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- ART. I.—1. *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Special Report of the Prudential Committee, on the control to be exercised over Missionaries and Mission Churches.* Printed for the use of the Board at the Annual Meeting.* Revised edition. Press of T. R. Marvin.
2. *Correspondence between the Cherokee and Choctaw Missions, the Rev. S. B. Treat, and the Prudential Committee.* Missionary Herald, October, 1848.

IT is a matter of notoriety that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, have for several years been sorely harassed on account of their supposed patronage or tolerance of slavery. Those known to the country as abolitionists, have felt it to be a duty to expostulate with the Board from time to time, for receiving money from the owners of slaves, for employing slaveholding missionaries, and for sustaining mission churches in which slaveholders were received as members.

* Also published in the Missionary Herald for October, 1848.

communion, the committee are relieved from all responsibility. On the other hand, if missionaries connected with the Congregationalists, with the approbation of those entitled to judge, hold and teach that slaveholders should not be received, the committee are bound to acquiesce, as to the mission churches under Congregational control. By the Board and the churches keeping thus, in their separate spheres, we see not why there need be any collision between them.

ART. II.—*The Work claiming to be the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, including the Canons; Whiston's version, revised from the Greek; with a Prize Essay at the University of Bonn, upon their origin and contents; translated from the German, by Irah Chase, D.D. New York. D. Appleton & Co. 1848.*

IT is justly remarked by Dr. Chase, in his preface to the work before us, that "in reading these Constitutions and Canons of the Apostles, the Christian of the present day will be likely to exclaim—a splendid specimen of pious fraud, a strange mixture of good and evil!" Viewing the work in the light of its own claims, as a pretended production of apostolic times, embodying a system of church discipline stamped with apostolic authority, it is indeed a remarkable "specimen of pious fraud." Still we hail its publication with pleasure, and think that Dr. Chase has done the church good service, by putting within the reach of the Christian student, and in a very convenient form, a work which hitherto has been almost inaccessible to the great mass of the Christian ministry in our country. There is, as we shall presently see, considerable diversity of opinion among the learned as to the age in which the Constitutions were framed; but whatever be the true date of their origin, there can be no doubt that the collection belongs to a remote Christian antiquity; and it is all the more precious from the fact that so few literary monuments of the earlier ages of the church have been preserved. It is a document of high value and importance for illustrating the ecclesiastical history of a very distant period,

during a part of which at least, paganism was the dominant religion, the sighing of Christian prisoners was heard, and the blood of Christian martyrs was flowing in abundant streams.

The present edition, which, by the way, is executed with singular elegance—consists of Whiston's translation of the Greek text of the Constitutions and Canons, revised by Dr. Chase, and an Essay, historical and critical, on their origin and contents, by Dr. O. C. Krabbe, characterized by that fulness of learned research for which the scholars of Germany are so eminent. The Constitutions themselves are divided into eight books, in which various topics are handled, not however in any thing like logical order; some of them being of a doctrinal cast, though they mostly refer to practical rules of life, ecclesiastical discipline, and forms of worship.

Among Romanist authors a wide diversity of judgment obtains respecting both the age and the authority of the Constitutions. Bovius, Turrian and Stapleton, who may be ranked among their strongest advocates, go the length of asserting that "they are full of the apostolic spirit," and that "if the church should receive them into the canon of scripture, she would have as much reason for holding them, as she has for holding the Epistle of James to be canonical." Bellarmine, on the contrary, while he makes frequent use of them in his defence of the Romish system, says decidedly that they are not the production of Clement, but belong to a later age. Baronius was of the same mind. Tillemont affirms that they were fabricated in the sixth century. Cotelierius, who published a noble edition of them, with a Latin translation, and numerous notes, is uncertain whether the author lived before or after the days of Epiphanius. With a few unimportant exceptions, Protestant writers agree in rejecting both the apostolic and the Clementine origin of the Constitutions. Blondell thinks that they were composed by the author of the Recognitions, about A. D. 180. Bishop Beveridge conjectured from a passage in the last canon, that they were written by Clement of Alexandria. Pierson supposes that, though they did not assume their present form until after the times of Epiphanius, they still exhibit substantially the instructions to the churches given by the Apostles,—by Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Ignatius and others of their contemporaries. The eccentric Whiston, however, far

