churches?

"Now, if this, which is obviously the reasonable and legitimate method of investigation, be adopted, we shall have no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion, that our own Presbyterian polity and government is the more agreeable to the model of the New Testament.

"In Acts xiv. 23, we find, that Paul and Barnabas, on their return to Antioch, visited, for a second time, the towns of Lystra and Iconium, and other places in which they had before prosecuted their Christian mission; and that they "ordained elders or presbyters in every church." In like manner Paul says, in Titus i. 5; "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders or presbyters in every city;" and then, in a following verse, as I shall afterwards have occasion to shew, he identifies these presbyters with bishops. From these two passages, it is too evident to be disputed, that "presbyters or bishops," which were names given to the same parties, were the only ecclesiastical officers whom the apostles and evangelists were accustomed to ordain for the edification and government of the churches that were settled by them.

"In Acts xx. 17, 28, we find that the very same parties are denominated "presbyters and bishops" without distinction, and are, at the same time, recognized as "pastors," whose duty it was to feed the flock of Christ. And no allusion is made to any one of these as pre-eminent in dignity and authority over the others.

"Another passage to which I would refer, is Philippians i. 1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." You see from this, that in the small town of Philippi, which had less population than many a rural parish in this country, there were several bishops; for they are spoken of in the plural number. It would be altogether unreasonable to suppose, that each one of these was a prelate or diocesan, like those who are commonly called bishops at the present day, with a number of subordinate pastors placed under him. No doubt these Philippian bishops—of whom there were several in so inconsiderable a place—were no other than ordinary ministers of the Gospel. And the same title is applied to all of them without distinction. Nor is there the least reference made to any one of them as being invested with the pre-eminence over the others. It is also worthy of remark, that in this salutation, to the Philippian church, there is no mention made of "presbyters" as a distinct order from bishops and deacons. The "saints, with the bishops and deacons," are alone referred to. Why should the supposed intermediate order of "presbyters" be left out in this address? For no reason that I can think of so entirely satisfactory, as that there really was no such intermediate order,—the bishops and the presbyters being the same parties under different names."

* A very strange attempt has been made to prove, that there was, at this time, a prelate at Philippi; and that he is not mentioned in the beginning of the epistle, because he was no other than Epaphroditus, the person by whom the epistle was conveyed. In the second chapter, at the 25th verse, these words occur with reference to this person: "I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he

"Another passage to which I may allude, is Titus i. 5-7: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain presbyters in every city, as I had appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.

"Here you perceive, the reason why, in ordaining presbyters, such persons should be selected as were "blameless" is, "that a bishop must be blameless." Now, this would be a very good and sufficient reason, if "bishop" and "presbyter" were two names for the same office. But if they were applied to two different offices, and if, of these two, that of the bishop were the more important, it seems unaccountable that the necessity of certain qualifications should be also required in those who are to hold the lower. It is altogether necessary, to the coherence of the Apostle's exhortation, that the two titles should be held as belonging to the same class of persons,—the word "elder" or "presbyter" being the title of honour that marks the office, while the other word "bishop" or "overseer," is descriptive of those pastoral duties which were attached to it. In this view the drift of the Apostle's argument is very obvious: "I left thee in Crete, to ordain presbyters in every city; these must be blameless, not accused of disorderly conduct, for their work being that of bishops or overseers, who take supervision of the conduct of other men, it is evidently necessary that they themselves should be free from fault."

