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Short Title

THE MINISTRY FROM CLEMENT TO CYPRIAN

A Study of the Ministry of the Church
in the Roman Empire, from the
Reign of Constantine to the
Reign of Theodosius, as
reflected in the writings of
the Fathers of the Church.

John David Thomas

1913

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1913

THE MINISTRY DURING THE PERIOD
FROM SAINT CLEMENT OF ROME
TO SAINT CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Theology

by

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ANF The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. I-X. Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.
- LCC The Library of Christian Classics. Various Editors. I-III, V. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953.
- LCL The Loeb Classical Library: The Apostolic Fathers. Translated and edited by Kirsopp Lake. I, II. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1913.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is the intention of this writer to present a systematic consideration of the concept of the ministry from documents of the Christian Church outside the New Testament to the middle of the third century. To do this it will be necessary to take into consideration the historical development of thought through the period. History, or tradition, will present vignettes with which this writer intends to give you, the reader, a concept of the ministry from St. Clement of Rome to St. Cyprian of Carthage.

Names and dates of people who appear on the landscape will be mentioned as necessary. Generally, however, this writer will rely on the reader's access to some of the better patrologies.¹ Space will not permit a listing of the persons under consideration nor an analysis of their works except insofar as the latter enter the area of this study. This will also be the procedure followed with regard to the general history of the period.

¹Quasten, Johannes, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950-1953). This work is perhaps the best in the field to date. See, however, the recent one volume edition by F. L. Cross, The Early Christian Fathers (London: Gerald Duckworth and Company, Ltd., 1960).

Chapter II will deal with the organization or structure of the Church as found in the literature outside the New Testament. Here it will be necessary to note the relationship of the Christian organization to the secular, Jewish, and heavenly communities. The names given to the various officers will be brought to the reader's attention with a few words on their origin. Next, attention will be drawn to the rule of the community by directing the question to the literature: How was the rule or Lordship of Christ put into concrete terms by the Early Church?

The following section will focus on the office of the ministry in general, discussing especially the method used to establish the servants of the Early Church in their positions.

Fourth, this paper will become more specific by relating the abstract concept of ministry to officers in the Church. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons, will be viewed as a unit in the constitution of the Church. In succeeding chapters these officers will be considered specifically. Our purpose here is to show how these officers function in relation to the entire community of believers and to one another. A glance will also be directed toward the apostolic appointment of these leaders.

Chapter V will discuss the office of the bishop specifically. Considering the requirements for the office of bishop, we will discuss all the things that relate to his person such as his education, age, virtue, marital status and

finances. The duties of the bishop will be shown in a discussion of his relationship to both God and the Christian community. Since this officer must have validation and authorization it will be of benefit to look into such things as election, appointment, ordination, succession, and tenure. The relation of the bishop to the handing down of doctrine will draw this section to a close.

In the sixth chapter we will discuss the office of presbyter, as a leader in the community or, in the plural, as a council of the faithful. His specific function will be sought with his relationship to the congregation and to the apostles who went before.

A look at the office of deacon will conclude the consideration of the major orders. The paper will view his person, his relation to God and the community, his functions, and finally his relation to superior officers i.e., bishop and presbyter (presbytery).

Finally the reader's attention will be focused on the so-called minor orders. This writer lists eleven that appear during the period under consideration: Apostles, Teachers, Prophets, Evangelists, Readers, Sub-deacons, Exorcists, accoluthi and ostiarrii (perhaps in English Janitors and Doorkeepers), Deaconess, Widows and Virgins.

May the Lord of the Church enlighten the reader with His Spirit and grant each of us a richer understanding of His Divine Institution, the Holy Ministry.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZING FOR ACTION

Conforming the Structure to Prevailing Lines

As the Body of Christ matured it both expanded in size and grew in volume of membership. Spreading from Jerusalem, the multitudes that the Church reached were of a mixed genealogy, being both Jews and Gentiles. Already in the period of St. Paul's missionary out-reach, a trend is noted toward formal organization in the Christian community. Already in the New Testament literature, one sees the Church organizing her forces to go out into all the world that many might be saved. This process of organization continued through the post-New Testament period under consideration.

Edwin Hatch is of the opinion that as the Church expanded into various communities, and became sufficiently large to need organization, it took on that governmental form which prevailed generally. Hence as people entered the Church in great enough numbers to require organization, it took on the most convenient form.¹ Thus the organization of any given Christian community might be either Jewish or Gentile depending

¹Organization of the Early Christian Church (London: Rivingtons, 1882), p. 63.

upon the ethnic orientation which prevailed.

Hatch maintains that there was much similarity between the organization of the early Christian community and the secular community which surrounded it. Their governments had much in common. Looking from simply the human side we notice that many names and titles were used by both groups.² In the early community of Christians there was an ordo which followed the established pattern (in titles if not in jobs) of the secular community. Such groups were known as sunedria or presbuteroi or episkopoi. "In their general capacity as a governing body they were known by names which were in current use for a governing body: in their special capacity as administrators of Church funds they were known by a name which was in current use for administrators."³ Dr. Hatch's evidence seems to show that church officers paralleled the secular officers of the same name in function. Nothing more can be established than that the Church office was one of general superintendence in the community and control of its affairs so that all things could be done decently and in order.⁴ In his presentation Hatch attempts to show that the organization of the early Christian Church followed closely not simply that

² Ibid., pp. 31-32.

³ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 120-21.

of the pagan world but that of pagan confraternities. Thomas Lindsay takes exception to this opinion, suggesting that Hatch has overrated the evidence which he brings forward to show that episcopi were finance officials in pagan confraternities:

points of resemblance found in the records of Greek associations for religious purposes are almost entirely taken from pre-Christian times, and it is forgotten that under the imperial rule the constitutions and formations of confraternities for all purposes were entirely altered and that we know almost nothing about these confraternities in the eastern provinces of the Empire during the first century and a half of the imperial rule.⁵

Lindsay goes on to take a moderate position emphasizing that one can see a resemblance "of the most general kind" between Christianity and pagan confraternities but this appears only to an outsider. To one on the inside no such resemblance would be noticed. Evidence for this position is drawn from Pliny who in writing to Trajan (Epistle 96) calls Christianity an illicit confraternity, and from Tertullian, who in his Apology asks that Christianity be recognized as a lawful confraternity.⁶ To this writer it appears that there may have been many points of resemblance between pagan and Christian organization especially as regards the confraternities, but such similarity would be obvious only to such as viewed the set up superficially. Those acquainted with the inner workings of the two organizations

⁵ The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1862), p. 128, fn. 2.

⁶ Ibid.

could arrive at no such essential identity. "The primitive Christian communities organized themselves independently in virtue of the new moral and social life that was implanted within them; but they did not disdain to take any hints about organization which would be of service from the pagan associations to which they had been accustomed."⁷

I Clement sets up the orders in the church on the basis of a typical interpretation of the Old Testament. The offices of Highpriest, priest, levite, and layman have their type in the New Testament Community through Christ, bishops, deacons, and laymen (laikos). In this way the nature of each one of these offices is interpreted as reflecting the Jewish institutions. Further, by mis-quoting the Old Testament I Clement is able to establish the fact that bishops and deacons are titles foretold in the Old Testament.⁸ The organization of the Christian community has indeed some similarity to that of the Jewish synagogue. As expansion of the Church made organization necessary she adopted that which would fulfill the need. Since there was still a strong awareness of Jewish origin in the early years, it was natural for the Church to adopt and adapt the government of the synagogue.⁹

⁷ Ibid., pp. 128-29.

⁸ Adolf Harnack, The Constitution & Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), pp. 72-74. St. Clement may have had access to a text that is unknown to us.

⁹ J. B. Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1913), p. 192.

It is not difficult to discern from the fragmentary evidence which has come down from the first--and second--century Christianity that these Jewish institutions formed the original basis or model for the earliest Judaeo-Christian polity.¹⁰

Dom Gregory Dix has made an attempt to show that James the Just was a high priest over a Christian zeqenim at Jerusalem.¹¹ He has also shown that the early church knew only two charismatic ministerial offices both of which were of Jewish origin: shaliach or apostle and zaken or elder.¹² J. W. C. Wand sees the Jewish origin evidenced very clearly in such things as the idea of the Body of Christ being formed from the "faithful remnant," the Christian Baptism, the Holy Eucharist, in the very fact that the Christians adopted the Jewish Scriptures and merely added to them some of her own.¹³ The term presbyter was surely a Jewish technical word which Christianity took over.¹⁴ The main functions of the council of presbyters in the Christian

¹⁰Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church," chapter IV of The Apostolic Ministry edited by Kenneth E. Kirk (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), p. 236.

¹¹Ibid. A group of elders or chief men.

¹²Ibid., p. 242.

¹³The Church (New York: Morehouse--Gorham Co., 1948), p. 66. "In the face of all this it seems quite likely that the roots of the ministry are to be found in the same Jewish soil. We have no need to look for pagan parallels but only to seek the origin of the Christian ministry in the Jewish organization, and then to see what change of doctrine and spirit occurred on its transplantation into a Christian setting."

¹⁴Burton Scott Easton in Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 75.

community seems to be closely analagous to the synedria of the Jewish community in its exercise of authority.¹⁵ However, as was shown above with the relationship of Christianity to pagan organization, no matter how close a relationship appears evident at first glance between Christianity and Judaism, still it must be maintained that they were at theologically opposite poles. To one on the outside Christianity might look like Judaism (or paganism) but once one has entered the edifice the resemblance ceases.

J. Rendel Harris in his critique of Dr. Sandy's essay on the office of the ministry maintains that the terms episkopos and presbuteros are of purely secular origin.¹⁶ Lietzmann on the other hand feels that the names were freely given on the model of some large See and from there adopted by the rest of the Church.¹⁷ He is certain that they were not adapted from Jewish usage nor were their functions comparable to those of their counterpart in the pagan world. This writer is inclined to agree with Thomas Lindsay who takes a view of the early Christian Church which is not wont to identify it with any existing structure.

¹⁵Hatch, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

¹⁶"Dr. Sandy on the Christian Ministry," Expositor, Series 3, V (1887), 230.

¹⁷Hans Lietzmann, A History of the Early Church, translated from the German by Bertram Lee Woolf (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1937), I, 145.

Whether we regard its connexion with the pagan confraternities on the one hand, or with the Jewish synagogue on the other, it may be said that the organization of the Christian communities proceeded by a path peculiar to themselves. Starting from the simplest forms of combination they framed their ministry to serve their needs in accordance with what they saw was best fitted for their own peculiar work. This did not mean that the training acquired in the pagan confraternity or in Jewish synagogue was altogether without effect on the members of the infant Christian churches, or that usages suitable for their purposes were not adopted; but it does mean that the organization of the primitive Gentile churches was not a copy either of pagan confraternity or of Jewish synagogue.¹⁸

Thus the early Church developed an organization which, though not unique, was, when viewed as a whole, different from anything which had existed previously.

Among the early fathers the opinion arose that the Church Militant is, according to type, the picture of the Church Triumphant. The orders of the Church here below resemble those of the Church above. The Bishop can be compared to the Heavenly Father. The presbyters are likened to the twenty-four elders of the Apocalypse. In the deacons are seen the holy angels who continually minister to God.¹⁹ Saint Clement of Alexandria draws the picture slightly differently but the idea still seems to be the same.²⁰ The organizational structure of

¹⁸Op. cit., pp. 131-32.

¹⁹Hatch, op. cit., p. 112. Ignatius, Epistle to The Magnesians, 6:1. LCC, I, 95.

²⁰The Stromata, 6:13. ANF, II, 505. "According to my opinion, the grades here in the Church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory, and of that economy which, the Scriptures say, awaits those who, following the footsteps of the apostles, have lived in perfection of righteousness according to the Gospel."

the early Christian community was modeled after the heavenly or spiritual community which the dreamy eyes of those early mystics could envision so vividly. If one were to choose an organizational pattern to which the Church most conformed during this period under consideration, this last one would fit both the external and the internal structure.

Officers

For the organization of the Church it was necessary to have leaders or officers, people who would preside in the life of the community. If all the terms which are used collectively for officers of the Christian community are gathered together from the first two centuries after our Lord, it will be found that they agree primarily in the connotation of presidency or leadership.²¹ These terms which will now be brought under consideration are the following: heegoumenoi and proeegoumenoi, proistamenoi and proestootes, kathistaneen, poimeen. Each of these defines the officers of the early Christian Church.

From among the presbyters or those advanced in years it is possible to distinguish "the leaders" to whom obedience is due. These are called heegoumenoi or proeegoumenoi.²² Such

²¹Hatch, op. cit., p. 113, fn. 1.

²²Harnack, op. cit., p. 69. According to Harnack the Apostolic age transmitted to the church of the second century an organization that was twofold. One was based on the diakonia tou logou which traced its establishment directly to our Lord. Included here were apostoloi, propheetai, and didaskaloi. Such

is the terminology used to designate those elders who are to be given "the proper respect."²³ "Let us respect those who rule over us. Let us honor our elders."²⁴ These are the men who take the chief seats in the Church and who are looked up to by the people as those who give good advice.²⁵ That these were men of influence is shown from the fact that Hermas takes their actions into account. These leaders, he feels, are people who must remain steadfast and are not to be double-minded; they are men who must live in righteousness.²⁶ Thus the rulers of the people are the men who command the respect of the community, men who stand out as an example to the

were men who were commissioned by God to speak the word to the entire community--not to any specific congregation. They were to spread the Gospel and to edify the Church of Christ. For this reason they were regarded as the real heegoumenoi in the communities. In a second place there were episkopoi and diakonoi who were assigned to individual congregations. These were endowed with gifts to lead and help, to receive and administer gifts, and to perform the sacrificial service. In general they had charge of the affairs of the community. Adolf Harnack, History of Dogma, translated from the German by Neil Buchanan (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1900), I, 214. It is possible that included along with those named officials of the early Church who presided at worship are other groups that are not named. Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries, p. 71.

²³I Clement 1:3. LCC, I, 43. "For you always acted without partiality and walked in God's laws. You obeyed your rulers and gave your elders the proper respect."

²⁴Ibid., 21:6. LCC, I, 54.

²⁵The Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 3:9:7. LCL, II, 51.

²⁶The Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 2:2:6,7. LCL, II, 21.

others. Heegoumenoi and proheegoumenoi seems to be anyone who distinguishes himself as worthy of administering the affairs of the community.

Proistamenoi was a term used of the officers of the community that suggested a "special kind of relationship between leaders and led."²⁷ Hermas uses this term also for the elders (i.e. presbyters) who are in charge of the Church.²⁸ Saint Irenaeus speaks of leaders who preach and teach in the Church.²⁹

There were appointed officials or kathistaneen in the Christian community. These are people who have a good name in the community having been solemnly examined in faith and life and with the consent of the entire church appointed by

²⁷Lindsay, op. cit., p. 123. "The term προστατης was used technically in Greek city life (and Thessalonica in Paul's time was a Greek city which had been permitted by the Romans to retain its ancient Greek constitution) to denote those citizens who undertook to care for and rule over the μετοικος, or persons who had no civic rights. It denoted technically the Roman relation of patron and client and what corresponded thereto in Greek social life. The word was used by Plutarch to translate the Latin patronus. . . . Clement, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, applies the word in three different places to denote our Lord: 'the Patron and Helper of our weakness' (xxxvi.1); 'the High priest and Patron of our souls' (lxi.3; lxiv). It was the custom that the Roman confraternities, especially those among the poorer classes, had a 'patron' or 'patrons' who were frequently ladies of rank and wealth. . . ." Ibid., fn. 5.

²⁸The Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 2:4:3. LCL, II, 25.

²⁹Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," 1:10:2. ANF, I, 331. His terminology cannot be certain since only Latin translations of this text are available.

men of repute to their position.³⁰ These appointed officers were the bishops, deacons, and presbyters of the Christians. Their appointment could be traced back to our Lord's sending the apostles who appointed leaders in the various communities to avoid the strife that would naturally follow from lack of organization.³¹

Poimeen or "pastor" or "shepherd" was a term also used to designate the leaders of the community. Bishop St. Ignatius uses the title to describe himself when he writes to the Roman community, "In my place they have God for their shepherd."³² By this he means to say that the Syrian Church had him as its shepherd previous to his arrest but now that their bishop is gone God must take over directly. Elsewhere this Holy Martyr draws a more vivid picture of the term by showing the bishop as the shepherd who wards off the wolves protecting the sheep that follow him.³³ Later St. Clement of Alexandria uses the same title for those who preside in the Church. They are worthy of such because they are called shepherds after the image of the Good Shepherd.³⁴ Bishop St. Cyprian at still a

³⁰Harnack, The Constitution and Law, p. 70.

³¹I Clement, 42:4,5; 43:1; 44:2ff; 54:2. LCC, I, 62-68.

³²Epistle to the Romans, 9:1. LCC, I, 106.

³³Epistle to the Philadelphians, 2:1. LCC, I, p. 108.

³⁴Clement of Alexandria, The Instructor, 6. ANF, II, 219.

later period says, "It devolves upon us who appear to be placed on high, in the place of a shepherd, to keep watch over the flock."³⁵ In this way poimeen is seen to be more than a mere title. The name presents to the hearer the function of those who preside in the Church. Even as God leads and men follow so the shepherd leads and the sheep follow, i.e., the presiding officer or officers stand at the head of the Christian community leading it in the path of righteousness.

Rule of the Community

It appears that even though the above-mentioned titles were used of those who presided in the community, the fact of a Christ-monarchy was never lost. Christ is the true Shepherd and Bishop of the community. Through the apostolic teaching which is present in the representative shepherd, or presiding officer, and living witnesses, the community builds itself upon the infallible Word of God.³⁶ Essentially the Church rallies around the Person of Christ. His cross and resurrection are the central point for all Christian activity. From union with Christ arises the union of believers in faith and love.³⁷

It is true that Christ was the supreme Ruler of the early

³⁵ Epistle 8:2. ANF, V, 280.

³⁶ Harnack, The Constitution and Law, p. 88.

³⁷ Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 190-91.

community and that the presiding officer was His designated representative. But in spite of the great importance given to the officials, final authority rested with the people. The congregation had final say.³⁸ It was the people who ruled by forming a little democracy. They chose their own office-bearers and leaders of worship as well as their judges. They reserved for themselves the right to reject the service of anyone and that in the name of God. According to Lindsay, the early Church shows itself to be a democracy as well as a theocracy.³⁹ It appears to this writer, however, that neither of these terms adequately describe the situation of the early Church. Christ ruled in the presiding officer; this would be theocracy. The people maintained to themselves the right to reject those who did not manifest Christ;⁴⁰ this could be construed as democracy. More than likely we are given a picture of the actual practice during our period in a letter to St. Cyprian (A.D. 250).

The Roman Clergy write:

What you also have yourself declared in so important a matter, is satisfactory to us, that the peace of the Church must first be maintained; then, that an assembly for counsel being gathered together, with bishops,

³⁸ I Clement, 16:1; 44:3; 54:2; 57:2. Cited in Harnack, Constitution and Law, p. 71.