outripped all other Protestant and even Popish theologians, in the zeal with which he defended their claims, boldly maintaining that they form a part of the divine rule of faith and manners, and are nothing less than a collection of the laws which the Saviour gave his apostles during the period of forty days between his resurrection and ascension. He was opposed by Le Clerc, who endeavoured to prove that they were the work of an Arian of the age of Constantine. Ittig who has largely discussed the subject, and Usher unite in holding that they first became known in the course of the fourth century, and were afterwards corrupted by an Arian in the sixth. But of all the Protestant authors who have treated of the origin and merits of the Constitutions, the name of the great Daille deserves to be mentioned with the highest respect, for to him belongs the honour of having proved most conclusively that they are the work neither of the apostles nor of the Roman Clement.

At the risk of being tedious we cannot forbear quoting the sentiments of one or two writers of more modern date. Schröckh says it is of less importance to know who was the author, than at what period he lived, and why he deceived the world. His judgment is that the work was composed by some unknown author under the heathen emperors, towards the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century. Starck says that if we collect and compare the traces of more ancient and more recent times, it becomes quite clear that the Constitutions are the productions neither of one man nor one age, but are a confused collection made here and there in the churches founded by apostles, of ecclesiastical laws, some of them old, some new, and which received the name they bear, simply because these churches were of apostolic origin.

The author of the historical Essay decidedly rejects the idea that the Constitutions were made up of sundry earlier documents, on the ground that no mention is made of any such documents by ancient writers, and that no remains of them have come down to us. He also maintains that the marked uniformity of the style precludes the supposition of more than one pen having been engaged in the composition. As to its age, he states that the external testimonies constrain us to seek for the origin of the work before the fourth century, a conclusion to which all the

internal evidences conduct us; while the Constitutions bear on themselves decisive proof that they must have been written towards the end of the third century. All their contents testify to this most strikingly; their form of public divine worship, their ritual and disciplinary institutions, the state of the teachers and subordinate officers of the church are so many witnesses to the truth of this averment. The whole internal and external form of the church as here portrayed, we find in the third century. In short they bear the strong impress of the age of Cyprian, and must have proceeded from the spirit, and have been designed to further the aims of that eminent man. To establish this position he goes into a minute and even tedious examination of the several books. He then discusses at much length the object of the author of the Constitutions. On this point he says, it is manifest from the nature of the case, that he must have had some plan whose accomplishment he deemed desirable and possible. His design seems to have been twofold, viz., to promote the unity of the church, and to establish a hierarchal form of government. The first of these objects he proposed to attain not by setting up a standard of doctrine or dogmatical canons, but rather an uniform system of discipline, ceremonies, and ecclesiastical arrangements. It was outward uniformity, and not unity in the scriptural sense of the word, at which he aimed,—not the unity which consists essentially in the being baptized into one spirit, and the being made partakers of a common divine life,—not the unity of believers, but the visible unity of a common usage. With this idea there was combined another, which may be traced throughout the entire work, viz., that the constitution of the Christian church is only an improved copy of the Jewish temple worship. In a word the author was a decided hierarchist, and his special purpose in getting up the Constitutions, and in palming them upon the world as the production of the Apostles, was the revival in the New Testament church of the laws and institutions of the ancient hierarchy.

From the above hasty summary of opinions, it will be seen that both Popish and Protestant theologians are greatly divided in judgment as to the age and author of this work; and that, on the whole, the latter class allow it a higher antiquity than the former. The views of Dr. Krabbe, who has examined the whole subject with so much thoroughness and care, are certain-

ly entitled to great weight, still, we must confess that his solution of this difficult historical problem does not completely satisfy us. We are inclined to regard the Constitutions, in the shape in which they have come down to us, as the work of more than one writer. The argument of Dr. Krabbe against this theory, founded on the uniformity of the style appears to us not to be of much weight, because the nature of the topics handled, is such as almost to preclude the possibility of a sensible diversity of style. Our statute book, for example, is the joint production of many men, yet no one would attempt to determine the authorship of its various chapters or enactments by the test of style, which, from the necessity of the case is uniform. So in the work before us, the absence of a varied style is no evidence of its being the production of a single author, for each succeeding contributor would naturally adopt the style of his predecessors. On Dr. Krabbe's theory, we cannot account for the numerous traces of Arianism which the Constitutions confessedly bear. If, as he maintains, the author belonged to the Cyprianic age, then it is quite obvious that those portions which savour of the Arian heresy must have been interpolated at a later period; and if the dogmatic character of the work has been changed, it is, to say the least, not improbable that other alterations or additions were made in those parts of it which refer to church usages and discipline. After all, the question whether one man or many men composed the Constitutions is more curious than important; their real value arises from the light they cast on the history and antiquities of the church, by showing what her condition was in the times when the authors lived.

