

of a Three-fold Ministry in the Apostolic Church. We see the Apostles and men like Timothy and Titus, and others, who wielded Apostolic powers; Bishops, or Presbyters, or Priests; and Deacons; and during this period, (when we would naturally expect it) we have clear proof that the Apostles intended their office to continue in the Church: we see them in fact making provision for and giving directions to their successors.\*

VI. The sixth period brings us to the thirty closing years of the first Christian century: from A. D. 70 to A. D. 100: from the death of St. Peter, St. Paul, and others of the Apostles, to the death of St. John.

There can be no doubt that during this period, the second and third Orders of the Christian Ministry continued in the Church. What evidence, (additional to that afforded by the Pastoral Epistles) have we of the continuance of the first and highest Order of the Christian Ministry?

We have the testimony of the last surviving Apostle, St. John. In the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, (A. D. 95), he is directed to write to the seven Churches of Lesser Asia. To whom, by Christ's own order does he address these Epistles? To a Board of Presbyters? a Synod? a General Assembly or Conference? No: but to an individual whom he calls "The Angel" of the Church. An Angel means one sent with a message. These Angels (in Rev. i., ii., iii.,) evidently occupy an official or responsible position. Moreover, our Lord holds each Angel answerable for the good government of the Church under him.

Who, then, could these Angels be? Who but the Apostolic Rulers of their respective Churches?† Church History tells us we are right in this conclusion: more, Church History gives us the very names of the Angels, or Bishops, of the seven Churches of Lesser Asia.

\* See explanatory note at the end of the Sermon on I. Tim. iv., 14.

† Archbishop Trench, in his Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia, after showing that the Angel could only be a Bishop, a Bishop, too, with the prerogatives which we apply to such, on the use of the term Angel, in this Book, remarks: "There is a certain mysteriousness and remoteness from the common language of man, in the adoption of this term, and such there is intended to be. It belongs to the enigmatic, symbolic character of the Book, elevated to its language throughout above the level of daily life."