³⁹ Lindsay, op. cit., p. 177.

⁴⁰ Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, 7:1. LCC, I, 110.

presbyters, deacons, and confessors, as well as with the laity who stand fast, we should deal with the case of the lapsed.⁴¹

From this brief passage we see that the believers functioned together as a unit. Final authority was vested in the congregation, synod, or Church, and these included both the clergy and the laity.

⁴¹Epistle of the Roman Clergy to St. Cyprian, 30. ANF, V, 310.

CHAPTER III

THE OFFICE OF MINISTRY

The Type of Individual Worthy of the Office is Holy

Some of the Corinthian Christians to whom St. Clement addressed his epistle had removed worthy clergymen from office. Despite their good conduct, honor, and the integrity with which they fulfilled their office, they were replaced.¹ We note from his tone of expression that these were virtues that were becoming to one who aspired to such an office. Hermas also points out that it is the virtuous man who is worthy of the office. Those who fulfill their ministry in holiness by not ministering in the wrong way, by not taking advantage of widows and orphans, by not trying to make a gain from their ministry, by not being covetous, are the ones who shall live.² A much clearer opinion is set forth by St. Clement of Alexandria when he says that those who are worthy of the office of ministry must practice the precepts of God's Law.

Those, then, also now, who have exercised themselves in the Lord's commandments, and lived perfectly and gnostically according to the Gospel, may be enrolled in the chosen body of the apostles. Such an one is

¹I Clement, 44:6. LCC, I, 64.

²The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude 9:26:1,2. LCL, II, 281.

in reality a presbyter of the Church, and a true minister (deacon) of the will of God, if he do and teach what is the Lord's; not as being ordained (elected) by men, not regarded righteous because a presbyter, but enrolled in the presbyterate because righteous. And although here upon earth he be not honoured with the chief seat, he will sit down on the four-and-twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Apocalypse.³

In this way holiness becomes a mark of, and prerequisite for, the office of the ministry.

In their total or full time service to the things of God the ministers are expected to set an example for the entire Church. Tertullian speaks of the clergy (i.e. deacons, presbyters, and bishops) as being men who are in authority set as an example for the laymen. Looking at their clergy the laymen will be able to see what to do in time of persecution.⁴

In such an opinion there appears the meaning of divine appointment. God has set these people up not simply as functionaries who make decency and order a reality but rather as living examples to the Faithful even as our Lord was an example to His disciples. As the officers or ministers performed the functions of the Church by divine appointment, as they served the things of God alone on the basis of their appointment or ordination, they became living examples to the flock of God and images of Christ. It is for this reason that the ministry is to be "obeyed" and given "the proper respect."⁵

³Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, 6:13. ANF, II, 504.

⁴De Fuga in Persecutione, 11. ANF, IV, 122.

⁵I Clement 1:3. LCC, I, 43.

The Office is Established by Divine Appointment to Perform
the Functions of the Whole Church

Commenting on the Our Father Origen points out that there is a certain duty required of all the ministries within the Church.

there is a certain "debt" due from a widow for whom the Church provides, and another due from the deacon, and another from a presbyter, but the "debt" due from a bishop is the heaviest, since it is demanded of him by the Saviour of the whole Church, and retribution follows if it be not paid.⁶

Such requirements were laid upon the members of the ministerial office not because these officials should perform special works to merit their position but so that order might be attained. The functions of the officers of the Church were the functions of the whole Church or of individual Christians. Both the officers and the duties which they performed rested upon Divine appointment but the ecclesiastical power which later was documented by this appointment is not found at this early date. The clergy is appointed by God to perform the functions of the whole Church both individually and collectively.⁷ We see this brought out quite clearly in the writing of St. Cyprian. In one epistle he shows that during his time the money which was distributed to the poor

⁶ On Prayer, 28:4. LCC, II, 306-07.

⁷ Edwin Hatch, Organization of the Early Christian Church (London: Rivingtons, 1882), pp. 138-39.

and needy first passed to the hands of the clergy who then sought to assist the necessities and burdens of the brethren.⁸ To maintain order according to the apostolic injunction, the desire and obligation of the corporate body was carried out by a few select individuals.

By ca. 230 A.D. Holy Ordination became a part of the establishment of the officers. It set the cleric apart on account of his ministry.⁹ Strictly speaking, the term *χρειατορυραγτες* means to elect by popular vote¹⁰ but it came generally to designate ordination, or the laying on of hands. Laying on of hands is a witness from God that a man has been chosen through the Holy Spirit. To Rudolph Sohm this act of imposing hands on an individual, ordination, was a godly function which strengthened a man in the power of the spirit. As a spiritual act however "Wahl und Ordination nur geistliche Gewalt, keine rechtliche Gewalt geben."¹¹ With such a view of ordination the Church and synagogue appear to be in close harmony. Such, however, is not the case. Rather they only

⁸Epistle 4:1. ANF, V, 282.

⁹Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, 11:5. Translated into English with introduction and notes by Burton Scott Easton (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 40.

¹⁰Thomas M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1862), p. 118.

¹¹Olof Linton, "Das Problem Der Urkirche In Der Neueren Forschung Eine Kritische Darstellung," Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift (Uppsala: A. -B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1932), I, 53.

appear to be alike in that both make use of the same Old Testament examples. According to Arnold Ehrhardt, the Church did not obtain ordination from the synagogue but they both received it from the same source.¹²

A clear example of what significance the laying on of hands had is to be found in the Clementine Homilies. Here, in one place, we see that hands were placed (physical contact seems to have been made) upon the head of the designated individual. While this was taking place some prescribed prayers were uttered beseeching God that the candidate might receive the power that belongs to his office.¹³ The significance of this ritual appears in the Old Testament.

The "laying-on of hands" in the Old Testament appears with a double significance. (a) When the people laid their hands upon the Levites, when the priest or the sacrificer laid his hands on the victim, the ceremony meant that the subject of it was made a representative-- a substitute (Numb. viii:10; Levit. xvi:21, iii: 2-15, iv: 4-29). The Levites were to represent the people; the victim was taken as a substitute for the offered. (b) It expressed the idea of benediction (Gen. xlvi: 14), and so especially it is used of Moses consecrating Joshua (Numb. xxvii:18; Deut. xxxiv:9. . .). It also became, before our Lord's time, the Jewish mode of appointing magistrates and rabbis, . . . and they laid stress upon a succession from Moses. . . . The characteristic use of it in the New Testament (apart from its use

¹²"Jewish and Christian Ordination," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, V (1954), 138.

¹³The Clementine Homilies, 3:72. ANF, VIII, 251. The writer is aware of the controversy over the dating of this literature. It is certainly not by St. Clement of Rome. See Johannes Quasten, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950), I, 62.

in healing, which however is symbolical) is by the Apostles to convey the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts viii:17, xix:6).¹⁴

The sanctity of this function, brought out in both the Old and New Testament evidence, seems to be upheld by the fact that no reference is made to repetition of the act. It is enlightening to see that during the period under consideration there is no evidence of re-ordination taking place even among those who return from heresy to the Catholic faith. There seems to be no evidence of one who had been ordained being re-ordained. "Once let a man be ordained in any office, and his ordination held good in every Church where he offered satisfactory evidence of his status."¹⁵ Thus we see the sanctity and, somewhat, the meaning of the rite.

Dom Gregory Dix notices a distinction between appointed (kathistatai) and ordained (cheirotoneitei) which one can find in Hippolytus [Apostolic Tradition, 1:2]. Appointment to a recognized office in the church is not the same thing as ordination by the laying on of hands. The "enrolled" widow and those belonging to other minor orders (e.g. lector and sub-deacon) received katastasis or formal public nomination "but not 'ordination' by the laying on of hands."¹⁶ From the

¹⁴ Charles Gore, The Church and the Ministry (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1913), p. 172, fn. 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 172-74.

¹⁶ Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church," chapter IV of The Apostolic Ministry edited by Kenneth E. Kirk (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), p. 193.

time of the Greek Solon the term katastasis was the normal term to designate the appointment of a public servant. "It conveys 'entrance upon office' with the authority that goes with public office, and official recognition that the recipient serves the community in a specific function."¹⁷

The usual practice in the Church during this period was to ordain no one without the consent of all the brethren. St. Cyprian seems to be defending a unique practice when he writes to his flock concerning the ordination of a Confessor which was done without their knowledge.

In ordination of the clergy, beloved brethren we usually consult you beforehand, and weigh the character and deserts of individuals, with the general advice. But human testimonies must not be waited for when divine approval precedes.¹⁸

According to St. Hippolytus a Confessor need not receive ordination. His reception into the presbyterate was automatic being based upon his confession, bonds, and imprisonment for the faith.¹⁹ This procedure also seems to have had the assent of the brethren.

Hans Lietzmann, speaking to the situation in I Clement 44:3 feels that it was everywhere customary, even among the Jews, for religious authorities to be chosen only for a term. To Prof. Lietzmann, the protest in I Clement shows that some

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 193-94.

¹⁸Epistle, 32:1. ANF, V, 311.

¹⁹The Apostolic Tradition, 10. Easton, op. cit., p. 39.

people felt that this practice should be adopted by the Church.²⁰ The conflict seems to this writer to be evidence enough that such was not to be the procedure of the Catholic Church. Once a person is appointed to office he is not deposed for any reason other than failure to function under the Rule of Faith.

Thus we see that the ministry of the Church was either ordained or appointed to function in office. Such appointment took place within the context of the entire community or Church and with the consent of all (it seems) who were present. Ordination set a man aside for the ministry, though he could be deposed from functioning for legitimate reason. Appointment separated an individual for service in the designated area. This topic will be treated later as it relates to the specific offices.²¹

²⁰ A History of the Early Church, translated from the German by Bertram Lee Woolf (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1937), I, 192. I Clement, 44:3. LCC, I, 63.

²¹ In the conclusion of his work on the history of Holy Ordination Frere summarizes his material with four points. We include them here. "First it is to be noticed that all gifts of grace are given by God, including ordinary gifts given to the believer, and the more special gifts which are given for the ministry or for the exercise of exceptional powers. Secondly the Church takes action with regard to these gifts. . . . Thirdly it is to be observed that the local Church is bound to take such action with the main stream of the apostolic tradition behind it, in order to have full approbation and acceptance. Action which is taken apart from that cannot be accepted as action of the apostolic Church. Fourthly, this action must also be taken in union, not only with the continuous historic Body, but also with the contemporaneous Body, with the Catholic Church of the day, as represented by the bishops of the province or neighborhood." Walter Howard Frere,

The Ministers Are to Serve Only the Things of God

In modern terms this statement would perhaps be defined as the minister must be concerned only with Gospel and Sacraments. This was indeed the opinion of St. Cyprian

very Lutheran of you!

that they who are promoted by clerical ordination in the Church of the Lord may be called off in no respect from the divine administration, nor be tied down by worldly anxieties and matters; but in the honour of the brethren who contribute, receiving as it were tenths of the fruits, they may not withdraw from the altars and sacrifices, but may serve day and night in heavenly and spiritual things.²²

Origen says much the same thing in his Commentary on John when he compares those who serve the divine word and are employed with nothing but the service of God to the priests and Levites of the Old Covenant.²³

As a closing note on the ministry, we direct the reader's attention to the latter part of our period (after ca. 200) for a consideration of the marriage of the clergy. At the beginning of this period the general opinion seems to have been that monogamy, or one marriage, was the rule for the entire Church. However later men like Tertullian and Origen begin to demand this especially for the ministry. "At all events, priests we are called by Christ; debtors to monogamy,

"Early Forms of Ordination," Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry, edited by H. B. Swete (London: Macmillan and Co., 1918), p. 310.

²²Epistle 65:1. ANF, V, 367.

²³Commentary on John, 1:3. ANF, V, 298.

in accordance with the pristine Law of God, which prophesied at that time of us in its own priests."²⁴ Elsewhere even more clearly Tertullian states

Among us the prescript is more fully and more carefully laid down, that they who are chosen into the sacerdotal order must be men of one marriage; which rule is so rigidly observed, that I remember some removed from their office for digamy.²⁵

It was permissible for a priest to marry but if his wife died the general opinion was in favor of his not contracting a second marriage. In the death of his wife God was saying to him "be continent." Origen bases his opinion on St. Paul.

Paul wishes no one of those of the church, who has attained to any eminence beyond the many, as is attained in the administration of the sacraments, to make trial of a second marriage.²⁶

St. Paul speaks this way in I Timothy of bishops as well as of deacons and widows.²⁷ Nonetheless, Origen maintains, some of those who have been married once and lost their spouse may be better equipped for the task of the ministry than those who have never been married. What St. Paul said was meant for a law concerning those who were divorced. We conclude then that marriage was permissible for the ministers though a second marriage was frowned upon. Yet in view of the attitude of Tertullian one might make a case for the fact that second marriages were taking place.

²⁴Tertullian, On Monogamy, 7. ANF, IV, 65.

²⁵On Exhortation to Chastity, 7. ANF, IV, 54.

²⁶Commentary on Mattheu, 14:22. ANF, IX, 509.

²⁷I Timothy 3:1-13.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL GUIDELINE CONCERNING THE MAJOR ORDERS OF BISHOP, PRESBYTER AND DEACON

By the middle of the second century Christian communities generally had three distinct orders of ministers: bishop, presbyters, deacons.¹ This is a development from the Apostolic Church of the first century which seems to have known only two distinct grades or orders: bishops called episcopi-presbyteri and deacons. In the Church of the first century "it seems that all who were ordained priests received the plenitude of the priesthood---that they were all bishops as regards their power of orders."² Bishop Gore lists three³ possible theories held

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2 orders

¹J. B. Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1913), p. 186.

²F. J. Connell, "Origin of the Presbyterate," Ecclesiastical Review, 82 (March, 1930), 227. "In the Apostolic church there was but one office to which individuals were elected (as distinguished from the extraordinary ministry of supernatural gifts represented by Apostles, Prophets, etc.), that of presbyter, and if the size or circumstances of the community required gradation among its presbyters, those in full authority were called ἐπίσκοπος, and their assistants were called διακονος." John Macpherson. "Dr. Sandy on the Origin of the Christian Ministry," Expositor, Series 3, V (1887), 291.

³Charles Gore, The Church and the Ministry (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1913), pp. 303-04. For more on the origin see also the Bishop's notes added to this text. Pp. 363-73.

concerning the relationship that existed between the ministries of the bishop and presbyter.

There is the view . . . that the Churches in the West were governed simply by a council of presbyters, who had no superiors over them, and who therefore must be supposed to have handed on their own ministry.

This view is tenable but subject to later development.

Secondly, there is a view based on the consideration that long after the existence of bishops in every Church, as distinct from presbyters, the term presbyter could still be used for both orders, as it is occasionally by Irenaeus and Clement and Origen.

According to Bishop Gore this view has no support in the documents. A third and concluding view is cited as that of the Bishop himself. He asserts "that in the West no more than in the East did the supreme power devolve upon the presbyters." So far Bishop Gore. Thus we have established really nothing except the fact that in certain instances the terms were used but what exactly their meaning was, or their origin, is left to the debate of scholars.

Clergy as Indispensable for the Constitution of the Church

While our Lord still walked and talked within the confines of this earth there was no need for any such institution as the clergy. This was the case when He came to dwell with men; this will be the case when men go to dwell with Him. Though the office of the ministry was not a part of Christianity's original equipment, it became a necessity in the years following His ascension. The needs of a growing Church must be met. "Just as kings and judges and soldiers spring up to suit the wants of civil society, so the clergy sprang up to meet the

wants of religious society."⁴ If it would not be this organization some other variety would arise. The destruction of Jerusalem caused the break up of the Mother Church of Christendom. Gnosticism appeared on the horizon as a threat to the very core of the Catholic faith. The persecutions brought to bear on the new community were a difficult load. Each of these events forced upon the Church a need for organization which would meet their threat. The Church arose to the occasion with its orders of clergy: bishops, deacons, and presbyters. "The establishment of episcopacy saved the church; whatever mischiefs were afterwards wrought by the abuse and perversion of the system."⁵

As bricks go into the make up of a house so the clergy fit into the church. Many people form the Body of Christ; of these the clerics form a part. Speaking to Hermas the Lady describes for him the "tower" which is the Church. Into this tower are placed stones; indeed, these make up the tower. They are the apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons who have worked together in godly agreement and peace. "Their joints fit in the building of the tower."⁶ A few years later

⁴Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Christian Institutions (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), pp. 213-14.

⁵G. A. Jacob, The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament (Fourth American Edition; New York: Thomas Whittaker, n.d.), pp. 80-81.

⁶The Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 3:5:1ff. LCL, II, 37ff. "Listen then concerning the stones which go into the building. The stones which are square and white and which fit into their

Bishop St. Ignatius amplified statements such as this by saying that in the Church the deacons represent Jesus Christ, the bishop represents the Father, the presbyters are like God's council. "You cannot have a church without these. I am sure that you agree with me in this."⁷ Whereas Hermas made the clergy the building blocks of the Church, St. Ignatius feels that there is no Church where these "blocks" are not used. Off on a slightly different note is the Epistle of Clement to James. This document, hardly by St. Clement, pictures the Church as a ship over which the bishop has control under the Lord. The implication seems to be that without each one at his station the ship would be driven from its course to destruction and the passengers would be lost.⁸ St. Cyprian, at the close of our period, states that the Church is in

joins are the Apostles and bishops and teachers and deacons who walked according to the majesty of God, and served the elect of God in holiness and reverence as bishops and teachers and deacons; some of them are fallen asleep and some are still alive. And they always agreed among themselves, and had peace among themselves, and listened to one another; for which cause their joints fit in the building of the tower."

⁷ Ignatius, Epistle to the Trallians, 3:1-2. LCC, I, 99. "Everyone must show the deacons respect. They represent Jesus Christ, just as the bishop has the role of the Father, and the presbyters are like God's council and an apostolic band. You cannot have a church without these. I am sure that you agree with me in this."

⁸ Epistle of Clement to James, 14. ANF, VIII, 220. "For the whole business of the Church is like unto a great ship, bearing through a violent storm men who are of many places, and who desire to inhabit the city of the good kingdom. Let, therefore, God be your shipmaster; and let the pilot be likened to Christ, the mate to the bishop, and the sailors

episcopo et clero et in omnibus stantibus constituta.

However in the sentence directly before this he states that the Church is founded on the bishops. Cyprian held from the beginning that the bishop is "the keystone of the arch; without him nothing remains but a heap of ruins."⁹ In this development from Hermas to St. Cyprian the reader is asked to notice only the relation of the clergy to the Church. During these 150 or more years the clergy were an essential part in the make-up of the Church.

"Pay heed to the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons,"¹⁰ demands Bishop St. Ignatius as he writes to fellow Christians. From this we see that the people, to his way of thinking, were to be subject to the clergy. St. Cyprian in the following century points out the same thing. He admonishes some adulterers, "Nor let them think that the way of life or of

to the deacons, the midshipmen to the catechists, the multitude of the brethren to the passengers. . . ." The writer is aware of the difficulty in dating this document. See Johannes Quasten, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950), I, 62.