In this point of view, though claiming to be what they are not, and assuming a name to which they have not the shadow of a title, they are of inestimable worth to the student of ecclesiastical history. The aim of their authors seems to have been to give a sort of apostolic sanction to rites and ceremonies to which the primitive Christians were strangers, and to incorporate with the constitution of the church certain hierarchal elements, for which not only can no warrant be found in the New Testament, but which are contrary to the whole spirit of the Christian dispensation. At the same time we find in these constitutions a considerable amount of pure and precious apos-

tolie truth. Thus in the opening chapter there is a description of the nature of the church of Christ, and of the great ends of her existence, as accurate as it is beautiful: "The catholic church is the plantation of God and his beloved vineyard, consisting of those who have believed in his unerring divine religion; who are heirs by faith of his everlasting kingdom; who are partakers of his divine influence, and of the communications of the Holy Spirit; who are armed and inwardly strengthened with his fear, through Jesus; who enjoy the benefit of the sprinkling of the precious and innocent blood of Christ; who have free liberty to call the Almighty God, Father, being fellow heirs and joint partakers of his beloved Son." Other passages might be quoted, embodying sound doctrine and pure morality, though none of them bear the marks of a very vigorous mind.

Instead, however, of enlarging on the dogmatical character of the Apostolical Constitutions, we propose to inquire—what is the form of government exhibited in them, and which, we may reasonably suppose, actually existed in the church at the period of their composition? We may here observe, that we do not wonder that the high-toned hierarchists of modern days, both Roman and Anglican, while making such ado about primitive order, and the authority of the primitive church, are so shy of a work on many accounts one of the most remarkable of the times to which it belongs. Its author or authors had clearly derived their ideas of the church from the ancient Jewish model; their manifest design is to establish a hierarchy; yet when we examine their work carefully, we discover a marked dissimilarity between the form of government portrayed in it, and all the existing platforms of prelacy; we meet with numerous statements respecting the ministry, which no hermeneutics can explain consistently with the hierarchal theory of Rome, Oxford, or New York. Of prelacy in the ordinary acceptation of the term, or the system which makes the bishop, the pastor not of a single congregation, but of a large number of them associated in the form of a diocese, no traces can be discovered in the Constitutions. In fact the counterpart of the platform of government which they exhibit is not to be found in any one of the existing forms of polity in the Christian church. Presbyterianism per-

haps comes the nearest to it, but they are not identical; in every regularly constituted congregation there was a bishop or pastor, there were presbyters and deacons; but the functions of the presbyter differed in some important respects from those of the ruling elder of the present day; and the duties of the deacon, though in the main the same as those discharged by deacons in Presbyterian congregations included some things which do not come within the province of the latter.

Let us then begin with the office of the Bishop. What were the duties of the bishop; did he stand in a direct or only indirect relation to the Christian people; was it his business to instruct them and exercise the discipline of Christ's house immediately, or through the agency of others; in other words, was he a parochial or a diocesan bishop? In reply to this inquiry, we say that he occupied the position and discharged the duties of a simple pastor of a congregation; and if our limits allowed it, we might quote a multitude of passages from the Apostolical Constitutions in which this fact is either expressly asserted, or clearly implied. For instance, Canon XL, (B. viii. p. 250) declares,—“Let not the presbyters and deacons do any thing without the consent of the bishop; for it is he who is entrusted with the people of the Lord, and will be required to give an account of their souls. We command that the bishop have power over the goods of the church; for if he be entrusted with the precious souls of men, much more ought he to give directions about goods, that under his authority they all be distributed by the presbyters and deacons to those in want.” Again, in chapter 1st of the same book, we find the following,—“Moreover let not a bishop be exalted against the deacons and the presbyters; nor the presbyters against the people, *for from each and all of these is the composition of the congregation.*” Words could hardly be more express. The directions concerning the election and ordination of a bishop are in precise accordance with this statement.” In the first place, therefore, a bishop to be ordained is to be unblameable in all things, a select person, *chosen by the whole people.* And when he is named and approved, let the people assemble, with the presbytery, and bishops that are present, on the Lord's day; and let them give their consent. And let him who is preferred among

