

be best fitted to promote their health and comfort, avoiding as much as possible those articles of diet in which poisonous adulterations are likely to exist. This simple rule of health and economy being strictly observed, there will be little or no craving for the more expensive luxuries in which others indulge. In regard to dress, it must be acknowledged that neither health, purse nor comfort seems to be very much consulted, and this more especially amongst the female portion of society. Not to speak of the want of modesty displayed in their attire (for every one is expected to follow the present fashion), but looking simply from an economical point of view, it must be evident that far more of their hard-won earnings are expended in the vain decoration of their persons than is at all consistent with reason. It is to be feared that many of them have their first lesson in economy to learn when they assume the management of their family exchequer.

A WORKINGMAN.

### THE LATER CHRISTIAN FATHERS.

BY REV. T. F. FOTHERINGHAM, ST. JOHN, N. B.

Notwithstanding the bitter hatred with which his countrymen everywhere assailed him, the Apostle Paul never lost his reverent love for the Church of his fathers. Refusing to accept their judgment that he was an apostate to the faith, he boldly declared to his bigoted accusers, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers." To him it was no small honour and privilege to stand in the line of spiritual as well as natural descent from Abraham, and to be able to demonstrate that the faith of Moses and the prophets was that of the Christian. He felt proud to belong to that race and Church upon whom was bestowed the high calling of sending forth the world's evangel, and inviting the nations to worship Him whose temple had stood through ages past upon Mount Zion.

A similar pride we, as Presbyterians, may justly feel when, examining the ancient teachings of the Church, we find that the later fathers who succeeded the Apostles were men like-minded with us, and bear their testimony to the principles of religious liberty which it is our privilege to maintain. Recently the teachings of Christian antiquity have been set before the public with unusual prominence. A Roman Catholic archbishop proclaims his Church as the only fold of Christ, and Anglican presbyters gallantly defend the Protestant Reformation. Communications of great eloquence, learning and length appear in one of our daily papers on the subject of papal infallibility, in which the argument rests, not on Scripture, but historical evidence. At the same time that the Presbytery of St. John is designating its pastors with rites of primitive simplicity, a new bishop of the Church of England is consecrated with imposing ceremonial and impressive ritual in the Cathedral at Fredericton, and in St. John itself three right reverend prelates have by their presence in the pulpit drawn public attention to their order. Yet all these appeal to antiquity as well as Scripture. By what right do we venture to dissent from those whose opinions are entitled to the utmost respect? Setting aside the scriptural argument, what have we to say to the fact that almost everywhere, at the period of the Reformation, the Church recognized Episcopal authority? If the Apostles did not found this order, how did it originate? If the contention of our Episcopal brethren is not true, namely, that the Apostles appointed men to succeed them in the apostolate, and these, although entitled to the higher designation, modestly assumed that of bishop, and have perpetuated the order of apostle-bishop in unbroken succession to our own day, so that, for example, Charles Hamilton, Bishop of Niagara, can satisfactorily assure himself that the chain is unbroken of which he is the latest link, if we say, this is not true, then when and how did the order arise and what did the early writers of the Church say about it? "Whose are the Fathers?" Do they exhibit to us a unanimous consent in favour of that system which finds, we believe, its logical and practical culmination in an infallible Pope, or do they testify to the existence of principles of clerical equality which, faithfully observed, would make it impossible for any one to lord it over God's heritage?

We have already discussed the evidence afforded by the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Let us now supplement that discussion by an examination of the principal Christian writers of the third, fourth

and fifth centuries. As we have already indicated, it is not necessary for us now to contend that the titles of presbyter and bishop were originally applied to the same persons—this is now conceded, and, willing to obliterate all traces of their defeats, our opponents vehemently assert that it was never denied—the victory is complete. But now a new position is occupied: we are told that the true state of affairs was, not that the episcopate grew out of the presbyterate, but that the Apostles appointed certain persons to succeed them, to whom alone was committed the right to ordain others, and that these, although having the right to term themselves apostles yet were contented with the humbler title of bishops. In other words, that Bishops Sweeney, Medley and Kingdon might, without presumption, style themselves apostles, and do actually, and of divine right, wield the ecclesiastical prerogatives of the chosen twelve. Certainly such claims merit our serious examination. If valid, it is treason to Christ to refuse our submission; if invalid, no terms within the limits of Christian courtesy would too strongly express our abhorrence of such impious arrogance.

Not only do the Apostolic Fathers refuse to lend the slightest sanction to such pretensions, but the most eminent writers of succeeding centuries distinctly disavow them.

We begin with Justin Martyr (died A. D. 165), who, from a heathen philosopher, became a defender of Christianity, and sealed his testimony with his blood in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. In order to mitigate the severity of the persecution, Justin wrote a treatise, addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, in which, to show the harmlessness of the Christian belief, he gives a detailed account of Church organization and ceremonial. In a work which thus professes to be complete, we would expect to find no omission of that office which, according to prelatists, is most essential to a church. *Nullus episcopus, nulla ecclesia*, say they. Such an omission would defeat the purpose for which the book was written. Suspicions were easily aroused; the Emperor would at once conclude that the concealment betrayed something which Christians dared not avow, and persecution would be hotter than ever. Yet throughout the whole work there is not the slightest hint that a "lord bishop" is the apostolic head of the Christian community. In his description of worship he writes: "Bread and a cup of water and wine are then brought to the president of the brethren. . . . The president having given thanks, and the people having expressed their approbation," etc. Several times the title of president is given to the pastor, and this is the highest office mentioned by Justin. Now, if bishops existed, the omission of them in a detailed account of the Church would be inexcusable. It would also be useless, for it would be sure of detection, and his apology would fail of conciliating the Emperor if anything so essential were suppressed. The silence of the writer in such a case is proof that bishops had no distinctive rank in his time, and were merely the presbyters who presided in each congregation.