⁹Thomas M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1862), pp. 299-300. For the Latin citation above he lists Epistle xxxiii.1 (xxvi) as the source.

¹⁰Epistle to the Philadelphians, 7:1. LCC, I, 110. Elsewhere he says, "May I always be glad about you, that is, if I deserve to be! It is right, then, for you to render all glory to Jesus Christ seeing he has glorified you. Thus, united in your submission, and subject to the bishop and the presbytery, you will be real saints." Epistle to the Ephesians, 2:2. LCC, I, 88.

salvation is still open to them, if they have refused to obey the bishops and priests. . . ." ¹¹ As the passenger is subject to the captain or the patient to the physician so the Christian is subject to the clergy. In unity with the bishop, deacon, and presbyter the Christian can find "eternal and perpetual joy." ¹² In the person of the clergy an observer can see the people whom they represent: their subjects. ¹³

The bishops, presbyters, and deacons are the leaders of the community of Christians. God is the captain of this boat-Church while Christ is the pilot, the look-out is the bishop, the sailors the presbyters, those who oversee the rowers the

¹¹ Cyprian, Epistle 61:4. ANF, V, 358. Elsewhere St. Cyprian writes, "'As many as I love,' saith the Lord, 'I rebuke and chasten.'" And thus also it behooves the Lord's priest not to mislead by deceiving concessions, but to provide with salutary remedies. He is an unskillful physician who handles the swelling edges of wounds with a tender hand, and, by retaining the poison shut up in the deep recesses of the body, increases it. The wound must be opened, and cut, and healed by the stronger remedy of cutting out the corrupting parts. The sick man may cry out, may vociferate, and may complain, in impatience of the pain; but he will afterwards give thanks when he has felt that he is cured." On the Lapsed, 14. ANF, V, 441.

¹² Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, Introduction. LCC, I, 107. "You are the very personification of eternal and perpetual joy. This is especially true if you are at one with the bishop, and with the presbyters and deacons, who are on his side and who have been appointed by the will of Jesus Christ."

¹³ Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, 2:1. LCC, I, 94-95. "I had the good fortune to see you, in the persons of Damas your bishop (he's a credit to God!), and of your worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and of my fellow slave, the deacon Zotion."

deacons, the stewards the catechists.¹⁴ Each functionary appears to have had his specific position and served the Church through it. After the very earliest period one is apt to conclude that the bishop became a potentate. Such was not his type of oversight. Among the leaders of the Christian community St. Clement lists those who had the conduct of divine service in their charge. Since this was the most important function of the Church this is where their leadership was most necessary.¹⁵ This is emphasized clearly by Tertullian in De Corona:

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We take also, in the congregation before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal-times, and enjoined to be taken by all alike.¹⁶

None but the leaders of the congregation could administer the Blessed Sacrament; this shows clearly their position in the community. Bishops and deacons are the selected leaders of the Church, chosen for their virtue as a credit to the Lord. "You must not, therefore, despise them, for along with the prophets and teachers they enjoy a place of

¹⁴Quoted from Pseudo-Clement by George H. Williams, "The Ministry in the Ante-Nicene Church (c. 125--315)," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 50. Compare the quote in fn. 10 above.

¹⁵Adolf Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), pp. 69-70.

¹⁶The Chaplet, 3. ANF, III, 94.

honor among you."¹⁷

These major orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon were set apart from the congregation by more than katastasis; to them was cheirotonia which is called by Dix the "sacramental laying on of hands." This custom which he feels came into the Church through Judaism was necessary for the cleric's performance of leitourgeia and for his leadership in the worship of the community. The order of kleros was given him not so much for his function in an office as in worship which means especially the Eucharist.¹⁸ Be this as it may divine authority requires that priests should be chosen in the presence of the people "under the eyes of all."

God commands a priest to be appointed in the presence of all the assembly; that is, He instructs and shows that the ordination of priests ought not to be solemnized except with the knowledge of the people standing near, that in the presence of the people either the crimes of the wicked may be disclosed, or the merits of the good may be declared, and the ordination, which shall have been examined by the suffrage and judgment of all, may be just and legitimate.¹⁹

¹⁷Didache, 15:1,2. LCC, I, 178. "This passage is rightly regarded by Harnack, and in this Sandy follows him, as of the utmost importance to enable us to trace the development of the Christian ministry in the primitive Church. . . . we see the change taking place whereby the ministry of the local church secured the place at an earlier period possessed by the prophetic ministry." Lindsay, op. cit., p. 176, fn. 2.

¹⁸Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church," chapter IV of The Apostolic Ministry, edited by Kenneth E. Kirk (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), p. 194.

¹⁹Cyprian, Epistle 67:4. ANF, V, 370.

This is the injunction of the apostles for all ordinations: those of bishops, priests, and deacons. Through such a process of laying on of hands these orders of ministry were established within the constitution of the Church which meant that they could now function in a leadership capacity especially at the community worship. It seems to have been of immense importance that this process of ordination take place.²⁰

The Offices Exist in Relation to One Another

The words recorded in chapter fifteen of the Teaching of the Apostles are particularly valuable in establishing the relationship of bishops and deacons. Harnack points to six reasons for this statement:

1. They bring bishops and deacons into close connection--presbyters are not mentioned either here or anywhere else in the book.
2. They show by the close connection of these persons with the sacrifice (thusia) that their function had primarily to do with public worship.
3. They specify their qualities in such a way that it is obvious that their duties also included personal influence in the management of finance.
4. They prove that these officials (as distinguished from Apostles, prophets, and teachers) are appointed by the community and are therefore local officials.
5. They show that "speaking the word" is not in itself one of their functions, but that their ministry (leitourgia) is beginning to pass into their hands.

²⁰ Dix, op. cit., p. 212, fn. 6.

6. Finally they show that in the abstract a great gulf is fixed between prophets and teachers on the one hand and bishops and deacons on the other, but that we should beware of underestimating the latter (as elected officials), since they now do the work of the former, namely, the ministration of the word.²¹

Let us see just how close this relationship was between the ministries.

John Knox sheds some light on the subject when he points out that diakonos in its early usage meant simply "waiter." *deacon waiter*
 Now if the deacons were waiters it stands to reason that where there was more than one doing service a "head-waiter" would be necessary. From this Knox concludes that "the office of the bishop would always have existed, by whatever name it was called."²² The reader need not agree with his logic but his point is well taken for there does appear to have been congruity between the offices of the ministry and an attitude of first among equals. What was equal among them was that *3 = all*
 they all served the Church. There was no individualistic ministry. Each man worked for the whole Church. Bishops, *4!!! all 3*
 presbyters, and deacons, all performed various functions in *off nearly equal for ch*
 the Church and did nothing apart from her. They were all servants of the Church.²³ This was exactly the point of

²¹The Constitution and Law, pp. 79-80.

²²"The Ministry in the Primitive Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), pp. 1-2.

²³William Norman Pittenger, The Church, the Ministry, and Reunion (Greenwich: Seabury Press, 1957), p. 62.

Bishop St. Ignatius in his letter to Smyrna. He sends greetings to the bishop, presbytery, and to the deacons designating the last named as "my fellow slaves."²⁴ A lively example of the officers working together for the upbuilding of the Church is brought by St. Hippolytus. 3 = 41

At the hour set for baptism the bishop shall give thanks over oil and put it into a vessel: this is called the "oil of thanksgiving." And he shall take other oil and exorcise it: this is called "the oil of exorcism." The anointing is performed by the presbyter. A deacon shall bring the oil of exorcism, and shall stand at the presbyter's left hand; and another deacon shall take the oil of thanksgiving, and shall stand at the presbyter's right hand. Then the presbyter, taking hold of each of those about to be baptized, shall command them to renounce. . . .²⁵

Every function of the Church is performed by the clergy as they serve in relation to one another--"fellow slaves" of the Church of God.

The relationship of the bishop and deacon is best expressed in the terms of chairman-treasurer and his assistant. The bishop was the chairman and the treasurer who had control of the alms that were delivered into his hands. These alms he gave over to the deacon who actually saw that the necessities of the people in need were relieved. Thus the bishop was sort of a superintendent and the deacon his officer. They

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²⁴Ignatius, Epistle to the Smyrnaeans, 12:2. LCC, I, 116.

²⁵Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 21. Translated into English with introduction and notes by Burton Scott Easton (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 45.

worked together in godly agreement.²⁶ It is true that there was subordination of the deacon to the bishop. This came about first because the analogy was made between the Christian ministry and the Mosaic priesthood. In this frame of reference the deacons were analogous to the Levites and hence subordinate to the bishops and presbyters as the Levites were to the priests. Secondly the increase of the number of Christians in the Church also affected the status of the deacons.²⁷ Bishop St. Ignatius shows that the bishop presided in the council of the clergy and yet there was godly agreement among them.

I urge you to aim to do everything in godly agreement. Let the bishop preside in God's place, and the presbyters take the place of the apostolic council, and let the deacons (my special favorites) be entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ who was with the Father from eternity and appeared at the end.²⁸

By the time of St. Hippolytus this unity under the bishop is much more explicit in the life of the Church.

Let the deacons and the presbyters assemble daily at the place which the bishop may appoint; let the deacons [in particular] never fail to assemble unless prevented by sickness. When all have met they shall instruct those who are in the church, and then, after prayer, each shall go to his appointed duties.²⁹

²⁶Edwin Hatch, Organization of the Early Christian Church (London: Rivingtons, 1882), pp. 50-51.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 51-52.

²⁸Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, 6:1. LCC, I, 95. See also Epistle to the Ephesians, 2:1. LCC, I, 88.

²⁹Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 33. Easton, op. cit., p. 53.

From what has been said we see that the bishop was the presiding officer in an agreeable council composed of all the clergy by the end of our period.

As harp strings are bound to the harp so the bishop and presbytery appear as one voice to the laity.³⁰ This same thought is shown elsewhere when it is said, "Whoever does anything without bishop, presbytery, and deacons, does not have a clear conscience."³¹ In this passage we note not only the relation of these officers but also that though they are distinguished internally yet when viewed externally (from a layman's eyes) they appear as one voice. As the Holy Eucharist is one being made up of one flesh of our Lord and one cup of His blood and this in turn makes men one, even so the bishop, presbytery and deacons are one.³² Their voice is one as they speak from God and do the works which God has called them to perform.

St. Clement of Alexandria shows that in his opinion the offices of bishop and presbyter are not synonyms for one

³⁰ Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, 4:1. LCC, I, 89. "Your presbytery, indeed, which deserves its name and is a credit to God, is as closely tied to the bishop as strings to a harp."

³¹ Ignatius, Epistle to the Trallians, 7:2. LCC, I, 100.

³² Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, 4. LCC, I, 108-109. "Be careful, then, to observe a single Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and one cup of his blood that makes us one, and one altar, just as there is one bishop along with the presbytery and the deacons my fellow slaves."

3 off → 1

office by showing that the Bible gives commands to the various chosen persons, bishops, presbyters, deacons, widows, etc.³³ From this evidence Bishop Lightfoot concludes that only in the so-called Gentile Churches are the titles used interchangeably. In time the title bishop became the designation for a higher office and then the term presbyter returned to its original significance.³⁴ St. Irenaeus also used the two titles in a rather loose way. Probably he had in mind the chief pastor of the congregation when he spoke alternatively of the two offices "as the bearers of the 'certain gifts of faith.'"³⁵ More than likely even at an early date the two offices joined their efforts in various functions thus leading to some of the confusion. St. Hippolytus, toward the end of our period, shows that after the bishop had been consecrated the deacons bring him the offerings on which he is to lay hands with the presbytery while repeating the Eucharistic prayer. This seems to be a clear indication of what was later called con-celebration as bishop and presbyter join together in function.³⁶ Even more striking is a

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³³Clement of Alexandria, The Instructor 3:12. ANF, II, 294.

³⁴Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 194.

³⁵Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 4:26:2, cited in Williams, op. cit., p. 36.

³⁶Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, 4. Easton, op. cit., p. 35.

later passage of this same work which shows that bishops, presbyters, and deacons are able to perform the same function.³⁷ There is a "common and like Spirit of the clergy."³⁸ Even with this common spirit a distinction is to be made. During the Decian persecution Bishop St. Cyprian writes to his presbyters and deacons instructing them to discharge his duties during his absence "in respect of doing those things which are required for the religious administration." He enumerates this to mean the care of the poor and needy, etc.³⁹ Elsewhere the same bishop points up the unity of office by saying that the church is "one bishop chosen by divine appointment." It is presbyters "associated with the bishop in priestly honour."⁴⁰ The officers do exist in relation to one another and they function together; between them there appears to be some sort of clerical cord which makes the office one but the functions manifold.

³⁷Ibid., 26:1, p. 51.

³⁸Ibid., 9, p. 38. "Yet the presbyter has only the power to receive but he had no power to give."

³⁹Epistle 5:2. ANF, V, 282-83. "Relying, therefore, upon your love and your piety, which I have abundantly known, in this letter I both exhort and command you, that those of you whose presence there is least suspicious and least perilous, should in my stead discharge my duty, in respect of doing those things which are required for the religious administration."

⁴⁰Ibid., 57:3. ANF, V, 353.

CHAPTER V

THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

A Christian society existed prior to the establishment of the Christian clergy. "In like manner the Christian clergy existed before the institution of the Christian bishops."¹ Only very gradually did the office of bishop develop into what it is today. Only slowly has the episcopal office ascended to the heights which it has attained.

The General Title: Secular and Ecclesiastical

If it is true that the titles of presbyter and bishop were at one time synonyms for the same office then it stands to reason that episcopal authority as it is known by the time of St. Cyprian is a development out of a subordinate position. The power of the bishop seems to have arisen through elevation of the presbyterate.²

Episkopos is a term from classical Greek. There it designated a civil officer sent by Athenian over-lords to

Episkopos
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¹ Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Christian Institutions (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), pp. 214-15.

² J. B. Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1913), p. 196.

superintend subjects.³ The term itself is derived from the combination of epi meaning over and skopeoo which means to look; hence one who over looks or an overseer.⁴ Both the office and the title were familiar to Gentile Christians in their social and civil organizations among the Greeks and the Romans. The term was used by the secular community to denote either permanent or quasi-permanent officers or a governing body or committee entrusted with the administration of funds for any special purpose.⁵ In the Theran inscription, Hatch notes, episkopos is used specifically for a financial officer of an association.⁶ Ehrhardt feels that what has been said above is quite true and that episcopoi were bursars in Hellenistic organizations. He asserts, however, that the Christians filled an old term with new meaning when their leaders took on something similar to the functions of the "royal inspectors" of hellenistic times and gave these leaders the title episcopoi.⁷ It appears likely to this writer that

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³G. A. Jacob, The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament (4th American Edition; New York: Thomas Whittaker, n.d.), p. 73, fn. 1.

⁴Thomas Kimber, The Early Christian Church and Other Essays (New York: David S. Taber and Co., n.d.), p. 101.

⁵Edwin Hatch, Organization of the Early Christian Church (London: Rivingtons, 1882), pp. 37-38.

⁶Ibid., p. 37, fn. 26. The Theran inscription reads: "It is resolved that the episkopoi Dion and Meleippus shall accept the offer and invest money." Hatch mentions that the term is used in several inscriptions for temple finance officials.

⁷A. Ehrhardt. "Beginnings of mon-episcopacy," Church Quarterly Review, CXL (July, 1945), 123.

Hatch is on a more correct track and that the title as it came to be used among Christians was an adaption of a common pagan usage.

In the ecclesiastical setting the bishop's function was considered as diakonia through his service to the Church for the common good of all the people⁸ and as oikonomia⁹ probably thinking of his oversight in God's household. The use of these terms to denote the administrator of the Christian community seems to derive from the fact that this presiding officer in the general assembly was the one who received the offerings of the people and spoke the words of thanksgiving and benediction over them.¹⁰ "It is in this setting of the effectualness and absoluteness of the church's divine ordered worship that the bishop's office is placed. . . ."¹¹ Thus in ecclesiastical usage the terms came to be used for one who serves the Church to the benefit of all and administers the affairs of the congregation, especially her worship.

Cruse
in
episcopal

⁸Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 5:1:29. See translation by Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 174. Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, 1:1, LCC, I, 108. "I well realize that this bishop of yours does not owe his ministry to his own efforts or to men. Nor is it to flatter his vanity that he holds this office which serves the common good. Rather does he owe it to the love of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

⁹Eusebius, op. cit., 4:4. Cruse, op. cit., p. 130.

¹⁰Hatch, op. cit., p. 40.

¹¹Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church," chapter IV of The Apostolic Ministry edited by Kenneth E. Kirk (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), p. 198.

Requirements of the Bishop in the Church

A bishop in the Church is to be a man who is acceptable as far as his person is concerned. This means first that he is to be well educated if possible or, at least, skilled with words.¹² Such education is not for its own sake but that he might be "deeply skilled in the word of God."¹³ It is preferable, secondly, that the bishop be "not under fifty years of age" since by this time the problems of youth are in his past together with the slander that arises over these from false brethren in the community.¹⁴ However it is possible that in a small parish someone of the required age will not be found. In this case a younger person

who has carried himself from his youth with meekness and regularity, like a much elder person,--after examination, and a general good report, be ordained in peace.¹⁵

Thirdly, the bishop must be acceptable in his virtues. Men are to be elected "who are a credit to the Lord, men who are

¹²Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:1. ANF, VII, 396. "Let him therefore, if it is possible, be well educated; but if he be unlettered, let him at any rate be skilful in the word. . . ."

¹³Epistle of Clement to James, 3. ANF, VIII, 218. The writer is aware of the controversy over the dating of this literature. It is certainly not by St. Clement of Rome. See Johannes Quasten, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950), I, 62.

¹⁴Constitutions, 2:12.

¹⁵Ibid.

bishop to be
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bishop acceptable
in virtue

gentle, generous, faithful, and well tried."¹⁶

Lend everybody a hand, as the Lord does you. "Out of love be patient" with everyone, as indeed you are. Devote yourself to continual prayer. Ask for increasing insight. Be ever on the watch by keeping your spirit alert. Take a personal interest in those you talk to, just as God does. "Bear the diseases" of everyone, like an athlete in perfect form. The greater the toil, the greater the gain.¹⁷

*Bishop
job of*

Resting his argument on the Levitical injunction "No man that hath a stain or blemish shall come nigh to offer gifts to the Lord," Bishop St. Cyprian feels that only men who are "sound and stainless" in virtue should serve at the Christian altar.¹⁸ Briefly the episcopal office is reserved for those who are faithful Christians, "pious, philanthropic, pure, learned, chaste, good, upright, large-hearted," ably bearing the burdens of the Church.¹⁹

*Cyprian all
pure men
should
serve a host*

The Bishop Presides in the Life of the Church

The Early Christian Church considered itself to be a complete Christian community. In every act of worship she thought it necessary to have every element of the community present. Thus, when the episcopate had established itself, everywhere there was a parish church there was a bishop. As the chief officer he presided wherever there was a meeting of

*!!! Every where
a bishop
also bishop*

¹⁶Didache, 15:1,2. LCC, I, 178.