the rest ask the presbytery and the people, whether this is the person whom they desire for their ruler. And if they give their consent, let him ask further, whether he has a good testimony from all men, as to his worthiness for so great and glorious an authority; whether all things relating to his piety towards God are right; whether justice towards men hath been observed by him; whether the affairs of his family have been well ordered by him. And if all the assembly together do, according to truth and not prejudice, testify that he is such a one, let them the third time, as before God the Judge, and Christ, the Holy Ghost also assuredly being present, and all the holy ministering spirits, ask again, whether he is truly worthy of this ministry. And if they agree the third time, that he is worthy, let them all be demanded their vote; and when they all give it willingly, let them be heard. And silence being made, let one of the principal bishops—the rest of the bishops and presbyters praying silently and the deacons holding the holy gospels open upon the head of him that is to be ordained—say to God;” then follows the form of prayer; we may add that neither in the prayer, nor in any other part of the chapter is imposition of hands spoken of. B. viii. p. 202. To these passages may be added what is said in the curious “description of a church and the clergy,” in which, the former and its officers are compared to a ship and her crew: “O Bishop, when thou callest an assembly of the church, as one that is the commander of a great ship, appoint the assemblies to be made with great skill; charging the deacons, as mariners, to prepare places for the brethren as for passengers with all due care and decorum. And first let the building be long, with its head to the east, its vestries on both sides at the east end, and so it will be like a ship. In the middle let the bishop’s throne* be placed; and on each side of him let the presbytery sit down; and let the deacons stand near at hand; for they are like the mariners and managers of the ship. While the Gospel is read, let all the presbyters and deacons, and all the people stand up in great silence. In the next place let the presbyters one by one, and not all together exhort the people, and the bishop in the last place as being the commander.” B. ii. p. 70.

* The original term simply means an official seat; and the sentence properly rendered would read “let the bishop’s chair be placed,” &c.

The direct relation of the bishop to the congregation, expressly declared in the passages already quoted, is also implied in the directions addressed to him, to teach and exercise discipline. "Be careful, therefore O Bishop, to study the word of God, that thou mayest copiously nourish thy people with much doctrine, and enlighten them with the light of the law." B. ii. p. 15. "For it becometh you, bishops, to be guides and watchmen to the people, as ye yourselves have Christ for your guide and watchman. For the Lord said by Ezekiel, speaking to every one of you: '*Son of man, &c.*' The trumpet is the holy Gospel, the watchman is the bishop, who is set in the church, who is obliged in his preaching to testify and vehemently to forewarn of that judgment. If ye do not declare and testify this to the people, the sins of those who are ignorant of it will be found upon you. Wherefore warn and reprove with boldness the perverse, teach the ignorant, confirm those that understand, bring back those that go astray." B. ii. p. 17. "The bishop is the minister of the word, the keeper of knowledge, the mediator between God and you in the several parts of your divine worship. He is the teacher of piety; and next after God, he is your father, who hath begotten you again to the adoption of sons by water and the Spirit." B. ii. p. 43. "Do not thou, O Bishop, immediately abhor any person who hath fallen into one or two offences, nor shalt thou exclude him from the word of the Lord, nor reject him from common intercourse; as thou receivest a heathen, after thou hast instructed and baptized him, so do thou let all join in prayers for this man, and restore him by imposition of hands to his ancient place among the flock, as one purified by repentance." B. ii. p. 54, 55.