The next passage to which I would refer, is 1 Timothy iii. 1-8, in which Paul gives special directions in regard to the qualifications of those who were to be admitted to office in the Christian Church. He begins by saying, "If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," &c. After dwelling awhile on the qualifications of a bishop, he points out, with equal minuteness, those of a deacon. The supposed middle order of presbyters, however, he wholly omits,—although, if there had been such an intermediate order, it is unaccountable that Paul should have given no directions in regard to their appointment. It was certainly of more importance, that a right selection should be made in the case of presbyters than in the case of deacons, whose functions are on all sides allowed to have been inferior. The omission can only be accounted for on the ground, that bishops and presbyters were but different names for

that ministered to my wants." Some persons insist, that the words translated "your messenger," ought to be translated "your apostle;" and that they are meant to mark out Epaphroditus as the apostle or head pastor, and ruler of the Philippian church. This notion, however, is quite at variance with the real facts of the case, as plainly declared in other parts of the epistle. For it evidently appears, from what is stated in the 4th chapter, at the 18th verse, that Epaphroditus was the person who had been sent from Philippi to Rome with those charitable contributions which the Christians in the former city, had supplied for relieving the wants of St. Paul in his captivity. And, accordingly, when Paul spake of him "as their messenger" who had ministered to his wants," it is clear that Epaphroditus is referred to, not as an apostle sent to the Philippians, but as a messenger sent from the Philippians; to carry their charitable and pious intentions into effect.

"I can discover," says Neander, "no other difference between the terms *Presbyter* and *Bishop* in the apostolic age, than that the first signifies the rank possessed, the second the duties discharged, by those who held the same office."—*History of the Planting of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 167.

the same persons,—"*presbyter* or *elder*" being the proper title of the office, borrowed, as was natural, from the usage of the Jewish synagogue; while "*bishop* or *overseer*" was descriptive of the work, in taking charge or superintendence of the flock."

After discussing the passages of scripture relating to the subject, Dr. Crawford quotes the testimonies of the Fathers to show that Prelacy was an innovation upon Apostolic order, a departure from the good old way. And he thus sums up the argument from authority:

"It is, moreover, a well ascertained historical fact, that the Christians in the kingdom of Bavaria were under a Presbyterian form of government for two hundred years after the time of their conversion, until, in the year 740, the Pope of Rome induced them to submit to Prelacy.

"It is also a known fact, that though Christianity was introduced into Scotland before the end of the first century, and was generally embraced about the year 203, the government of the Church continued to be Presbyterian for the space of two hundred years, until, in the year 431, Palladius was sent thither by the Pope as their first bishop. Fordun states in his *Chronicles of Scotland*, which were written long before the Reformation, that "until the coming of Palladius, the Scots, following the custom of the primitive Church, had teachers of the faith and administrators of the sacraments who were only presbyters."

"I may here further remark, that the ancient church of the Waldenses, which, throughout the darkest periods of Popery, maintained the doctrine of Christ pure and uncorrupted, was, and still is, in respect of the equality of its pastors, its ruling elders, and its synods or ecclesiastical courts, a Presbyterian church very strongly resembling our own."

"It is also very worthy of observation, that while under the denomination of the Popacy, a distinction of clerical power and dignity was fully established, those devoted men who, from time to time opposed, and those who at length, to a great extent, prevailed against the errors and usurpations of Romanism, have given their verdict with the most wonderful unanimity in favour of the apostolic origin of Presbyterianism.

"John Wickliffe, that "morning star of the Reformation," who flourished about the year 1350, says: "I holdly assert, that in the primitive Church, or in the time of the Apostle Paul, two orders of clergy were thought sufficient,—viz., Presbyter and Deacon. And I do also say, that in the time of Paul, a Presbyter and a Bishop were one and the same."

"John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, who soon after followed Wickliffe, held the same opinion. One of the charges brought against them was, that they allowed no difference of order among those who bear the priestly office.

* Were it said, "A sheriff must be a man of integrity, because it is necessary that the chief magistrate of a county should possess a pure and upright character," all would at once see, that the "sheriff" and the "chief magistrate of a county," meant the same officer. Yet these two titles are not, in the case supposed, more distinctly identified with one another, than are the "presbyter" and the "bishop" in Paul's instructions to Titus.

† Their discipline," says Dr. Gilly, "is Presbyterian, very much resembling that of the Church of Scotland." "Episcopal consecration, so justly cherished by us," says Mr. Ackland, an Episcopalian, "is unquestionably no longer preserved among them."—*Waldensian Researches*.