¹⁷Ignatius, Epistle to Polycarp, 1:3. LCC, I, 118.

¹⁸Cyprian, Epistle 71:2. ANF, V, 379.

¹⁹Epistle of Clement to James, 2. ANF, VIII, 218.

the Christian community.²⁰ Despite the long and varied history of the title, the word episcopus means simply one who has an episcopate, one who had oversight or superintendence.²¹ The bishop is one who presides in the Church. Bishop St. Ignatius wrote to St. Polycarp, also a bishop, "Do not let anything be done without your consent; and do not do anything without God's, as indeed you do not. Stand firm."²² St. Clement of Alexandria held that even as a father maintains oversight in his own household so the bishop should be in charge of the entire Church. A man should not be appointed to the office who cannot oversee his own home.²³ In the time of Tertullian it was customary for the bishop, in his position of leadership, to issue mandates regarding practices within the Church.²⁴ Perhaps about this same time it was common practice

²⁰Hatch, op. cit., p. 79.

²¹Thomas M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran, 1862), pp. 164-65. See also Fr. Loofs. "Die urchristliche Gemeindeverfassung mit spezieller Beziehung auf Loening und Harnach," Theologische Studien und Kritiken, 63 (1890), 628.

²²Ignatius, Epistle to Polycarp, 4:1. LCC, I, 119.

²³Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage (Stromata, III), 79. LCC, II, 76. "The Apostle says that one should appoint bishops who by their oversight over their own house have learned to be in charge of the whole church."

²⁴Tertullian, On Fasting, 13. ANF, IV, 111. "But it is enough for me that it is customary practice for the bishops withal to issue mandates for fasts to the universal commonalty of the Church. . . ."

for the bishop to exorcise catechumens prior to their baptism to assure himself, personally, of their purity.²⁵ In this way his presidency in the community was maintained. This oversight of the flock is to be carried on without detraction. The bishop should watch over what pertains to the salvation of those entrusted to his care. Seeing that they are his chief concern the people will know that he is "the ambassador of truth" and that what he binds is bound and what he looses is loosed.²⁶ By the time of Bishop St. Cyprian if not earlier the bishop is shown to have oversight of the funds of the congregation and hence the stipends due the other clergy.²⁷ He is the head, the laity are the tail. The latter submit to him; he submits to God alone. He governs but is governed by none but God even as a father his son, a master his slave,

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John's soul
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bishop oversees
funds etc

God
bishop
laity

bishop governs
by none

²⁵Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 20. Translated into English with introduction and notes by Burton Scott Easton (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 44.

²⁶Epistle of Clement to James, 6. ANF, VIII, 219. "Wherefore do you indeed preside over them without occupation, so as to send forth seasonably the words that are able to save them; and so let them listen to you, knowing that whatever the ambassador of the truth shall bind upon earth is bound also in heaven, and what he shall loose is loosed. But you shall bind what ought to be bound, and loose what ought to be loosed. And these, and such like, are the things that relate to you as president."

²⁷See Epistles 35; 5:2; 62; 37:2; 27:3. The case may be, however, that since St. Cyprian was a wealthy individual in his own right he may have been simply giving from his bounty, and not from the treasury of the Church.

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bishop led
off 577

a teacher his scholar, a king his soldier.²⁸ It must be granted that this final material is taken from late in the period. Nonetheless it does show, to this writer, a natural development from the earlier writers. It does not appear to be an extension of the essential thought of overseer but rather an enumeration of the practical applications made from the basic starting point. Opinions may vary on how the bishop presided. Our point here is simply that he did preside in the life of the Church.

let the bishop, as chief, be heard in the things which he speaks; and let the elders give heed that the things ordered be done. Let the deacons, going about, look after the bodies and the souls of the brethren, and report to the bishop.²⁹

With the centrality of the bishop in the life of the Church it seems natural that he should become to many the object of imitation--even as many clergymen are today. St. Cyprian noticed the danger involved in such an attitude on the part of the lay folk if the bishop should fall. Such a fall has the tendency to lead his followers upon the same path and to destruction. On the other hand when the bishop is a faithful shepherd of the flock giving constant evidence of a firm faith, then he will be a good object for

²⁸Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:14. ANF, VII, 399.

²⁹The Clementine Homily, 3:67. ANF, VIII, 250.

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Pst Job
Bromley

imitation on the part of his people.³⁰ Such a position in the eyes of the congregation emphasizes the necessity on the part of the clergy to pay attention to the personal requirements for the holy office.

It could hardly be called a requirement of the office, but late in our period we receive some notice that the bishops received a stipend for their service. Eusebius mentions an heretical bishop named Natalius who "was persuaded" to accept an heretical episcopate "with a salary from them of 150 denarii a month."³¹ If the heretics were doing it, such could have been the practice in the Catholic Church though this cannot be established positively. Perhaps reflecting on the state of things under Callistus St. Cyprian laments that many of the bishops, who ought to be setting examples for other people, despise their divine charge and throne, forsake their people, and run after the wealth of the nations. "They sought to possess money in hoards, they seized estates by crafty deceits, they increased their gains by multiplying usuries."³² Though this passage does not show bishops

³⁰Cyprian, Epistle 3. ANF, V, 281. "In proportion as the fall of a bishop is an event which tends ruinously to the fall of his followers, so on the other hand it is a useful and helpful thing when a bishop, by the firmness of his faith, sets himself forth to his brethren as an object of imitation."

³¹Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 5:28. Cruse, op. cit., p. 214.

³²Cyprian, On the Lapsed, 6. ANF, V, 438.

receiving pay for their labors yet it seems improbable that such could have happened if they were not receiving some sort of remuneration. Both of these illustrations are taken from late in the period. However one could maintain on the basis of abuse, which does not come at first bud of a situation, that the procedure of paying bishops if not to be found at the beginning of the period at least appeared very early. The laborer was, very early, worthy of his reward.

Duties of the Bishop

As early as the time of St. Polycarp great things were expected of the bishop. One need but look at the martyrdom of this Holy Bishop to see the reverence and respect he received. At so high a level did the Christian brethren place him that the writer of the account of his martyrdom felt it necessary to point out that, contrary to the popular pagan opinion, this man will not replace the Lord; no one will venerate him before the Christ.³³ At the other end of the period under consideration we see the reverence is at just about an equally high pitch.

As to a good shepherd, let the lay person honour him, love him, reverence him as his lord, as his master, as the high priest of God, as a teacher of piety. For he that heareth him, heareth Christ; and he that rejecteth him, rejecteth Christ; and he who does not receive Christ, does not receive His God and Father. . . .³⁴

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hear **

³³Martyrdom of Polycarp, 16, 17. LCC, I, 155.

³⁴Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:20. ANF, VII, 404.

A bishop in the early church was looked upon as leader in worship, judge, the one who dispenses charity, the Church's representative to the world, ruler and defender of the faithful. He probably looked like a trustee of property to those looking in from the pagan world. He was the court of appeal in disputes. He dispensed the grace of God through the Office of the Keys to the people. His high position is plainly shown in that he was generally the first to be sought in times of persecution. In a total sense the bishop was the leader of the community.³⁵

In his capacity as director of worship and superintendent of the assembly the bishop was labeled overseer. From this function of his office all other of his duties evolve: oversight of the gifts, property, poor and needy, visitors and strangers, representation of the Church to those who are on the outside, proclamation of the Word and general edification of the Church.³⁶ Thus, "in all the innumerable applications of the term" bishop means overseer.³⁷ Bishop St. Cyprian summarizes well the thought when he says that by "divine law"

³⁵F. J. Foakes-Jackson, Studies in the Life of the Early Church (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1924), p. 158.

³⁶Adolf Harnack. "On the Origin of the Christian Ministry," Expositor, Series 3, V (1887), 342.

³⁷Hans Lietzmann, A History of the Early Church, translated from the German by Bertram Lee Woolf (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1937), I, 145.

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101 - secretary

bishop office

Overseer
worship
office

"every act of the Church is controlled by these rulers."³⁸

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control only
either both

Closely related to this title is the term shepherd. The idea behind this appellation is also ruling. As a good shepherd the bishop guards the flock protecting the weak, guiding the strong, healing the ill, restoring the wayward to the straight and narrow.³⁹ Speaking of the bishop as the one who feeds the flock, St. Hippolytus undoubtedly thought in terms of giving the faithful correct doctrine as well as correct sacraments.⁴⁰

In the latter part of our period sacerdotal language comes to be used for the bishop. No doubt this developed along with the concept of sacrifice attached to the Holy Eucharist though it can also be traced to the power of binding and loosing of sins which our Lord gave to St. Peter and the other first apostles.⁴¹ St. Cyprian enjoins confession upon his brethren while they are still in the world, "while the satisfaction and remission made by the priests are

Cyprian
bsh
obscure

³⁸Cyprian, Epistle 26:1. ANF, V, 305. From the command of our Lord to St. Peter "through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flows onward; so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers."

³⁹Hatch, op. cit., pp. 126-27. See Ignatius, Epistle to the Romans, 9:1, where shepherd is overseer even as God.

⁴⁰Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, edited and translated by Burton Scott Easton (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 64.

⁴¹Charles Gore, The Church and the Ministry (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1913), p. 183, fn. 1.

pleasing to the Lord.⁴² Elsewhere he speaks of the bishops "as priests, who daily celebrate the sacrifices of God.

. . ."⁴³ This is direct reference to the Eucharist. Earlier, St. Hippolytus showed the bishop in a mediating position between God and man instructing the people to bring their first-fruits to the bishop. "And he shall offer them, shall give thanks and shall name him who offered them. . . ."⁴⁴

A bishop stands at the head of every community of Christians and he is the only one that bears that name. He is the monarch of the community. He leads in worship and presides at all Christian gatherings. He is the one to whom all Christians seek to attach themselves. Nothing must be done in an unauthorized way in opposition to or apart from the bishop.⁴⁵ In this way the bishop receives the title monarch.

⁴²On the Lapsed, 29. ANF, V, 445.

⁴³Epistle, 53:3. ANF, V, 337.

⁴⁴Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, 28. Easton, op. cit., p. 52. "This appearance of sacerdotal titles for Christian ministers--something that is foreign to the New Testament--was a consequence of the adoption of sacrificial terms for Christian worship: sacrifices are offered by priests. . . . Consequently it is more than probable that "high priest" and "priest" were in common--although by no means universal--use among Christians by the middle of the second century." Ibid., p. 64. For the term highpriest see Hippolytus, op. cit., 30.

⁴⁵Adolf Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), pp. 83-84.

Such is the contention of Bishop St. Ignatius already at the beginning of our period.

Nobody must do anything that has to do with the Church without the bishop's approval. You should regard the Eucharist as valid which is celebrated either by the bishop or by someone he authorizes. . . . Without the bishop's supervision, no baptisms or love feasts are permitted. On the other hand, whatever he approves pleases God as well. In that way everything you do will be on the safe side and valid. . . . He who pays the bishop honor had been honored by God. But he who acts without the bishop's knowledge is in the devil's service.⁴⁶

Ignatius
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How extensive such an opinion of the bishop was cannot be determined conclusively. It can, however, be shown that the concept of bishop as monarch continued down to the close of our period. The Clementine Homilies speak of the bishop as a universal king appointed by God in the world "that by means of a monarch there may be unfailling peace."⁴⁷ Some hold that it was necessary to give the bishop the title and position of monarch, in order to maintain doctrine and discipline and to protect the Church from attack both within and without.⁴⁸ Lietzmann asserts that "the concentration of power in the hands of a single person offered the surest guarantee of good

⁴⁶ Ignatius, Epistle to Smyrna, 8:1-9. LCC, I, 115.

⁴⁷ The Clementine Homily 3:62. ANF, 8, 249. "It behooves all, therefore, to follow some one as leader, honouring him as the image of God; and it behooves the leader to be acquainted with the road that entereth into the holy city."

⁴⁸ Lietzmann, op. cit., I, 248. Foakes-Jackson, op. cit., pp. 156-57.

leadership. . . ."49 This was most necessary for opposition to heresy, especially Gnosticism, which was a common threat of the time. No doubt, however, the bishop as monarch developed first in the large metropolitan areas and only later moved into the hinterland.⁵⁰ Mentioned only briefly is another symbol of the monarchial authority of the episcopate: the cathedra or episcopal seat which was traditionally established by Bishop St. James at Jerusalem.⁵¹ Originally this was probably the bishop's seat during worship. From this start the seat or the bishop's chair became a magisterial chair, a liturgical bench, and a judicial throne.⁵²

Two other duties that were given to the episcopal office are closely related to the position of monarch. In Eusebius is cited a letter by St. Dionysius showing that Soter, Bishop of Rome, is an example to be followed in works of mercy among the brethren. In this passage the bishop is called a father

49Lietzmann, op. cit., I, 248.

50Ibid., II, 63.

51Eusebius, op. cit., 3:5:2. Cruse, op. cit., p. 86. "After the ascension of our Saviour, the Jews, in addition to the wickedness against him, were now incessantly plotting mischief against his apostles. First, they slew Stephan by stoning him, next James the son of Zebedee, and the brother of John, by beheading, and finally James, who first obtained the episcopal seat at Jerusalem, after the ascension of our Saviour, and was slain in the manner before related."

52George H. Williams. "The Ministry in the Ante-Nicene Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 36.

who with loving care has watched over his children.⁵³ The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, secondly, speak of the bishop as one who presides next to God and he is to be "honoured with the authority of God, which he is to exercise over the clergy, and by which he is to govern the people."⁵⁴ As both father and God to the Christian community a great weight of responsibility was placed upon the shoulders of the bishop.

To add to this load, very early the bishop was considered the philanthropist of the church. As was shown earlier he had charge of the funds of the community. For this reason it was up to him to shelter the destitute and to care for the widows and the like.⁵⁵ Even the caretakers of the catacombs were to be paid by the bishop so that the Christian visitors to that place might not be burdened with a charge.⁵⁶ In all ways possible the bishops sought to relieve the physical burdens of men by their philanthropy.⁵⁷

⁵³Eusebius, op. cit., 4:23. Cruse, op. cit., p. 160. "He not only furnished great supplies to the saints, but also encouraged the brethren that came from abroad, as a loving father his children, with consolatory words."

⁵⁴The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:26. ANF, VII, 410.

⁵⁵The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude 9:27:1ff. LCC, II, 285.

⁵⁶Hippolytus, op. cit., 34. Easton, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵⁷Tertullian, On the Veiling of Virgins, 9. ANF, IV, 33.

St. Ignatius admonishes St. Polycarp, "Make unity your concern--there is nothing better than that."⁵⁸ This is one of the duties of the bishop: to be a symbol of unity among the faithful. To resist him is to resist God and destroy unity. To obey him is to obey God and to live in a unity comparable to that of the Father and the Son.⁵⁹

There is one God, and Christ is one, and there is one Church, and one chair founded upon the rock [the episcopate] by the word of the Lord. Another altar cannot be constituted nor a new priesthood be made, except the one altar and the one priesthood.⁶⁰

Such unity was shown, at least between individual parishes, by sending the Eucharist from one to the other⁶¹ establishing the oneness of the Body of Christ in all places at all times. The bishop is to be the champion in upholding this unity as he maintains the true doctrine and takes his share in the responsibility for the whole Church. Though she spreads over the whole world, St. Cyprian held, the Church's unity is an established fact in the agreement of the bishops. "The episcopate is a single whole, in which each bishop's share gives him a right to, and a responsibility

⁵⁸ Ignatius, Epistle to Polycarp, 1:2. LCC, I, 118.

⁵⁹ Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, 5. LCC, I, 89.

⁶⁰ Cyprian, Epistle 39:5. ANF, V, 318.

⁶¹ Eusebius, op. cit., 5:24:14. Cruse, op. cit., p. 210.

Polycarp
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for, the whole."⁶² As there was one Church represented by the many individual communities even so there was unity among the bishops. One single episcopal office was embodied in each who possessed the office. To disturb this unity was to disturb what God had wrought and thus to cut oneself off from the mystical unity of the Catholic Church.⁶³ Each bishop is allowed personal determination apart from the interference of his brothers in office.⁶⁴ "For although we are many shepherds, yet we feed one flock. . . ."⁶⁵

⁶²Cyprian, Unity of the Catholic Church, 5. LCC, V, 126-27. Especially footnote 12 on page 127. "Episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur." This famous sentence is hard to translate. Cyprian uses a legal term in solidum, but not with precision. Two men can each of them be responsible for the whole debt. This is one part of Cyprian's meaning here. Each bishop must exercise his own episcopal rights with a sense of responsibility to the whole college of bishops. Another sense is tenure upon a totality, the total being indivisible, but various people having rights to the whole. This sense is also present, for each bishop had full episcopal rights."

⁶³Lietzmann, op. cit., II, 255-256.

⁶⁴The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian, Preface. ANF, V, 565. "It remains, that upon this same matter each of us should bring forward what we think, judging no man, nor rejecting any one from the right communion, if he should think differently from us. For neither does any of us set himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical terror does any compel his colleague to the necessity of obedience; since every bishop, according to the allowance of his liberty and power, has his own proper right and judgment, and can no more be judged by another. But let us all wait for the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only one that had the power both of preferring us in the government of His Church, and of judging us in our conduct there."

⁶⁵Cyprian, Epistle 66:4. ANF, V, 369.

Again in another epistle St. Cyprian says, "In the Catholic Church there ought to be one bishop."⁶⁶ This writer is aware of the fact that most of the literature cited to show the symbolic unity found in the bishop is taken from late in the period. But what St. Cyprian came to define so clearly was surely in its inaugural stages with the statements of Bishop St. Ignatius. It appears that this development was almost entirely practical; the bishop is the symbol of unity among the faithful to prevent schism and to ward off heresy, or, put positively, to represent to the world the unity of Christ.⁶⁷

H. Chadwick has shown in a recent article that when St. Ignatius speaks in terms of the silence of the bishop he is thinking of him as "the earthly counterpart of the divine archetype." The silence of God is exemplified in the silence of the bishop for St. Ignatius.⁶⁸ Whether this is true or not what is sure is that according to St. Ignatius the bishop was a visible representative of God to the Church who in a way not unlike the Incarnation itself reveals to men the glory of God the Father.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Ibid., Epistle 45. ANF, V, 323. Quoted also in Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 6:43. Cruse, op. cit., p. 265.

⁶⁷Cyprian, Epistle 54:5. ANF, V, 340.

⁶⁸H. Chadwick, "Silence of Bishops in Ignatius," Harvard Theological Review, XLIII (April, 1950), 71.

⁶⁹Ehrhardt, op. cit., p. 125. Harnack, op. cit., p. 121.

The more anyone sees the bishop modestly silent, the more he should revere him. For everyone the Master of the house sends on his business, we ought to receive as the One who sent him. It is clear, then, that we should regard the bishop as the Lord himself.⁷⁰

*Reminders
- how we bshp
viewed as the
lord*

Unity with God and unity with the bishop are synonyms in his thought.⁷¹ To turn against the bishop becoming

schismatic is the same as resisting subjection to God.⁷²

In order to reflect to the world the mind of God and of our Lord one must be acting in accord with the mind of the bishop which is surely to be in unity with him.⁷³ Even as our Lord turned to his Father in prayer, just as the apostles turned to Christ while they walked with Him in Palestine, so Christians are admonished to defer to the bishop.⁷⁴ He represents Jesus Christ and God to the Church.