To these passages, we might were it requisite add many others of similar import. Nor is it necessary to comment on those we have quoted; they speak for themselves. The directions addressed to the bishop to preach the gospel, to exercise a constant and minute supervision of the people committed to his charge, for whose souls he is especially responsible, and to administer the discipline of Christ's house, plainly indicate that his charge was precisely equivalent to that of a modern pastor. Every unprejudiced reader must feel that it would be perfectly preposterous to give directions like these, for instance, to the bishop of London—or of New York, or in fact to any diocesan

prelate, unless (as is commonly the case with Scottish and American prelates) he is at the same time the rector of a particular parish. Did it fall in with our present design, we could adduce evidence of the same kind, in support of this position from the epistles of the Apostolic fathers, Clement, Polycarp, and Ignatius, who lived long before the author of the Constitutions; and likewise from Bingham's lists of the bishoprics in the early church. In all these documents, facts and circumstances are detailed, which it is impossible to account for, except on the supposition that the relations of a primitive bishop were just those of a modern pastor. There is only one passage in the work before us that seems to conflict with the preceding statements, to overlook which might appear uncandid; it is as follows: "We have heard from our Lord that a pastor who is to be ordained a bishop for the churches in every parish must be blameless—and not under fifty years of age." B. ii. p. 12. Such is Whiston's rendering of it, and it seems to imply that "*the parish*"—παροικια—was equivalent to a diocese, and included many distinctly organised congregations. This inference would not be a fair one, in the face of so many other passages of directly opposite import, even if we were quite sure that the reading in this place is genuine. But there is reason to believe that the words—εἰς τας ἐκκλησίας—have been interpolated. Cotelerius, who, by the way, renders the phrase in question—"in aliqua ecclesia et parœcia," declares that the interpolation of single words and expressions are very numerous, while at the same time it is impossible to detect them. Romanist though he was, his own rendering of the passage, shows that he was somewhat suspicious of its genuineness, or at all events, that in his judgment, the existence of diocesan prelacy could not be fairly concluded from it.

The next point of inquiry respects the office of *Presbyter*. It is evident from various passages in the Apostolic Constitutions, that, in every congregation fully organised, there was a *bench of Presbyters*—a presbytery. While the bishop is always spoken of as holding his position alone, the presbyter is as invariably represented as forming one of a college. "If any determine to invite elder women to an entertainment—let what is the pastor's due, be set apart in the feast for him; let a double portion be set apart for the presbyters, as for those who labour

about the word and doctrine." B. ii. p. 45. "The deacon is to minister to the bishop and to the *presbyters*, and not to meddle with the other offices." B. ii. p. 93. "Moreover let not the bishop be exalted against the deacons and the presbyters; nor the Presbyters against the people; *for from each and all of these is the composition of the congregation.* B. ii. p. 199. "If a brother or sister come from another parish, bringing recommendatory letters, let the deacon inquire whether they are faithful, of the church, not defiled by heresy; when he is satisfied in these questions, let him conduct every one to the place proper for him. If a presbyter come from another parish, let him be received to communion by *the presbyters*; if a deacon by the deacons; if a bishop, let him sit with the bishop, and be allowed the same honour with himself." B. ii. p. 71, 72.

The difference between the bishop and the presbyter of the Constitutions is nowhere precisely and formally stated; yet it is plain that the former was more than *primus inter pares*, for it is expressly declared that "sacred offices are conferred by the laying on of the hands of the bishop." "We do not permit presbyters, but only bishops, to ordain deacons or deaconesses, or readers, or servants," &c. B. iii. p. 87. In the prayer appointed to be used at the ordination of a presbyter (which was to be held "in the presence of the presbyters and deacons") the following language occurs: "O Lord Almighty, do thou thyself now look upon this thy servant, who is *put into the presbytery* by the vote and determination of the whole clergy.* And do thou replenish him with the spirit of grace and counsel *to assist and govern thy people* with a pure heart." B. viii. p. 224. This agrees with the account elsewhere given of the presbytery as being "the counsellors of the bishop; the sanhedrim and senate of the church." B. ii. p. 45. Each presbyter was invested with authority "to teach,† to offer (i. e. administer the Lord's Supper)

* The term clergy as used in the Apostolic Confessions includes all who were in any way connected officially with the congregation—bishop, presbyters, deacons, deaconesses, readers, singers, porters, servants. See B. iii. p. 87.