Irenæus (died A. D. 205) distinctly applies the terms "bishop" and "presbyter" to the same persons. He speaks of presbyters as having received the succession of their episcopate from the Apostles. "Wherefore we ought to hear those presbyters who are in the Church, who have the succession from the Apostles, and who, with the succession of the episcopate, have received the gift of the truth according to the pleasure of the Father. . . . Such presbyters the Church nourishes, of whom also the prophet says: 'I will give thee thy princes in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness'" (Adv. Haeres. B. iv. 43, 44). It was presbyters, then, who preserved the succession of the episcopate and were the bishops whom God had promised to the Church. Irenæus mentions to Victor, Bishop of Rome, "Those presbyters who governed the Church which thou now governest," and calls these same persons also bishops. Eusebius and the martyrs of Lyons style Irenæus, himself Bishop of Lyons, simply "a presbyter of the Church." "Our brother and companion" (Eusebius v. 4). Certainly the lofty pretensions of later days were then unknown.

Clement of Alexandria (died A. D. 220) is sometimes quoted as speaking of three degrees in the Church militant: "Now in the Church here the progressions of bishops, presbyters, deacons, I think, are imita-

tions of the angelical glory and of that dispensation which the Scriptures declare they look for who have lived according to the Gospel in the perfection of righteousness, walking in the steps of the Apostle. These men, the Apostle writes, being taken up into the clouds, shall first serve as deacons, and then shall be admitted among the presbyters, according to the progression in glory" (Strom. B. vi.).

But if Clement considered bishops to be a higher order here on earth, why does he suppose that in heaven there will be none but presbyters and deacons? What becomes of the bishops? If they enter heaven at all, then, it must be divested of their mitres. He holds out no hope of such a dignity to any one in the next world. If he regarded presbyters (as does the Book of Revelation) as the principal order in the Church in heaven, he could not hold that there was a higher dignity attainable on earth, else the Church on earth would not "imitate the angelical glory," but surpass it "in its progressions." The testimony of Clement merely shows that there were three terms in common use; but he gives us no authority for affirming that in his time bishops exclusively ordained, confirmed and governed, or that they were any other than the pastors of the churches and presiding presbyters in them.

Hippolytus (died about A. D. 240) represents the presiding bishop as appointed by his co-presbyters and set apart by the deacons holding the Gospels over his head, while his presbyters were ordained by the imposition of hands (Pres. Def. p. 42, Crawford). Here is simply consecration. No new order was conferred. The consecration is effected by the presbyters and deacons without the assistance of any bishop. The only orders of which Hippolytus betrays any knowledge are essentially Presbyterian.

Tertullian (died about A. D. 240), one of the grandest characters of the ancient Church, informs us that "the presidents who bear rule therein (i.e., in the Church) are certain approved elders, who have obtained this honour, not by reward, but by good report" (Apol. 39), who were none other, as he intimates elsewhere (De Corona Militis 3.), but those from whose hands they used to receive the sacrament of the eucharist. These were evidently the pastors of the Churches, and no order above these is ever mentioned by him.

Origen (died A. D. 254), it is true, mentions bishops, priests and deacons as three classes, but in what the superiority of the bishops consisted he does not say. Frequently he speaks as if there were but two orders, presbyters and deacons. Thus in his second homily on Numbers, "Whence, then, is it that you often hear men speaking ill of them and saying: 'See what a bishop,' or 'what a presbyter,' or 'what a deacon?' Are not these things said when a priest or a minister of God is seen to behave in a way which is contrary to his order, and to perform anything unworthy of the priestly or levitical order." Here he compares bishops and priests to the priestly order, and deacons to the levitical. This much we may confidently assert concerning Origen, that he never places the bishops in a position which might not be filled by a simple presbyter.

In Cyprian's writings (died A. D. 258) we find the later corruptions of the Church more manifestly displayed than in the writings of any other father. He asserts the primacy of Peter (Ep. 70); the merit of good works (Ep. 52); holds that the baptized should be anointed (Ep. 70), and that water should be mingled with wine in the Eucharist (Ep. 63). He sanctioned prayers for the dead (Ep. 76), and believed that the blood of Christ availed for sins committed before baptism, but that almsgiving atoned for subsequent delinquencies (Ep. 50). Amid such a mass of unscriptural teaching, we should not be surprised if we found his views regarding government assuming the most extreme phase of sacerdotalism. Yet even Cyprian is found no very reliable authority for episcopal supremacy. Although he uses such extravagant expressions regarding episcopal and priestly authority, that even Milner is forced to acknowledge "that the episcopal authority, through the gradual growth of superstition, was naturally advancing to an excess of dignity" (Ch. His. I. p. 457), yet there are no powers ascribed by him to bishops which may not be performed by presiding presbyters. His own practice is quite consistent with this view. He tells his clergy, "From the beginning of my episcopate I have resolved to do nothing without your advice, and