This was much the same line of thought at the other end of our period. The writer of the Clementine Homilies says that "honour or contempt shown to the president is handed on to Christ, and from Christ to God"; thus disobedience

*bshp mp
R*

⁷⁰ Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, 6:1. LCC, I, 89.

⁷¹ Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, 8:1. LCC, I, 110.

⁷² Epistle to the Ephesians, 5:3. LCC, I, 89

⁷³ Ibid., 3:2. LCC, I, 88-89.

⁷⁴ Epistle to the Magnesians, 13:2. LCC, I, 97.

to him is disobedience to Christ and God.⁷⁵ Honor to the bishop is honor to the throne of Christ. St. Cyprian shows the same emphases when he says that every bishop directs his own actions and purposes, meaning that the only authority above him is God.⁷⁶ He alone in the Church discharges the office of the Lord in that he imitates Christ. Following the example of Christ the bishop offers the Sacrifice of the Eucharist even as the Father has commanded that it be done in commemoration.⁷⁷ Thus the office becomes a sublime and even divine power governing the Church⁷⁸ which rests upon what God has given the episcopate through ordination.⁷⁹ The Recognitions of Clement and the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles follow these opinions very closely as they say that the bishop holds the place of Christ⁸⁰ being to the Christian Church the "mouth of God."⁸¹ To represent God and Christ is a duty of the bishop.

*Cyprian
bshp honor
sublime power*

⁷⁵The Clementine Homilies, 3:66. ANF, VIII, 250. See also 3:70. "However, hear your bishop, and do not weary of giving all honour to him; knowing that, by showing it to him, it is borne to Christ, and from Christ it is borne to God; and to him who offers it, is requitted manifold. Honour, therefore, the throne of Christ."

⁷⁶Cyprian, Epistle 51:21. ANF, V, 332.

⁷⁷Cyprian, Epistle, 62:14. ANF, V, 362.

⁷⁸Cyprian, Epistle, 54:2. ANF, V, 339.

⁷⁹Cyprian, Epistle, 68:9. ANF, V, 375.

⁸⁰Recognitions of Clement, 3:66. ANF, VIII, 132.

⁸¹Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:28. ANF, VII, 411.

To have a bishop without a congregation was as unlikely as having a congregation without a bishop. One without the other was meaningless.⁸² They both together make up the congregation or community of which the bishop is the representative. This is shown quite clearly early in our period by St. Ignatius as he advocates "Do nothing apart from the Bishop. . . ."⁸³ in one place, and elsewhere that he received the "large" congregation of the Ephesians in the person of their bishop.⁸⁴ Somehow these two views harmonize in his mind so that the bishop cannot act upon his own nor can the congregation. Rather the two act in conjunction with the bishop as the final representative of a unified opinion. Tertullian, about a century later, reacted to this by saying that the Church does not consist of a number of bishops, but of spiritual men who alone have the right to forgive sins.⁸⁵ This was perhaps his opinion after his fall into heresy; nonetheless it does give us insight into a possible conclusion to a theory of episcopal representation of the congregation. There is always the possibility that either the congregation or the episcopate

⁸²Dix, op. cit., p. 199.

⁸³Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, 7:2. LCC, I, 110.

⁸⁴Epistle to the Ephesians, 1:3. LCC, I, 88. See also the Epistle to the Trallians, 1:2. LCC, I, 98.

⁸⁵Tertullian, De Pudicitia, 21. Quoted in Lindsay, op. cit., p. 272, fn. 1.

bshp + congre
always together

need both bshp
& congre = com

Ignatius
w/ congre
no bshp

will assume more to itself than it rightly owns. Best is when congregation and bishop function together as St. Hippolytus has shown.⁸⁶ But during our period the duty of the bishop was to represent the community before God and in the world though no theory of transference is yet evidenced.

Bishop Must be Validated and Authorized

Bishop St. Ignatius laments the fact that some are called Christians but do not know what it is to be Christian. These people act on their own volition disregarding the will of the bishop. Of these he says, "Such people seem to me to be acting against their conscience, since they do not come to the valid and authorized services."⁸⁷ The services which he has in mind are those of the bishop. We must now look to see what a valid and authorized bishop was, or what constituted him as such.

John Henry Bernard makes a case for the fact that in the election of a bishop the people did not really vote in the modern sense of that term. Rather than a formal procedure of balloting all that was necessary was their applause. Such a proclamation however gave them a principle

⁸⁶Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, 25. Easton, op. cit., p. 50.

⁸⁷Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, 4. LCC, I, 95.

responsibility in the election for they checked the selection of one from their midst who was not worthy of the office. They were the ones in a position to know this.⁸⁸ Unlike the applause which acclaims the Roman Pontif yet today after his election this acclamation by the people could either confirm his election or, and here is the difference, black ball him from office. The point we wish to make, however, is that the bishop was not ordained until "he has been chosen by all the people."⁸⁹ The episcopal election was in the hands of all the people though we must add that people here means both clergy and laity together.⁹⁰ If we interpret St. Cyprian correctly it is possible to say that in this way the Lord "condescends to elect and appoint for Himself priests in His Church. . . ."⁹¹ This passage must be paralleled with another that points out how St. Cornelius was made a bishop by the judgment of God and His Christ to be sure but also "by the testimony of almost all the clergy . . . the people who were present . . . ancient priests and

bishop elected
in the people

bishop elected
in the people

⁸⁸ John Henry Bernard. "The Cyprianic Doctrine of the Ministry," Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry, edited by H. B. Swete (London: Macmillan and Co., 1918), p. 231.

⁸⁹ Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, 2. Easton, op. cit., p. 33.

⁹⁰ Easton, op. cit., p. 63.

⁹¹ Cyprian, Epistle 44:4. ANF, V, 322.

good men. . . ."92 By way of clarification there is evidence in the later canons that it was proper to hold an election only when more than twelve persons were present.⁹³ Again most of the literature which we have brought to your attention is from the late second or early third century but it does establish the fact that election validated and authorized the bishop to function in office.

Though it cannot be proven with any certainty it is worthy of note that there is some reference during this period to an orderly ascension to the episcopate. Tertullian relates that the heretic Valentinus had expected to be elevated to the Holy Office when a Confessor by-passed him. From this slim evidence we see that Valentinus rested his hope on a normal order which only a Confessor could interrupt.⁹⁴ A very clear reference is recorded by Bishop St. Cyprian speaking of St. Cornelius who was "promoted through all the ecclesiastical offices" patiently waiting his turn to the episcopal chair.⁹⁵ This is very little evidence to be sure but it does show that perhaps even before Tertullian there was an orderly procedure for obtaining clerics in the Church.

⁹²Epistle 51:8. ANF, V, 329.

⁹³Adolf Harnack, Sources of the Apostolic Canons, translated by Leonard A. Wheatley (London: A. and C. Black, 1895), pp. 7-8.

⁹⁴Tertullian, Against the Valentinians, 4. ANF, III, 505.

⁹⁵Cyprian, Epistle 51:8. ANF, V, 329.

St. Hippolytus relates that the bishop is to be ordained after the people have chosen him. He is to meet with all the people, laymen, bishops, presbyter, on a Sunday. "While all give their consent, the bishops shall lay their hands upon him. . . ." ⁹⁶ While this is going on prayers shall be offered by both clergy and lay men. The bishop is given a special prayer of ordination. ⁹⁷ The practice by the time

⁹⁶ Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, II. Easton, op. cit., p. 33.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 3. Easton, op. cit., p. 3. "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who dwellest on high yet has respect to the lowly, who knowest all things before they come to pass. Thou hast appointed the borders of thy church by the word of thy grace, predestinating from the beginning the righteous race of Abraham. And making them princes and priests, and leaving not thy sanctuary without a ministry, thou hast from the beginning of the world been pleased to be glorified among those whom thou hast chosen. Pour forth now that power, which is thine, of thy royal spirit, which thou gavest to thy beloved Servant Jesus Christ, which he bestowed on his holy Apostles, who established the church in every place, the church which thou hast sanctified unto unceasing glory and praise of thy name. Thou who knowest the hearts of all, grant to this thy servant, whom thou hast chosen to be bishop, [to feed thy holy flock] and to serve as thy high priest without blame, ministering night and day, to propitiate thy countenance without ceasing and to offer thee the gifts of thy holy church. And by the Spirit of high-priesthood to have authority to remit sins according to thy commandment, to assign the lots according to thy precepts, to loose every bond according to the authority which thou gavest to thy apostles, and to please thee in meekness and purity of heart, offering to thee an odor of sweet savour. Through thy Servant Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom be to thee glory, might, honour, with [the] Holy Spirit in [the] holy church, both now and always, and world without end. Amen." See Walter Howard Frere, "Early Forms of Ordination," Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry edited by H. B. Swete (London: Macmillan and Co., 1918), pp. 263-312. He has a fine discussion on all the ordination prayers.

Prayer of ordination

bsh to feed flock
bsh offer spm
bsh absolve

of St. Cyprian was to have all the neighbouring bishops of the same province present at an ordination assembled together with the people for whom the prelate was being ordained. He should be chosen in the presence of those who are most able to know his life conduct.⁹⁸ Only a brief reference is found during this period to ordination of a bishop by three other bishops. Eusebius relates the story of Novatus who sent some shady characters to a small town.⁹⁹ They got the local bishops drunk and then took advantage of their condition to receive ordination. Two things are against putting too much weight on this reference: the story is concerned with heretics not mainline Catholics, and it is related as an unusual situation. It does not seem to show anything beyond the fact that ordination was the accepted procedure to obtain the office of bishop as has been seen from the rest of this section. "For one who has not been ordained in the Church can by no means possess or govern the Church."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Cyprian, Epistle 67:5. ANF, V, 371.

⁹⁹Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 6:43. Cruse, op. cit., p. 264. In his analysis of the story Harnack says, "This story shows that in the middle of the third century (in Rome) it was the naturalized custom to have bishops consecrated by three foreign bishops; only such a consecration could be considered as perfect." Harnack, Sources, p. 37.

¹⁰⁰Cyprian, Epistle 69:3. LCC, V, 152.

Turning now to the term succession we note that this also was a means of validation and authorization of the bishop. The apostles had delivered over to the succeeding bishops their "place of government" and charged them with the functions that they had performed.¹⁰¹ This is briefly what was meant by succession during this period; however we must go into the matter a bit deeper. C. H. Turner notes that Hegesippus in laying stress on the idea of succession used the verb diadexesthai to show one bishop succeeding another and the noun diadoxee to designate a list recording successions.¹⁰² First of all the bishop must be lawfully chosen (which would be the election as shown above) by a community of Christians. Then the next step was to entrust him with the gifts of the episcopal office given by those recognized to possess them.¹⁰³ In this way a man is admitted to a chair which had been occupied by a recognized individual before him. The latter individual had succeeded a still earlier recognized individual so on back to apostolic sanction.¹⁰⁴ In those days it would have been possible for

*also used
apostolic episcopate*

¹⁰¹ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 3:3:1. ANF, I, 415.

¹⁰² C. H. Turner, "Apostolic Succession," Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry, edited by H. B. Swete (London: Macmillan and Co., 1921), pp. 117-18. See also pp. 197-206 for a fine discussion on "succession" language.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 105-106.

almost anyone to trace the lineage of a given See. St. Clement of Rome lists the succession back to our Lord.⁽²⁾

"The Apostles received the gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus, the Christ, was sent from God. Thus Christ is from God and the Apostles from Christ."¹⁰⁵ This is the first explicit declaration of some sort of apostolic succession.¹⁰⁶ Tertullian uses the thought of an apostolic succession to defend the Catholic faith against heresy. Heresy is not able to trace its lineage back to our Lord and His apostles as the apostolic churches record their origin.¹⁰⁷ If these heretics are proclaiming the truth as they profess let them unroll the lists that show the origin of the doctrine. From what apostle did it arise? An example of this procedure is St. Irenaeus who in his work Against Heresies speaks of episcopal succession and then proceeds to list names.¹⁰⁸ Never does it appear to be succession for

¹⁰⁵I Clement, 44:4. LCC, I, 63. See fn. 2.

¹⁰⁶Johannes Quasten, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950), I, 45.

¹⁰⁷Tertullian, Prescriptions Against Heretics, 32. LCC, V, 52. "If any heresies venture to plant themselves in the apostolic age, so that they may be thought to have been handed down by the apostles because they existed in their time, we can say, let them exhibit the origins of their churches, let them unroll the list of their bishops, coming down from the beginning by succession in such a way that their first bishop had for his originator and predecessor one of the apostles or apostolic men; one, I mean, who continued with the apostles. For this is how the apostolic churches record their origin."

¹⁰⁸Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 1:27:1. LCC, I, 367. See also Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 6:11:2.

the sake of succession but always for the sake of truth. The object of the succession is that perpetual awareness might be kept alive as to what and who has gone before so that their examples might be applied to the present situation.¹⁰⁹

Contingent on the succession from Christ, God, and the Apostles were certain gifts given to the bishop. In the prayer (cited above) at the ordination of a bishop St. Hippolytus lists some of the special gifts that are bestowed upon the bishop. Those who pray ask that God will give him the "authority to remit sins . . . assign lots . . . to loose every bond. . . ." ¹¹⁰ St. Peter hands on the gift of loosing and binding to St. Clement according to one epistle.¹¹¹

absol from P+

According to St. Cyprian all the apostles passed the power to remit sins on to those who succeeded them "by vicarious ordination."¹¹² Another gift that is mentioned as proceeding from the apostles through the office of the bishop is the Holy Spirit. The apostles bequeathed this gift to the Church

bish rec P.S.

¹⁰⁹Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:22. ANF, VII, 406. "It is also thy duty, O bishop, to have before thine eyes the example of those that have gone before, and to apply them skillfully to the cases of those who want words of severity or of consolation."

¹¹⁰Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, 3. Easton, op. cit., p. 34.

¹¹¹Epistle of Clement to James, 2. ANF, VIII, 218.

¹¹²Cyprian, Epistle 74:16. ANF, V, 394. "The power of remitting sins was given to the apostles and to the churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the bishops who succeeded to them by vicarious ordination."

and committed it to those who rightly believed and to their successors.¹¹³ Again, St. Irenaeus speaks of "the certain gift of truth" which is given to those who follow the succession of the episcopate "according to the good pleasure of the Father."¹¹⁴ It seems that this charisma veritatis is received through the tradition from the apostles by the Church. However, since the bishop is the representative of the Church who governs it he is the responsible guardian of the gift.¹¹⁵ By the fact of his office the bishop was in a special position to receive and to transmit this truth.¹¹⁶ Thus we have seen that by his participation in a succession from God, from Christ, and from the apostles the bishop received certain gifts with which to carry out his office. He was validated and authorized for service to the Church.

Hans Lietzmann shows that by the very nature of the case (since he was appointed by God) a charismatic could not be deposed from office. When the office of episcopos evolved from a financial officer who could be removed into an officer who replaced the prophet in the cultus of the community, then he also adopted the unlimitable tenure of the prophet. Dr.

¹¹³Hippolytus, The Refutation of All Heresies, 1: Proemium. ANF, V, 10.

¹¹⁴Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 4:26:2. ANF, I, 497.

¹¹⁵A. J. Mason, "Conceptions of the Church in Early Times," Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry, edited by H. B. Swete (London: Macmillan and Co., 1921), p. 47.

¹¹⁶Lindsay, op. cit., p. 227, fn. 1.

Lietzmann holds that, "It is this very point that the epistle of Clement explains to the Corinthians."¹¹⁷ Bishop St. Clement says, "We shall be guilty of no slight since if we eject from the episcopate men who have offered the sacrifices with innocence and holiness."¹¹⁸ Much later in our period St. Hippolytus relates much the same thing being held by St. Callistus to whom St. Hippolytus was opposed. St. Callistus maintained that even if guilty of a sin unto death the bishop could not be deposed from office.¹¹⁹ Little can be determined on the basis of this slim evidence besides the fact (which appears certain) that a bishop was not to be removed from office if approved.

The Bishops Maintain the Succession of the Apostolic
Doctrine: Truth and Secret Tradition

In an article written for the Lutheran Quarterly John Knudsen discusses the matter of secret tradition. Within the Church there has always been that which was passed on from mouth to ear apart from written documents. In the early church it was the office of the bishop to impart these secret and sacred things of Christianity to those only who had first

¹¹⁷Lietzmann, op. cit., I, 193-94.

¹¹⁸I Clement, 44:4. LCC, I, 64.

¹¹⁹Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, 9:7. ANF, V, 131. This opinion is established on the basis of St. Paul to the Romans, 15:4.

been accepted into the communicate membership of the Church.¹²⁰ Besides maintaining this secret tradition the bishop was also entrusted with the truth to which the Church held and the discipline which she administered. All this was best preserved in a single person.¹²¹ Even apart from the "forging of Scriptures" the doctrine of the apostles and the constitution of the Church were handed down through the succession of bishops.¹²² Whatever the apostles knew they transferred to those who succeeded them as heads of communities; perfect and irreproachable men who could be entrusted with such as this.¹²³ Each bishop carried on the tradition of apostolic truth.¹²⁴ By the very fact that St. Irenaeus could list the names of bishops in a given community down to his day he showed "that it is one and the same life-giving faith which has been preserved from the apostles to the present, and is handed on in truth."¹²⁵ Even if the apostles had not left their writings to the Church still she would have, in those to whom they committed the Church

¹²⁰Johannes Knudsen, "Secret Tradition in the Ancient Church," The Lutheran Quarterly, VII (August, 1955), 257.

¹²¹Hatch, op. cit., p. 103, fn. 38.

¹²²Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 4:33:8. ANF, I, 508.

¹²³Ibid., 3:3:1. LCC, I, 371.

¹²⁴Ibid., 3:3:4. LCC, I, 373-74.

¹²⁵Ibid., 3:3:3. LCC, I, 372-73.

and her truth, "the rule of the tradition" even apostolic truth.¹²⁶ Only that is "accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition."¹²⁷ St. Clement of Alexandria can point with pride to his teachers who had preserved the pure doctrine derived directly from the Holy Apostles of our Lord. By God's will it has been preserved.¹²⁸ Tertullian puts the matter quite logically when confronting Marcion,

On the whole, then, if that is evidently more true which is earlier, if that is earlier which is from the very beginning, if that is from the beginning which has the apostles for its authors, then it will certainly be quite evident, that that comes down from the apostles which had been kept as a sacred deposit in the churches of the apostles.¹²⁹

Ordinarily it is the bishop who maintains and continues this succession of truth and the secret tradition within the Church.

¹²⁶Ibid., 3:4:1. LCC, I, 374.

¹²⁷Origen, De Principiis, Preface 2. ANF, IV, 239.

¹²⁸Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, 1:1:11. ANF, II, 301.