† As to the preaching of presbyters, different rules obtained in different parts of the church. Thus Possidius mentions in his life of Augustine that while he (Augustine) was a presbyter, the bishop gave him power "*coram se in ecclesia evangelium prædicandi—contra usum ac consuetudinem Africarum ecclesiarum. Postea porro præcedente exemplo, accepta ab episcopis potestate, presbyteri nonnulli coram episcopis populo tractare cœperunt verbum Dei.*" We may also state,

to baptize, and to bless the people;" (B. iii. p. 93); though in ordinary circumstances the performance of these offices devolved upon the bishop, as the pastor of the congregation. When he was present, or rather in the usual weekly assemblies of the congregation, it was customary for several of the presbyters, in succession to exhort the people, before the delivery of *the* sermon by the bishop. Thus in the chapter in which the Christian congregation is compared to a ship, directions are given as to the order in which the books of scripture are to be read, and the conduct of the presbyters, deacons and people" while the gospel is read; "In the next place, let the presbyters, *one by one*, not altogether, exhort the people, and the bishop in the last place as being the commander of the ship." B. ii. 70.

We come next to the office of the *Deacon*. He was one of the clerical order, as has been already shown, in common with the porter, and the lamplighters, but is nowhere styled a priest; nor is the office anywhere represented as forming one of the orders of the priesthood. It is perfectly obvious from the most cursory inspection of the Constitutions that there was in every properly organized congregation a *bench of Deacons*, as well as of presbyters. On this point it is needless to multiply quotations, as it is sufficiently evident from those already made. The *duties* of the deacon appear to have been very various; and hence he is much more frequently mentioned in the Constitutions than the presbyter. He was the bishop's "minister;" or the organ through which he obtained information of what was passing among the people of his charge, and the medium of communication with the poor and needy. "Let the deacon order such things as he is able, by himself, receiving power from the bishop. But the weighty matters, let the Bishop judge. But let the deacon be the bishop's ear, and eye, and mouth, and soul, and heart, that the bishop may not be distracted with many cares, but with such only as are considerable." B. II. p. 59. "Let both the deacons and the deacon-

that in the 4th and beginning of the 5th century, we find in North Africa traces of an order of officers called *seniores plebis* of which no mention is made in the Constitutions. Augustine repeatedly refers to them. Optatus, *De Schis. Donat.* p. 168, says "Omnes vos episcopi, presbyteri, diacones, *seniores*." "Adhibite Conclericeos et *Seniores plebis*." p. 169. They were not clerical presbyters, but held a middle position between the clergy and the laity. They were in fact the representatives of the latter. See Guerike's *Lehrbuch der christ. kirch. Archäologie.* p. 49.

nesses be ready to carry messages, to travel about, to minister and serve." B. III. p. 92. It was his business, as appears from a passage already quoted, to look after those who had recently come within the bounds of the congregation, to receive their letters of commendation, to examine into their principles and character, and in the event of their admission to membership to assign them their proper places in the church.

Again in the assemblies for public worship, the deacons discharged various offices. "Let the deacons stand near at hand, (i. e., the bishop and the presbytery), in close and small girt garments,* for they are like the mariners and managers of the ship." B. II. p. 69. They were the disposers of places, "that every one of those who came in might go to his proper place, and not sit at the entrance"—"if any one be found sitting out of his place, let him be rebuked by the deacon, as a messenger of the foreship." It devolved also on them to "oversee the people, that no one may whisper, nor slumber, nor laugh, nor nod." Sometimes a deacon read "the lessons from the gospels," while another "prayed for the whole church, for the whole world, and the several parts of it, and the fruits of it." They also assisted in the administration of the Lord's Supper, performing those services which are now rendered by ruling elders. "After the prayer (of consecration) is over, let *some* of the deacons attend upon the oblation of the eucharist, ministering to the Lord's body. Let *others* of *them* watch the multitude and keep them silent." B. II. p. 71. Not a word, however, is said about either their preaching sermons of their own, or reading the homilies of others. But one of their principal duties was the taking care of the poor; yet even in the discharge of this office they were directed to keep themselves in constant communication with the bishop. They must do nothing in the way of relieving the necessities of the afflicted without the knowledge and express warrant of the bishop; and the reason assigned for this of itself affords decisive evidence that he was the pastor of an

* Whether the "close and small girt garment" was the official habiliment of the deacon, does not appear. This, however, is the only place in which the deacon's dress, official or otherwise, is referred to. Of the bishops and presbyter's robes no account is given; not the most distant allusion is made to the official dress of these officers, in the Constitutions, or even in the Canons, where we might expect to meet some reference to badges of office of this sort, if any such had existed at the time.

ordinary congregation. "Let not the deacon do anything at all without his bishop, nor give anything without his consent. For if he give to any one as to a person in distress, without the bishop's knowledge, *he will give it so that it must tend to the reproach of the bishop*, and will accuse him as careless of the distressed." "If, therefore, O deacon, thou knowest any one in distress, *put the bishop in mind of him, and so give to him*; but do nothing in a clandestine way, lest thou raise a murmur against him," B. II. p. 47.

