

with ignorance on these topics, it would not have been amiss for you to have qualified yourself for the functions of your censorship, by acquiring a more extended and accurate knowledge of them yourself. But the manner in which these points are settled cannot affect Polycarp's testimony on the question now under discussion—a testimony, it is hardly necessary to say, perfectly coincident with that of Clement. Like him, Polycarp evinces an utter unconsciousness of more than two orders of Ministers in the Church; and by exhorting the Philippians, chap. v., to be subject to their *Presbyters* and *deacons* as to God and Christ, he indisputably precludes the idea of any higher functionary to whom they owed ecclesiastical submission. "He could go no higher for a similitude; nor could he decently have gone so high, had he known of a higher order in the Church. Not a syllable of the Bishop, who, in less than a hundred and fifty years after, would have been the principal, if not the only, person to whom their subjection would have been enjoined by any Christian writer."

On a review of the most unexceptionable evidence deducible from the writings of the apostolic fathers, in relation to the orders of ministers in the Church, in the age immediately succeeding the times of the Apostles, it must, I think, be apparent to all who have eyes to see, that none was then known superior to Presbyters; and that therefore, whatever distinction was subsequently introduced, originated not by *divine right*, but by conventional appointment. The presbyterial hypothesis therefore manifestly accords with the exemplified constitution of the primitive Church. And it derives no slight confirmation of its truth from the inextricable perplexity and mutual contentions in which the rejection of it involves Episcopalians. Dodwell, one of the staunchest advocates of prelacy, repudiates the notion that there was a Bishop in the world, save James at Jerusalem, whom he represents as a universal Bishop, or species of Pope, at the time when Clement and Polycarp wrote their epistles. Dr. Hammond maintains that the Presbyters mentioned by Clement, were all Bishops, and that there was no middle order of Presbyters in the Church at that time; while Dr. Burnet contends, in opposition to both, "that Clement mentions Bishops *and* Presbyters, and he *means* Presbyters by Deacons.\* At least an equal number

\* Dr. Mitchell's, *Primitive Truth and Order*, page 39.