¹²⁹Tertullian, Against Marcion, 4:5. ANF, III, 349.

CHAPTER VI

THE OFFICE OF THE PRESBYTER

Thomas Lindsay states that the term presbyteros was a common term in Asia Minor to describe the rulers of a corporation prior to the New Testament period. In Egypt the appellation was used for a religious official. During the reign of the Ptolemies it designated a twenty-five member board that conducted all the affairs of the priesthood.¹ Beyond this "presbyter" is also an Old Testament and a New Testament term denoting persons who functioned in an official capacity. During this period the presbyter fills various roles which will be described in this chapter.

An Office of General Benevolence and Service

Adolf Harnack distinguishes two uses of the term deacon. In its wider sense the usage designates any ministry which is not a service of the Word, any function requiring discipline or management. In a narrow sense it includes two closely related spheres of care for the poor and the performance of duties at the assembly of the community. Presbyters performed this work or service in its wide and narrow sense sometimes being called bishops and deacons.

¹The Church and the Ministry In the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1862), p. 154, fn. 1.

Presbyters become more and more to be denoted by the names reserved for the diaconate in the narrower sense as covering the care of the poor.² Bishop St. Polycarp writes to the Philippians,

Presbyters must be compassionate, merciful to all, turning back those who have gone astray, looking after the sick, not neglecting widow or orphan or one that is poor; but "always taking thought for what is honorable in the sight of God and men," refraining from all anger, partiality, unjust judgment, keeping far from all love of money, not hastily believing evil of anyone, nor being severe in judgment, knowing that we all owe the debt of sin.³

From this it is clear that the presbyters at Philippi had supreme oversight in matters that required judgment. Edwin Hatch holds that they cared for all areas of need within the Christian community.⁴ The presbyter's was a function of service or benevolence not necessarily of prestige. A presbyter, says St. Clement of Alexandria, is not honored

²Adolf Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), pp. 90-91. It is not the purpose of this paper to delve into the controversy over the relation of bishop to presbyter etc. For insight into two opinions we recommend to the reader this work of Harnack and that of a later critic Thomas M. Lindsay, cited in footnote 1, and Olof Linton, "Das Problem Der Urkirche In Der Neueren Forschung Eine Kritische Darstellung," Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift. Band 1. (Uppsala: A. -B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1932). Linton covers quite thoroughly the more recent literature.

³Polycarp, Epistle to the Philippians, 6:1. LCC, I, 133-34.

⁴Organization of the Early Christian Church (London: Rivingtons, 1882), p. 67. "Nor does it appear that any of these duties ever wholly ceased to be the duties of the presbyterate."

here on earth with the chief-seat yet he will be honored with many thrones after this life.⁵ Here below his honor is found in the care of the poor lambs in the flock of God.

A Council For General Improvement

"In the Church, the elders attend to the department which has improvement for its object."⁶ In theory these officers formed a council for the bishop even when episcopal authority was most roundly asserted.⁷ As late as the end of our period they were still a group surrounding the bishop.⁸ A broad generalization might characterize the bishop attending to theological matters and the presbyters caring for the practical matters.

The presbyters were a council to the bishop. In most communities there was no need for them to perform priestly functions. Early the congregations were small enough so that the bishop could handle the situation. However they would, even in small communities, surround the bishop with their

⁵Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, 6:13. ANF, II, 504. Hatch, op. cit., p. 80, notes that for a long time the functions of the presbyter were narrowly limited. Baptism and the celebration of the Eucharist by a presbyter were no doubt valid but as a matter of church order they could only baptize in emergencies. The right of the presbyter as regards the Eucharist are uncertain.

⁶Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, 7:1. ANF, II, 523.

⁷Hatch, op. cit., p. 67.

⁸Lindsay, op. cit., p. 180, fn. 1.

council, and in cases of emergency take over his functions.⁹ Usually this "college of presbyters" would stand in subordination to the bishop in spite of their special seat in the community. They act only as a council and not as individuals.¹⁰ As the monarchical episcopate took shape within the Church the presbytery regressed from a ruling body within the community to merely a council of advice to the bishop.¹¹ St. Cyprian speaks of them as a group which he calls together for "well-grounded counsel."¹² The Clementine Homilies refer to them as a council that renders judgment among the brethren and reports to the bishop.¹³ In each case they are a council of the bishop. St. Cyprian, being a monarchical bishop, desired that the presbyters be subject to his office in all things. At least one of his epistles, however, relates the fact that during his day there were those presbyters who claimed full authority for themselves. The disturbance shows that the

⁹F. J. Foakes-Jackson, Studies in the Life of the Early Church (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1924), p. 159-60. An example of an emergency is the Roman congregation after the death of Bishop Fabian. No successor could be appointed after his martyrdom so the presbyters took over the government of the Church and collectively represented the episcopal office.

¹⁰Harnack, op. cit., p. 84.

¹¹Burton Scott Easton in Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 77.

¹²Cyprian, Epistle 45. ANF, V, 323.

¹³The Clementine Homilies, 3:67. ANF, VIII, 250.

idea of ruling presbyters was on the way out.¹⁴ By this time it could be said that the council of presbyters was subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop.¹⁵ Nonetheless they are, and remain, throughout our period, his council.

Let also a double portion be set apart for the presbyters, as for such who labour continually about the word and doctrine, upon the account of the apostles of our Lord, whose place they sustain, as the counsellors of the bishop and the crown of the Church. For they are the Sanhedrin and senate of the Church.¹⁶

This last sentence draws our attention to the proposition that the presbyters had jurisdiction in disputes even as the Jewish council. Like the Jewish presbyters the Christian men with the same title exercised a consensual jurisdiction in matters of dispute between Christians. Only when severe punishments were required were Gentile courts used. Jurisdiction belonged to the council of presbyters.¹⁷ Pseudo-Clement

¹⁴Cyprian, Epistle 9:1. ANF, V, 289. "For what danger ought we not to fear from the Lord's displeasure, when some of the presbyters, remembering neither the Gospel nor their own place, and, moreover, considering neither the Lord's future judgment nor the bishop placed over them, claim to themselves entire authority,--a thing which was never in any wise done under our predecessors,--with discredit and contempt of the bishop?"

¹⁵Cyprian, Epistle 10:1. See also 23. ANF, V, 291 and 301.

¹⁶Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:28. ANF, VII, 411.

¹⁷Hatch, op. cit., p. 72ff. Harnack, op. cit., p. 90. The "elders" were old men "appointed by the laying on of hands--who sometimes disappeared into the general body of old men and sometimes stood out from it. They were also called 'shepherds,' and 'presidents,' a name which in itself does not denote any office but an actual function. Their

said:

Let not those who have disputes go to law before the civil powers but let them by all means be reconciled by the elders of the Church, then let them readily yield to their position.¹⁸

Reconciliation was their goal but such could not always be attained. In the latter case at least one writer shows that their jurisdiction permitted them to expel the erring brother from the Church.¹⁹

To perform their primary task God gave the presbyters gifts. At a presbyter's ordination the clergy and people besought God to send His Holy Spirit upon this man and give him the "grace and counsel of a presbyter" that he might be enabled to "sustain and govern" the people of God with a pure heart.²⁰ This grace was given so that he might be adequate to his tasks.

Presbyters also exercise discipline in the church. In the Corinthian community, to which St. Clement wrote, there had been a revolt against the presbyters. Its result was the blasphemy of God. Bishop St. Clement admonishes those

authority was to be in all essentials dependent on their great example (I Pet. 5), and was thus not of a judicial nature." Harnack disagrees with Hatch.

¹⁸ Epistle of Clement to James, 10. ANF, VIII, 220. Hatch, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁹ Hippolytus, Against the Heresy of One Noetus, 1. ANF, V, 223.

²⁰ Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 8. Translated into English by Burton Scott Easton (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 37.

responsible for the uprising to submit to the presbyters. "You must humble your hearts and be disciplined so that you repent."²¹ Elsewhere St. Polycarp tells his readers to be obedient to the presbyters as to God.²² Origen describes them as allowing and forbidding.

There are men appointed among us to examine closely into the lives and characters of those who come to us that they may prevent those who do what is forbidden from entering our common assembly, and that by receiving those who do otherwise they may make them better day by day.²³

Keeping a tab on the flock given to their charge the presbyters will "adorn with discipline the bride of Christ . . . in moral purity. . . ."²⁴ Thus the church will reach the heights of honor and will be found pure and holy at the return of our Lord. Perhaps one of the means by which this was done is alluded to as an exception by St. Cyprian. During one of his absences he gives the presbyters instructions to absolve any of the lapsed who come to them for confession and the imposition of hands "if they should be seized with any misfortune and peril of sickness."²⁵ To this writer it appears that the bishop is speaking of something that is

²¹I Clement, 57:1. LCC, I, 69.

²²The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, 5:3. LCC, I, 133.

²³Origen, Against Celsus, 3:51. ANF, IV, p. 484. Hatch, op. cit., p. 71.

²⁴Epistle of Clement to James, 7. ANF, VIII, 219. Hatch, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

²⁵Cyprian, Epistle, 12:1. ANF, V, 293.

not generally done. However, if it was possible for the presbyter to function this way in St. Cyprian's day could it not have been probable that he functioned thus earlier? Nonetheless it has been shown above that the presbyters in their office for benevolence and general improvement of the community did exercise discipline perhaps by means of confession and absolution.

Bishop St. Clement seems to hold that the presbyter was appointed to his office²⁶ and could be removed at will by the people.²⁷ It is not possible on the basis of these brief notices to frame conclusions on the presbyter's length of tenure. A revolt arose and perfectly qualified men were removed from office. This was to St. Clement a highly irregular procedure and a burden upon the clergy. What is evident is that the clergy were appointed and functioned only in conjunction with the people.

It appears to have been the practice to ordain a presbyter in his own dioceses. In the case of Origen, to which we refer, there were other impediments which provoked the Bishop of Alexandria's refusal to recognize his ordination.²⁸ In the ordination proper it was the practice for the

²⁶ I Clement, 54:2. LCC, I, 68.

²⁷ Ibid., 44:5. LCC, I, 64.

²⁸ Hans Lietzmann, A History of the Early Church, translated from the German original by Bertram Lee Woolf (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1937), II, 299.

bishop to lay his hands upon the one being ordained while the presbyters simply touch him. As this is going on the bishop speaks the prayer of consecration seeking for this person the gifts belonging to the office.²⁹ Thus the presbyter was appointed and ordained to serve the Church.

The presbyters received monetary support. Valens, sometimes a presbyter among the Philippian, "forgot the office what was given him" turning to a concern for mundane matters.³⁰ Whatever might have been the case there, we do know that in Rome there were forty-six salaried presbyters.³¹ In the East about the same time we hear of Origen, when a presbyter, being supported financially by a wealthy Christian.³² It thus appears to have been the practice, whether it began

²⁹Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 8. Easton, op. cit., pp. 37-38. The bishop shall say as he lays his hands upon the presbyter to be: "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look upon this thy servant, and grant him the Spirit of grace and counsel of a presbyter, that he may sustain and govern thy people with a pure heart; as thou didst look upon thy chosen people and didst command Moses that he should choose presbyters, whom thou didst fill with thy Spirit, which thou gavest to thy servant. And now, O Lord, grant that there may be unfailingly preserved amongst us the Spirit of thy grace, and make us worthy that, believing, we may minister to thee in simplicity of heart, praising thee. Through thy Servant Jesus Christ, through whom be to thee glory and honour, with [the] Holy Spirit in the holy church, both now and always and world without end. Amen." See an expanded version of this in the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 8:16. ANF, VII, 492.

³⁰Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippian, II. LCC, I, 135.

³¹Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History, 6:43. Translated from the original by Christian Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 265.

³²Ibid., 6:23. Cruse, op. cit., p. 243.

early or late in the period, to give a stipend to the presbyters for their services.

Worthy of Respect

Presbyters were always respected individuals in the Christian community. We see this especially from early in the period since at that time the presbyter was not so overshadowed by the bishop as he was later. St. Clement praises the Corinthian Christians for having obeyed their rulers and for giving their elders the proper respect in obedience to God's Law.³³ The Christian is bound to honor these officers even as he is bound by God to raise his children properly and to do good.³⁴ Respect for presbyters is a virtue to be desired and should be a habit of the Christian. In the Shepherd of Hermas the "Lady" comes to Hermas with six young men, and invites him to sit with her on a couch. Hermas accepts the invitation but insists that the elders must be seated first before he will sit.³⁵ Thus once again we have an example of deference shown to presbyters. Probably in all these cases the respect that is shown is bestowed upon the office rather than upon the individual though with such

³³I Clement, 1:3. LCC, I, 43. "For you always acted without partiality and walked in God's laws. You obeyed your rulers and gave your elders the proper respect."

³⁴Ibid., 21:6. LCC, I, 54. "Let us respect those who rule over us. Let us honor our elders. Let us rear the young in the fear of God. Let us direct our women to what is good."

³⁵The Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 3:1:8. LCL, II, 29.

scant witness such is not firmly established.

Preside At Worship

Some of the respect that accrued to the presbyters no doubt came from the fact that they took part in the worship of the community, though the fact that they were honorable men made them worthy of participation in the cultus. When the Christians came together (to call to remembrance the sacred writings) the elders presided. In this way the Christians remained under the scrutiny of the eye of God.³⁶ These same elders or presbyters as late as St. Cyprian were entrusted with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. By this time it was customary for the bishop to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the regular assembly but in special situations the presbyter also could make use of his gifts along this line.³⁷ St. Justin Martyr is an early witness to presbyters presiding at worship. Here it is clear that there were only two functioning officers in the worship, the president (i.e., bishop-presbyter) and deacon.³⁸ As time went on and the Church expanded, the work of her officers became more clearly defined. But as powerful as the bishop was to become it was possible for the presbyter on account of the dignity of his office to preside at Christian worship.

³⁶Tertullian, Apology, 39. ANF, III, 46.

³⁷Cyprian, Epistle, 4:2. ANF, V, 282.

³⁸Justin Martyr, The First Apology, 65. ANF, I, 185.
See also George H. Williams, "The Ministry in the Ante-

Represent The Apostles

Bishop St. Ignatius twice points out that the presbyter is comparable to the apostle of Jesus Christ.³⁹ Even as one would submit to the apostles so one should follow and submit to the presbyters. "Let the presbyters be esteemed by you," says a much later document, "to represent us the apostles, and let them be the teachers of divine knowledge."⁴⁰ The ruling and the teaching office of the Holy Apostles was combined in the office of the presbyter.⁴¹

At the time of St. Irenaeus the distinction was not made between presbyter and bishop. This great saint is able to speak of the presbyters possessing the tradition which has been handed down through "the succession of elders" from the apostles. During this era the presbyter-bishops were considered the guardians of the church's truth.⁴² To our knowl-

Nicene Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 28.

³⁹ Ignatius, Epistle to the Trallians, 2:2. LCC, I, 99. Epistle to the Smyrneans, 8:1. LCC, I, 115.

⁴⁰ The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:26. ANF, VII, 410.

⁴¹ Hatch, op. cit., p. 78, disagrees. He feels that it is clear that the presbyters of the primitive Church did not necessarily teach. They were not forbidden to teach but if they taught and ruled at the same time then they obviously combined two offices. In sub-apostolic literature there is not one reference to a presbyter being a teacher.

⁴² Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 3:2:2; 4:26:5. ANF, I, 415, 498.

edge this opinion fades with the passage of time and the bishop comes to represent the apostolic succession and to preserve the tradition of Holy Church.

It is St. Irenaeus who holds that the presbyters, along with "succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth" (charisma veritas). Such they receive at the good pleasure of the heavenly Father.⁴³ The saint of Lyons probably has reference to the same gift as that possessed by the bishop. This gift is the truth of the Church which accrues to those who are officers within the Church according to the succession from the Holy Apostles.⁴⁴ St. Clement of Alexandria holds that even before a man's inclusion in the order of presbyters he must show that he possesses the necessary gifts; that he is a truly Christian Gnostic. Such a one is "exercised in the Lord's commandments, and lives perfectly and gnostically according to the Gospel. . . ." ⁴⁵ Only this type of person can truly be called a presbyter and servant of the Church of God. St. Hippolytus stresses the fact that the bishop and presbyter are of a "common spirit." He held only one distinction between these officers: whereas the bishop is able to communicate his gifts to others in

⁴³Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 4:26:2. ANF, I, 497.

⁴⁴See Chapter V, the section relating to the validation and authorization of a bishop.

⁴⁵Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, 6:13. Quoted in Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 282-83 and 283, fn. 1.

ordination, the presbyter has "only the power to receive."⁴⁶
 This is of course a late witness. Such a distinction does
 not necessarily hold true throughout this period. From the
 evidence we can be sure that certain gifts were both requisite
 and prerequisite for the office of presbyter.

⁴⁶Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 9. Easton, op. cit.,
 p. 38.

CHAPTER VII

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

It appears that the office of deacon was a totally new institution. Unlike the presbyter this term has no recognizable prototype in Judaism. If the office is connected with either the Levites or some other office in the synagogue its philanthropic objectives make parallelism difficult.¹ Springing from the uniqueness of the Christian message the office of deacon was totally new when it was inaugurated by the Christian Church.

General Requirements: A Virtuous Person

The Church expected deacons to be ethically and spiritually pure. They were to be "men who are gentle, generous, faithful, and well tried."² They are servants of God, not

¹J. B. Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1913), p. 189. See also Olof Linton, "Das Problem Der Urkirche In Der Neueren Forschung Eine Kritische Darstellung," Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift (Uppsala: A. -B. Lundequist-ska Bokhandeln, 1932), I, 113. "Die gewöhnlichen Worte für den Diener sind $\nu\pi\epsilon\rho\epsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ und $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma$. Für einen niederen Kultdienst wie vielleicht auch für den Aufwärter gewisser Kultvereine kommt jedoch $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ vor. In gehobener Sprache ist das Wort gewöhnlicher. Gottes $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ nennt Epiktet den kynischen Philosophen. Demgemäss hat das Wort auf ausserchristlichem Gebiet noch weniger als das Wort eine technische Bedeutung."

²Didache, 15. LCC, I, 178.

of men,

not slanderers, or double-tongued, not lovers of money, temperate in all matters, compassionate, careful, living according to the truth of the Lord, who became "a servant of all". . . .³

A Chosen and Respected Officer

The deacon was primarily God's servant or as St. Ignatius says "deacons of the Christ God."⁴ They were elected by the entire community to be God's representatives. A deacon represented the Church and the bishops represented God.⁵ They served God by ministering to His Church. It was, then, incumbent upon them that they not leave themselves open to criticism but should rather attempt to "give complete satisfaction to everyone."⁶ When fulfilling these obligations the deacons enjoyed a place of honor in the Christian Church;⁷ the people respected their

³Polycarp, Epistle to the Philippians, 5:2. LCC, I, 133. For a later witness and elaboration of this see Adolf Harnack, Sources of the Apostolic Canons (London: A. and C. Black, 1895), pp. 17-19. Also see Thomas M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry In the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1862), p. 181 fn. 1.

⁴Ignatius, Epistle to Smyrna, 10:1. LCC, I, 115.

⁵Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, 10:1,2. LCC, I, 111.

⁶Ignatius, Epistle to the Trallians, 2:3. LCC, I, 99.

⁷Didache, 15. LCC, I, 178.

elected officials even as they respected God's law.⁸

Traditionally the office of Deacon was traced back to an apostolic pattern. When the apostles were sent out by our Lord they preached and taught in the countryside and cities making converts. They selected some of these converts to be overseers of the new community and they appointed others as deacons to the new believers. Bishop St. Clement claims scriptural origin for this procedure by quoting Isaiah 60:17, "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith."⁹ The question as to how this apostolic selection continued after the death of the apostles is elucidated by the Constitution of the Holy Apostles. The deacon received the laying on of hands from the bishop, while the deacons and presbytery were present.¹⁰ In the prayer that was spoken while the bishop's hands lay on the candidate's head, reference is made to the proto-martyr St. Stephen. No direct mention is made of St. Stephen's deaconate, though the comparison seems clear. The newly created deacon was encouraged to follow the example of the great and holy martyr.¹¹ No such mention is made in the shorter and

⁸ Ignatius, Epistle to Smyrna, 8:1. LCC, I, 115.
"Respect the deacons as you would God's law."

⁹ I Clement, 42:4ff. LCC, I, 62. Perhaps a lost version.

¹⁰ Constitution of the Holy Apostles, 8:18. ANF, VII, 492.

¹¹ Ibid. Harnack concludes that apart from their conclusions (which he calls "ugly") the consecration prayers could "certainly not" have been composed in the eighth century. All

perhaps older prayer recorded by St. Hippolytus. Here there is only a request for the "Holy Spirit of grace and care" so that the deacon might perform the office for which he has been chosen by God.¹² No mention is made of the apostolic origin of the office.

As a chosen and respected officer of the Church the deacon was given a stipend for his support. Whether this was the rule before the reign of St. Cornelius (ca. 250) of Rome cannot be shown from the documents.¹³

Another matter about which there is but slight notice is whether loss of office would necessitate re-ordination. St. Cyprian relates that one who had been entrusted with the

the ordination prayers of the Constitutions show a strong dependence on much earlier sources. Hence he concludes that these prayers belong to Christian antiquity. Harnack, op. cit., p. 69.

¹²Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 9. Translated into English by Burton Scott Easton (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), pp. 38-39. We record this as the shorter of the two mentioned in the text. "O God, who hast created all things and hast ordered them by thy Word, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom thou didst send to minister thy will and to manifest to us thy desire; grant [the] Holy Spirit of grace and care and diligence to this thy servant, whom thou hast chosen to serve the church and to offer in thy holy sanctuary the gifts that are offered to thee by thine appointed high priests, so that serving without blame and with a pure heart he may be counted worthy of this exalted office, by thy goodwill, praising thee continually. Through thy Servant Jesus Christ, through whom be to thee glory and honour, with [the] Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, both now and always and world without end. Amen."

¹³Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 6:43. Translated from the original by Christian Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 265.

"diaconate of sacred administration" lost this function because he defected from the Church and took some money with him.¹⁴ All we are able to ascertain from this singular passage is that the deacon could relinquish his office.

The Deacon Performed Ministerial Functions

St. Clement of Alexandria compared the duties of the deacons to the ministerial functions of the angels who serve God.¹⁵ They have a ministry to perform and they go about it as by the command of the Almighty. Basically the title "deacon" means "servant," particularly a waiter on table. No doubt their function was originally to wait on the Lord's Table by taking the Holy Sacrament to the homes of the absent and caring for the sick. "In practice . . . they became the assistants of the bishops in discharging services of love to all the members of the church who were in need."¹⁶ As the angels serve in heaven so the deacons serve on earth. As the angels serve God so the deacons minister to the needs of the bishop.

One chief function of the deacon's office was to administer the love of God and of the community to fellow

¹⁴Cyprian, Epistle 48:1. ANF, V, 325.

¹⁵Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, 7:1. LCC, II, 94.

¹⁶Hans Lietzmann, A History of the Early Church, translated from the German by Bertram Lee Woolf (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1937), I, 145-46.

redeemed Christians. They distributed the gifts of the early community. This is clearly shown in The Shepherd of Hermas which directs the reader's attention to wicked deacons who used the charity entrusted to them for distribution for their own benefit. If the work of these men had not included contact with the actual gifts being distributed their fall might have been avoided.¹⁷ Later in our period we see the deacons functioning as the eyes of the bishop. In this capacity they check up on the congregation in an attempt to prevent sin. They uncover the suffering that is going on bodily among the members of the community and report it to the multitude. They supply the wants of the needy as the bishop directs.¹⁸ In short they do what the bishop does not have the opportunity to perform himself. Since it was difficult for the bishop to distribute the Holy Sacrament to those absent, the deacons carried this out after they had

¹⁷The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude, 9:26:2. LCL, II, 281.

¹⁸Epistle of Clement to James, 12. ANF, VIII, 220. "Moreover let the deacons of the church, going about with intelligence, be as the eyes to the bishop, carefully inquiring into the doings of each member of the church, ascertaining who is about to sin, in order that, being arrested with admonition by the president, he may haply not accomplish the sin. . . . Let them check the disorderly. . . . And let them learn who are suffering under bodily disease, and then bring them to the notice of the multitude who do not know of them, that they may visit them, and supply their wants according to the judgment of the president. Yea, though they do this without his knowledge, they do nothing amiss. These things, then, and things like to these, let the deacons attend to."

distributed the sacred species to those present at the liturgy.¹⁹ In these ways the deacons performed ministerial duties.

Functioned In Relation To A Superior

Throughout this period it was the general policy for the deacon to go about his duties under the direction of a superior who was usually the bishop. In the epistles of Ignatius the deacons appear as individuals who are always in direct relation to the bishop as the executive organ. They function in this capacity at divine service and in the work of administration.²⁰ St. Ignatius can speak of the deacons as his "fellow slaves" probably meaning that they worked alongside of him.²¹ This same Holy Bishop speaks with joy of a deacon who willingly submits to both the presbytery and to the bishop.²² It seems to have been customary for every bishop to have one or more deacons to perform necessary tasks.²³ This perhaps gives us some insight into the later terminology that speaks of the deacons

¹⁹ Justin Martyr, The First Apology, 65, 67. ANF, I, 185.

²⁰ Adolf Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), p. 84.

²¹ Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, 2:1. LCC, I, 88.

²² Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, 2. LCC, I, 95. "I am delighted with him because he submits to the bishop as to God's grace, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ."

²³ Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 4:22. Cruse, op. cit., p. 157.

as the bishop's eyes.²⁴ It was perhaps simply for this reason that St. Hippolytus makes a large point of the idea that the deacon is "to serve the bishop and to carry out the bishop's commands."²⁵ It is for this reason that he does not receive, at ordination, the priesthood of the church which the bishops and presbyters share; ". . . he receives only what is confided in him under the bishop's authority."²⁶ "Each of the deacons, with the sub-deacons, shall be alert on the bishop's behalf. . . ."²⁷ St. Cyprian reminds the deacons that the bishops have been chosen by the Lord (in succession from the first apostles) whereas the deacons are chosen by the bishop and should therefore try to satisfy him who is set over them.²⁸ This submission to the bishop's will is demonstrated when St. Cyprian designates the deacons to give Holy Absolution upon the repentance of the lapsed.²⁹ In The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles we find a good

²⁴See above. Also Edwin Hatch, Organization of the Early Christian Church (London: Rivingtons, 1882), p. 51.

²⁵Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 9. Easton, op. cit., p. 38.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 30. Easton, op. cit., p. 53.

²⁸Cyprian, Epistle, 64:3. ANF, V, 366. "But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose apostles, that is bishops and overseers; while apostles appointed themselves deacons after the ascent of the Lord into heaven, as ministers of their episcopacy and of the Church."

²⁹Cyprian, Epistle, 12:1. ANF, V, 293.

summary:

For as Christ does nothing without His Father, so neither does the deacon do anything without his bishop; and as the Son without His Father is nothing, so is the deacon nothing without his bishop; and as the Son is subject to His Father, so is every deacon subject to his bishop; and as the Son is the messenger and prophet of the Father, so is the deacon the messenger and prophet of his bishop. Wherefore let all things that he is to do with any one be made known to the bishop, and be finally ordered by him.³⁰

³⁰Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:30. ANF, VII, 411. See also 2:26. ANF, VII, 410.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MINOR ORDERS

In this chapter we propose to touch upon the offices of Apostle, Teacher, Prophet, Evangelist, Reader, Sub-deacon, Exorcist, Doorkeeper and Janitor, Deaconess, Widow and Virgin. These were ministrants who were considered as "next to the clergy." The main distinction that was made between them and the orders of Bishop, Deacon, and Presbyter was that the former were not ordained with the laying on of hands. Generally their office came by nomination.¹ The bishop, presbyter, and deacon received the imposition of hands and with this the Spirit to perform their churchly task. The so-called minor orders, on the other hand, were "officially admitted to the exercise of gifts they already possess."² Rudolph Sohm divided the minor offices of the Church into two classes. He called the one "diakonale Amter" and the other "klerikalisierte Lienthätigkeit."³ Some of these

¹George H. Williams, "The Ministry in the Ante-Nicene Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 51.

²Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, edited and translated by Burton Scott Easton (Ann Arbor: Archon Books, 1962), p. 83.

³Olof Linton, "Das Problem Der Urkirche In Der Neueren Forschung Eine Kritische Darstellung," Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift (Uppsala: A. -B. Lundquistska Bokhandeln, 1932), I, 114. See also Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early

people performed services for the entire Church and others acted much as lay assistants to the clergy. Their order was not "minor" in that they had a less godly purpose to fulfill but only in that they did not act in the capacity of the bishop, presbyter and deacon. There seems to be a quantitative distinction in function but not a qualitative distinction of duties. This is clear from Bishop St. Cyprian. Besides the ministries of the bishop, presbyter, and deacon, he recognizes "other ministries" among the clergy.⁴ Perhaps it would be correct to speak of the three major orders as performing a variety of ministries in the Church whereas the minor orders functioned in specific tasks without much variety. What is clear is that in the minds of most early Christians a distinction was made between the orders though it was realized that they all ministered to the Church.⁵

Church," The Apostolic Ministry, edited by Kenneth E. Kirk (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), p. 196.

⁴Cyprian, Epistle, 39:1. ANF, V, 316.

⁵Tertullian, Prescriptions Against Heretics, 3. LCC, V, 32. "If then a bishop or deacon, a widow, a virgin or a teacher, or even a martyr, has lapsed from the Rule of Faith, must we conclude that heresy possesses the truth?" See Adolf Harnack, Sources of the Apostolic Canons (London: A. and C. Black, 1895), p. 61, where the conclusion is drawn on the basis of this text that Tertullian knew nothing of "ordines minores."

The Apostles

Adolf Harnack shows that the title "apostle" is used in two different senses in the early Church. Used narrowly, the term designates the original "Twelve" chosen by our Lord. Used widely, it designates a class of itinerant prophets.⁶ Later it reverted back to the primary designation of "the founders of the church" who had walked and talked with our Lord.⁷ From the time of St. Jerome the Jewish term shaliach has been recognized as a prototype of apostle. The shaliach was a person "sent" both "in the name" and "in the person" of the sender to perform unalterable actions for the sender.⁸

⁶Adolf Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, translated and edited by James Moffatt (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), pp. 325-27.

⁷E. De Witt Burton. "The Office of Apostle in the Early Church," American Journal of Theology, XVI (1912), 588.

⁸Dix, op. cit., p. 228. F. Gavin, "Shaliach and Apostolos," Anglican Theological Review, IX (1927), 257, says of shaliach, "In the early period (B.C.) it meant the authorization of a plenipotentiary by competent authority, to act in accordance with specific instruction at a distance from the deputizing party. In the Persian period the chief function of such an appointee was itinerant religious teaching: he was, in fact, a kind of traveling missionary. By the first century . . . there had come about a distinction between the two passive forms as in the Yoma where shaliach means plenipotentiary and shaluach deputed agent. In the course of the growth of the synagogue (perhaps extensively even before the year 70) the word came to be applied to the officiant or celebrant at public worship, and associated with it the term 'offerer' (karoba). There grew up in the

After the time of the Twelve the appellation is used by The Shepherd of Hermas of those who with the bishops, teachers, and deacons were stones well fitted to go into the makeup of the "building" which is the Church. These lived in purity and godly agreement as they served the elect of God.⁹ By such virtue they fulfilled their responsible role of mission outreach for the Lord of the Church. Sometimes all those who took seriously their commission from the Lord, no matter what office they held, were called apostles.¹⁰ Briefly the apostle was a man entrusted with the high responsibility to represent another.

In a cryptic way Hermas mentions that the apostles were men "who preached to the whole world."¹¹ To do this they would have to travel. The Didache shows this.

Welcome every apostle on arriving, as if he were the Lord. But he must not stay beyond one day. In case

early Christian centuries various other meanings of the term: the shalichim of the separate communities authorized to transmit funds to the central board, the shalichim of the patriarch deputized both for this purpose and that of other religious duties, and the shalichim of various Rabbis of eminence." See also Linton, op. cit., pp. 73-74, who quotes Lightfoot, "Thus in designating His immediate and most favoured disciples 'Apostle,' our Lord was not introducing a new term but adopting one which from its current usage would suggest to His hearers the idea of a highly responsible mission." Compare Harnack, op. cit., p. 330.

⁹The Shepherd of Hermas, Vision, 3:5. LCL, II, 35.

¹⁰Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, 4:17. ANF, II, 428.

¹¹The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude, 9:25. LCL, II, 279.

of necessity, however, the next day too. If he stays three days, he is a false prophet. On departing, an apostle must not accept anything save sufficient food to carry him till his next lodging. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet.¹²

We notice from this passage that the apostle represented a higher authority, in this case "the Lord." Apostles were also to be rolling stones never stopping to become a burden on any specific community. Their itinerant ministry consisted in reaching as many places as possible with the message of their Sender.

"Diese Apostel . . . waren an keine Einzelgemeinde gebunden, sondern waren Lehrer der ganzen Kirche die von Gemeinde zu Gemeinde wanderten."¹³ The teaching which they proclaimed from place to place was the Word of God and His Christ. They were "apostles . . . of the preaching of the Son of God."¹⁴

One notes that all the literature cited is from the earliest part of our period. No doubt the apostolic task survived for a time after the death of the "twelve" and was gradually taken over by the permanent officers. Whatever the situation this writer found no evidence for the office's existence at a later date.

¹²Didache, 11:4-6. LCC, I, 176.

¹³Linton, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁴The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude, 9:15; 9:16:5. LCL, II, 262-63.

The Teachers

The function of a teacher in the Christian Church or even in the world which surrounds the Holy Church is to help men understand "the meaning of life in a God-centered world, and to guide them in finding, facing, and fulfilling the Divine will."¹⁵ In the early Church it was the teacher's function to explain the Sacred Scriptures. This role was adopted from the Jewish synagogue as was also the honour which accrued to those who taught.¹⁶ The prestige of the Christian teacher finds a parallel in Judaism where the teacher was also highly respected. The rabbi, or teacher, was placed on a higher level than one's own father. For example, if both one's father and teacher were found carrying a load the teacher was to receive assistance first.¹⁷ This prestige and honor sprang, no doubt, from the message rather than the man. In the period under scrutiny the duties of the teacher are not elucidated. His functions were gradually taken over by other officials.

Hermas classes teachers with apostles, bishops and deacons as men who serve the elect of God. They are stones

¹⁵F. V. Filson, "Christian Teacher in the First Century," Journal of Biblical Literature, LX (1941), 318.

¹⁶Hans Lietzmann, A History of the Early Church, translated from the German by Bertram Lee Woolf (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1937), I, 144.

¹⁷Harnack, op. cit., pp. 333-34.

which go into the building of the "tower," the Church.¹⁸ Though these teachers might have had an independent existence, by the time of St. Hippolytus we find them teaching the catechumens in the employ of the community.¹⁹ Even Eusebius, much later, could still speak of them as a separate office in the Church but in conjunction with another cleric.²⁰ It is, therefore, likely that throughout our period there were some areas where teachers maintained an independent office (Alexandria may fit this description) and other places where their function was taken over by the established clergy (for example Origen was both teacher and presbyter).

St. Hippolytus mentions that a teacher could be either a cleric or a layman.²¹ Elsewhere we read, "Even if a teacher be a layman, still if he be skilled in the word and reverent in habit, let him teach: for the Scripture says, 'They shall be all taught of God.'"²² The teachers proclaimed the doctrines of the Church among the faithful.²³

¹⁸The Shepherd of Hermas, Vision, 3:5:1. LCL, II, 39.

¹⁹Easton, in Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, p. 86.

²⁰Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History, 7:24:6. Translated from the original by Christian Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 296.

²¹Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 19. Easton, op. cit., p. 43.

²²The Shepherd of Hermas, Mandates, 4:3:1. LCL, II, 83.

²³Apostolical Constitutions, 8:31. Quoted in Edwin Hatch, Organization of the Early Christian Church (London: Rivingtons, 1882), p. 117.

There are other items worthy of note. First, the teacher could be an itinerant individual. The faithful were encouraged to welcome a teacher who came proclaiming apostolic truth furthering "the Lord's righteousness and knowledge, welcome him as the Lord." If he does not teach apostolic truth he is not to be heeded.²⁴ The common practice was probably for a teacher to remain in one community. There were a few teachers who functioned as the apostles. Secondly, "A genuine teacher himself, just like a workman, has a right to his support."²⁵

The Prophets

According to Adolf Harnack prophets were quite prevalent in Judaism during (and following) the sojourn of our Lord on earth. They were respected individuals who possessed "an absolute authority in their preaching and counsels. They were not merely deemed capable of miracles, but expected to perform them."²⁶ To the Jews as well as to the Christians the prophets could either be the Biblical figures of the past or outstanding men in the present. The character of both the Jewish and Christian prophets was, according to Lietzmann, affected by Hellenistic religion. "Pagan religious societies had prophets as leaders of public worship, a custom which

²⁴Didache, 11:1,2. LCC, I, 176.

²⁵Didache, 13:2. LCC, I, 177.

²⁶Harnack, op. cit., pp. 331-33.

became usual among the Christians."²⁷ Essentially the prophet was a public preacher.²⁸ Being a leader in worship, his function was quite naturally taken over by another officer and in time the prophet dropped from sight as a distinct office in the Church.

A Prophet was identified by the Spirit that rested upon him.

Test the man who has the Divine Spirit by his life. In the first place, he who has the spirit which is from above, is meek and gentle, and lowly-minded, and refrains from all wickedness and evil desire of this world, and makes himself poorer than all men, and gives no answers to anyone when he is consulted, nor does he speak by himself (for the Holy Spirit does not speak when a man wishes to speak), but he speaks at the time when God wishes him to speak. Therefore, when the man who has the Divine Spirit comes into a meeting of righteous men who have the faith of the Divine Spirit, and intercession is made to God from the assembly of those men, then the angel of the prophetic spirit rests on him and fills the man, and the man, being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the congregation as the Lord wills. Thus, then, the Spirit of the Godhead will be plain. Such, then, is the power of the Lord concerning the Spirit of the Godhead.²⁹

His life also gives expression to the fact that he is totally dedicated to God even as his voice gives utterance only when God desires. One could distinguish the true from the false prophet in that the former behaved like the Lord.

²⁷Lietzmann, op. cit., I, 144.

²⁸Linton, op. cit., pp. 101-02. "Es ist 'ein Rahmen wort ohne konkreten Inhalt.' Im klassischen Griechisch tritt es hinter $\mu\alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ vollkommen zurück. So hat die Septuaginta den Unterschied zwischen $\mu\alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ (heidnischem Wahrsager) und $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ leicht ausprägen können. Darin ist das N. T. dem A. T. gefolgt."

²⁹The Shepherd of Hermas, Mandates 11:7-10. LCL, II, 119-21.

Ecstatic utterances are a sign but they are not enough.

A prophet with the Divine Spirit practices what he preaches.

"It is by their conduct that the false prophet and the prophet can be distinguished."³⁰ In the Christian community, especially in the worship, each prophet was given freedom of expression; he was allowed to give thanks according to the dictates of his spirit.³¹ It was believed that the Spirit would distinguish, through an interpreter of tongues, the true and the false prophet for the faithful.

Like the other servants of the Church the prophet was entitled to receive his support from the people. Even as the Deuteronomic code commanded the people of Israel to give the priest of their first-fruits so the first-fruits of the Christian faithful were to be given to the prophet when he decided to settle within one community.³²

³⁰Didache, 11:7-12. LCC, I, 176-77. Another expression is worth quoting. "Every prophet who teaches the truth but fails to practice what he preaches is a false prophet. But every attested and genuine prophet who acts with a view to symbolizing the mystery of the Church, and does not teach you to do all he does, must not be judged by you. His judgment rests with God. For the ancient prophets too acted in this way. But if someone says in the Spirit, 'Give me money, or something else,' you must not heed him. However, if he tells you to give for others in need, no one must condemn him."

³¹Didache, 10:7. LCC, I, 176. John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 14. "The Didache [13:3b] calls the prophet the 'high priest' of the church; and it is altogether likely that the conduct of worship and the presiding at the Eucharist were from the beginning committed to one or another of the prophets."

³²Didache, 13:1-7. LCC, I, 177. See Deuteronomy 18:3-5. If there was no prophet in the community these things were to be given to the poor and needy.

The Evangelists

The title Evangelist is a still more obscure term than those above. Most of what we know about this group, if such it was, can only be based on conjecture. Harnack feels that the only distinction that can be made between the evangelists, prophets and apostles is that the evangelists were men unworthy of the more honorable titles.³³ This is pure conjecture. Elsewhere he asserts that "any distinction between apostles and evangelists was rarely drawn in the early ages of the church. . . ."³⁴ This is more in keeping with the facts. Tertullian, in a negative usage, puts "false prophets . . . false apostles . . . and spurious evangelists . . ." into one category by calling them "false preachers."³⁵ Since this is a comparatively late reference it is probably safe to assume that evangelist was another designation for the above named offices.

The Readers

Tertullian points out that with the heretics there is no distinction among the clergy. A deacon today may be

³³Adolf Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), p. 57.

³⁴Harnack, The Mission and Expansion, p. 349.

³⁵Prescriptions Against Heretics, 4. LCC, V, 33.

a reader tomorrow. A priest today may be a layman tomorrow.³⁶ From this brief reference we notice that when the father of Latin Theology wrote there was a distinction between the clerical offices of the Catholic Church. One of these functionaries was the reader. He performed a necessary duty for the Church. The manuscripts of Sacred Scripture were handwritten and very difficult to read even for a capable person. The reader was a man who had facility with the written word and could read it clearly.³⁷ The office, no doubt, arose only after written manuscripts were available to most of the Christian communities. Harnack feels that the readers entered the ranks of the clergy only after ca. 222 A.D. though there were, he feels, special readers in the Church prior to 200 A.D.³⁸

Before one is elevated to the office of reader he must be carefully approved. He is to be a virtuous individual,

no babbler, nor drunkard, or jester; of good morals, submissive, of benevolent disposition, first in the assembly of the meetings on the Lord's Day, of a plain utterance, and capable of clearly expounding, mindful that he rules in the place of an evangelist. . . .³⁹

At the time of St. Hippolytus such an individual was not ordained as the other clergy; rather "The reader is appointed

³⁶The Prescriptions Against Heretics, 41. LCC, V, 62.

³⁷Easton in Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, p. 84.

³⁸Harnack, Sources, p. 63.

³⁹Apostolical Church Order, 3. Quoted in Harnack, The Constitution, p. 132, fn. 1.

by the bishop's giving him the book. . . ."40 Later, however, it became the custom to ordain the reader with the laying on of hands and prayer.⁴¹ It is possible (if the dating of Harnack is correct) that both these procedures were in use by the close of our period since St. Cyprian speaks of ordaining a confessor to the office of reader in the presence of his colleagues.⁴² All readers were carefully approved before taking office.

By the nature of the office the reader's duties were performed at the worship of the community. All the requirements of the office pointed in this direction.⁴³ In his search for pagan parallels Harnack succeeds again. It was the custom in some pagan communities to entrust the reader

⁴⁰Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 12. Easton, op. cit., p. 40.

⁴¹Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 8:22. ANF, VII, 493. "Ordain a reader by laying thy hands upon him, and pray unto God, and say: O Eternal God, who art plenteous in mercy and compassion, who hast made manifest the constitution of the world by Thy operations therein, and keepest the number of Thine elect, do Thou also now look down upon Thy servant, who is to be entrusted to read Thy Holy Scriptures to Thy people, and give him Thy Holy Spirit, the prophetic Spirit. Thou who didst instruct Esdras Thy servant to read Thy laws to the people, do Thou now also at our prayers instruct Thy servant, and grant that he may without blame perfect the work committed to him and thereby be declared worthy of an higher degree, through Christ, with whom glory and worship be to Thee and to the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen."

⁴²Cyprian, Epistle 32:2. ANF, V, 312. See also Epistle 33:4. ANF, V, 313.

⁴³Thomas M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1862), p. 182.

with the care of the sacred books which he would keep under lock and key until he expounded them in their worship.⁴⁴

In the Christian community the people would gather from city and country on Sunday and a reader would read to them from the "memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets."⁴⁵

These would be read with melodious voice and correct rhythm from the Biblical codices available to the congregation.⁴⁶

It is probable that through this close association with the clergy at worship the designation of clergy was given to the reader. Both Tertullian and St. Cyprian include them in the clerical rank though the latter describes them as "next to the clergy."⁴⁷ Those of the readers who desired could use their office as a stepping stone to the higher ranks of the clergy.⁴⁸ Whether, however, they planned to remain in their station or to seek higher dignity each of the readers received a stipend for his services.⁴⁹

⁴⁴Harnack, Sources, p. 90, fn. 2.

⁴⁵Justin Martyr, The First Apology, 67. LCC, I, p. 287. See also Cyprian, Epistle 32:2 and 33:4. The reading also included the Gospel of Christ perhaps already in "lessons." ANF, V.

⁴⁶Lietzmann, op. cit., II, 251.

⁴⁷Cyprian, Epistle 23; 16. ANF, V, 301, 296. Harnack, Sources, p. 62.

⁴⁸Cyprian, Epistle, 23. ANF, V, 301.

⁴⁹Didascalia, 2:20. Quoted by Williams, op. cit., p. 35. Eusebius, op. cit., 6:43. Cruse, op. cit., p. 265.

The Sub-deacons

Bishops had deacons, deacons had sub-deacons. Eusebius lists "seven sub-deacons" in the Church of Rome during the reign of St. Cornelius.⁵⁰ Since Acts 6 was taken literalistically to refer to deacons, their number was limited. When the duties of a congregation became too great for the deacons to handle they could not ordain more deacons. The sub-deacons were thus introduced.⁵¹ This officer was not ordained with the laying on of hands; rather it was announced (probably at worship) that he served the deacon.⁵² Toward the end of our period, perhaps as in the case of the reader, they began to receive the ordination with prayer and laying on of hands⁵³ and eventually were elevated to the status of major orders.⁵⁴ However it appears that the sub-deacons assisted the deacons in their manifold tasks even as the deacons assisted the bishop.

⁵⁰Eusebius, 6:43. Cruse, op. cit., p. 265.

⁵¹Easton in Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, p. 85.

⁵²Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 14. Easton, op. cit., p. 41.

⁵³Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 8:21. ANF, VII, 492-93. "When thou dost ordain a sub-deacon, O bishop, thou shalt lay thy hands upon him, and say: O Lord God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things that are therein; who also in the tabernacle of the testimony didst appoint overseers and keepers of Thy holy vessels; do Thou now look down upon this Thy servant, appointed a sub-deacon; and grant him the Holy Spirit, that he may worthily handle the vessels of Thy ministry, and do Thy will always, through Thy Christ, with whom glory, honour, and worship be to Thee and to the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen."

⁵⁴Easton in Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, p. 85.

The Exorcist

Bishop St. Cyprian classed the exorcist with the reader and hence with the clergy.⁵⁵ In the Roman list mentioned in Eusebius exorcists are included as paid officials of the Church.⁵⁶ St. Hippolytus tells us that "If anyone says, 'I have received the gift of healing,' hands shall not be laid upon him: the deed shall make manifest if he speaks the truth."⁵⁷ St. Hippolytus recognized as a charismatic function what later came to be a specialized function within the Church. In the early days the exorcist was a healer in the strict sense but later he became the one who prepared the catechumens for baptism.⁵⁸ The office of the charismatic healer seems to have survived longer in the East than in the West.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Cyprian, Epistle 16. ANF, V, 296.

⁵⁶Eusebius, op. cit., 6:43.

⁵⁷Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 15. Easton, op. cit., p. 41. Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 8:26. ANF, VII, 493. "An exorcist is not ordained. For it is a trial of voluntary goodness, and of the grace of God through Christ by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For he who has received the gift of healing is declared by revelation from God, the grace which is in him being manifest to all. But if there be occasion for him, he must be ordained a bishop, or a presbyter, or a deacon." No doubt this also is an early injunction.

⁵⁸Easton in Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, p. 85.

⁵⁹Williams, op. cit., p. 51.

The Acoluthi and Ostiarri

These functionaries are mentioned only briefly. From the list in Eusebius we learn that the acolythi (clerks, janitors) were among those who received their support from the Church at Rome.⁶⁰ St. Cyprian used acolytes as tabelarii to carry his correspondence.⁶¹ The ostiarri were the doorkeepers and caretakers at the places of worship.⁶² Harnack maintains that the acolytes were attached to sacred persons whereas the doorkeepers found their work with sacred things.⁶³ More than this would appear to be speculation.

The Deaconesses

Tertullian spoke very harshly regarding women in the Church. A woman is not permitted to speak in the Church nor to perform any of the sacerdotal functions such as teaching, baptizing, offering, nor any other of the manly functions.⁶⁴ This could have been the last shout before capitulation or the senility of an old man. Whatever the case, we know that during this time women performed a valuable service in the Church as deaconesses. These women served as helps to the

⁶⁰Eusebius, op. cit., 6:43.

⁶¹Harnack, Sources, p. 88.

⁶²Lietzmann, op. cit., II, 251.

⁶³Harnack, Sources, p. 88.

⁶⁴Tertullian, On the Veiling of Virgins, 9. ANF, IV, 33.

deacon just as the sub-deacon. Their special area of concern was the women of the parish. Any woman who wished to address herself to the bishop had to come through the deaconess.⁶⁵

Nothing is mentioned of them in St. Hippolytus' Apostolic Tradition but some of the later Constitutions include a prayer and the order for her to receive the laying on of hands with prayer.⁶⁶ This is all we know of her duties from this early date.

The Virgins and Widows

Bishop St. Ignatius sends his greetings to "the virgins enrolled with the widows" in Smyrna.⁶⁷ From this passage we note an order of women consisting of widows and virgins. The order was made up mostly of older women but on occasion a young virgin could enter--to the dismay of Tertullian.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:26. ANF, VII, 410.

⁶⁶Ibid., 8:19,20. ANF, VII, 492. "O bishop, thou shalt lay thy hands upon her in the presence of the presbytery, and of the deacons and deaconesses, and shalt say: O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and of woman, who didst replenish with the Spirit of Miriam, and Deborah, and Anna, and Huldah; who didst not disdain that Thy only begotten Son should be born of a woman; who also in the tabernacle of the testimony, and in the temple, did ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates,--do Thou now also look down upon this Thy servant, who is to be ordained to the office of deaconess, and grant her Thy Holy Spirit, and 'cleanses her from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,' that she may worthily discharge the work which is committed to her to Thy glory, and the praise of Thy Christ, with whom glory and adoration be to Thee and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen."

⁶⁷Ignatius, Epistle to the Smyrneans, 13:1. LCC, I, 116.

⁶⁸Tertullian, On the Veiling of Virgins, 9. ANF, IV, 33.

The "experimental training" of the older women aids in making them "capable" of readily aiding all others with counsel and comfort.⁶⁹

Members of this order were to live lives of dedication to the Lord and His Church. Their virtues should stand out as they shun slander, gossip, false witness, love of money, and all other evils.⁷⁰ Some were appointed to prayer, others to receive revelation, some to visit and assist the sick women. Nothing should get in her way to hinder the performing of her services.⁷¹ Neither the widow nor the virgin is ordained with the laying on of hands and prayer to perform these duties. St. Hippolytus says

The widow shall be appointed by the word alone, and [so] shall be associated with the other widows; hands shall not be laid upon her because she does not offer the oblation nor has she a sacred ministry.⁷²

And again, "Hands shall not be laid upon a virgin, for it is her purpose alone that makes her a virgin."⁷³ Women who were dedicated in this way performed the work of intercession,

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Polycarp, Epistle to the Philippians, 4:3. LCC, I, 133.

⁷¹See Harnack, The Constitution, p. 131, fn. 1. Also Lindsay, op. cit., p. 181, fn. 2.

⁷²Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 11. Easton, op. cit., p. 40. See also Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 8:25. ANF, VII, 493.

⁷³Hippolytus, op. cit., 13. Easton, op. cit., p. 40. See also Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 8:24. ANF, VII, 493.

fasting frequently and praying for the Church. "The widow is appointed for prayer, and prayer is the duty of all."⁷⁴

Both the widows and virgins are spoken of in the Constitutions as Thusiasteerion Theou⁷⁵ undoubtedly referring to the fact that these women who receive alms are to pray for their benefactors.⁷⁶ In these ways their lives are lived in dedication to the Lord.

⁷⁴Hippolytus, op. cit., 11:5. Easton, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷⁵The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, 2:26. ANF, VII, 410.

⁷⁶Lindsay, op. cit., p. 115, fn. 3.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

In Chapter II we attempted to show that the structure of the Christian community began by conforming in part to the prevailing lines of the secular and Jewish communities. With the exception of the deacon, the titles which were selected for the offices were not wholly unfamiliar to the surrounding world. The Early Christian Community was ruled by Christ and His Rule found expression in the Church through the united community consisting of both clergy and laity.

Directing attention to the office of the ministry in general it was shown that those worthy of such function in the Church must show themselves to be holy. This was necessary since during the centuries under consideration it was believed that the Holy Office was established by Divine Appointment. Though no theory was as yet developed as to how this takes place, the clergy performed the functions and duties of the entire congregation--not, to be sure, to the exclusion of the latter. Rather those set apart by ordination or appointment were recognized as individuals who serve the entire community. Such service relates to the things of God. The clerics were not to be encumbered with mundane concerns and temptations. The chief duty of the cleric was to serve God and the community with (what was later defined as) the Word and the Sacraments.

Turning to the offices of the bishop, presbyter, and deacon it was noticed that these clergy were considered indispensable to the constitution of the Church. As one could not have a Church without faithful laity so one could not have a Church without the God-appointed faithful clergy. As Hermas relates they were stones that enter into the make-up of the Church. The appointment which they had received from God through the entire Church set them apart as men to whom the people must be subject as to God (though under God). God had appointed each of them by ordination, to the position of leadership in the community. Thus in all that they did these officers of the early Church complemented one another's function in performing their particular service. Being "fellow slaves" in the service of God and the Church they sought to do all things in godly agreement. The unity of the clergy was visible for all to see.

Each of the bishops seem to have arisen to power by elevation through the presbyterate. His functions appear to have followed along the lines of a secular counterpart-- also an officer, or overseer of a community. In ecclesiastical usage the title came to be used for one who serves the Church to the benefit of all and who administers the affairs of the community (especially worship). Various requirements were made of one who aspired to the episcopal throne. He had to be acceptable in age, education, and virtue. He had to preside in the life of the Church. He must be willing and able to be set up as an example for the whole Church to

see and follow. To the Church he was leader, overseer, shepherd, father, priest, monarch and administrator. Both the unity among the many bishops and the focusing of the image of the entire community upon the person of each bishop made these officers into living symbols of unity among the members of Christ's Body. By their very position the bishops represented to the Church both God and Christ, and their words were respected as God's word to men. Each of the bishops was validated and authorized to perform his duties in the whole Church by the laying on of hands or ordination. He was entrusted with the succession of doctrine which began with Christ passing through the apostles. Further he was established in office with special gifts of the Holy Spirit; hence it was extra-ordinary to remove him from office. In all things it was the duty of the bishop to uphold the truth, the Rule of Faith which he had received and to pass it on to his successor.

Each presbyter was an honored official of the Church entrusted with the care of the flock of God. Usually functioning as a "college" or council, their name, no doubt, arose from their Jewish counterpart, the sanhedrin and presbyters. Though gradually their authority was removed by the authoritarian episcopate, to the very end of our period they were considered to be beneficial in the constitution of the community. By seeking the general improvement of the community through their benevolence they remained through the time under consideration respected officials in

the Church. The presbyters were recognized to have the same gifts of office that belong to the bishop but they were not permitted to use them in the same manner.

Like the other clergy one of the first requirements of the deacon was that he be virtuous in his life and conduct. He also was a chosen and respected officer set aside as the bishop and presbyter through the laying on of hands or ordination. The one stress always found for the deacon's office is that he must function in relation to a superior. Whether the duties he performed were at worship or taking charity to the poor he always worked, not on his own dignity, but as the arm of the bishop.

It will be difficult to summarize all the minor orders since for most of them the only material available is in itself a summary. Suffice it to be said that some of these orders were in the course of time absorbed into the duties of a stationary officer (bishop, presbyter, deacon) especially the apostle, prophet, and evangelist and at a later date the exorcist. The reader, sub-deacon, clerks and doorkeepers, deaconess, and widows and virgins exist in some form or other to the present time.

Each of these offices fitted into the structure of God's creation at the appointed time and whether it was considered a major or a minor order each of these people had a duty and service to perform for God and His Church that the Gospel might go out into all the world.

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