There are a few other inferior offices incidentally mentioned, such as that of the reader, the porter, and the deaconness, who performed toward those of her own sex certain duties, which, with the views and in the state of society then existing, could not be so suitably discharged by men. All these officers are included by the authors of the Constitutions under the general name of the *clergy*; but as their functions are not particularly described, and if they do not appear to have taken any share in the government of the church, they may be dismissed without further notice. There is, however, a canon on the subject of councils or synods, which should not be passed over, viz., the 38th, which is as follows, "Let a council of bishops be held twice in the year; and let them ask one another the doctrines of piety; and let them determine the ecclesiastical disputes that happen; once in the fourth week of Pentecost, and again on the 12th of October." As both the Constitutions and the canons have confessedly come down to us in a vitiated text, it is quite possible that the one just quoted, originally provided for the presence of others beside bishops, in these semi-annual synods, perhaps for the *seniores plebis*, or the representatives of the people. But taking it as it stands, it reveals a fact of great importance respecting the government of the early church. We may fairly infer from the frequency with which these synods met that their members lived near each other, and therefore must have been pastors of congregations. It is obvious, moreover from the express terms of the canon, that the synods then held were not advisory councils, but courts of judicature. It also appears from the 37th canon, that these synods had jurisdiction not only over bishops, but likewise over presbyters and deacons; for this canon provides that—"If any bishop that is ordained do not undertake his office, nor take care of the people committed

to him, he shall be suspended until he do undertake it ; and in like manner, a presbyter and a deacon. But if he go, and be not received because of the ill temper of the people, let the *clergy of that city be suspended* because they have not taught that disobedient people better."

Such then is an outline of the form of government set forth in the Apostolic Constitutions, and which must have existed in the church during the period when their author or authors lived. Each congregation was under the care of its *bishop*, who was the pastor of the people, not indirectly, like a modern diocesan bishop, but immediately ; on whom especially devolved the duty of preaching the word, administering the sacraments, exercising discipline, ascertaining and providing for the wants of the poor, in short, just that work with which an ordinary pastor in the present day is occupied. Next to the bishop was the *presbytery* or *the bench of presbyters*, who collectively constituted his council, while each of them, under his direction, had authority to exhort, preach, and administer the sacraments. And finally, there were the *deacons*, who discharged a multitude of subordinate officers, as the servants of the bishop, the supervisors of the people when met for public worship, and the overseers of the poor. Though this system, at the period referred to, appears to have obtained in most of the countries in which the church had gained a footing, we do not believe that it was universal. In the churches of North Africa it probably existed in a somewhat modified form. Even in apostolic times, there is reason for thinking—if we take all the testimony scriptural and ecclesiastical into account—that the platform of government was not precisely the same in all parts of the church,* and if so, we might expect to find the same circumstantial diversity long after the decease of the apostles.

It may be asked, is not the scheme of government exhibited in the Apostolic Constitutions, *Prelacy*? To this question we reply,—if the essence of prelacy be understood to consist in the want of parity among church officers, then the scheme under consideration was one of the various forms in which prelacy may exist ; for although, the porter, the servant, the reader,

* Our readers may not agree with us in this remark ; but it seems to us that there was a difference, slight indeed, but still a difference, between the constitution of the church of Philippi, and the church of Jerusalem.

the deaconesses and the deacon were not "ministers of the word," they were all clerics, in the sense in which the term was then used; they were all ordained to office by the imposition of hands; and of course in the clerical order there were as many ranks as there were offices between those of the pastor and the porter. In the elevation of the bishop above the presbyter, and placing in his hands the sole power of ordination, in the large increase of clerical offices, and in the so strongly marked distinction between the clergy and the laity, we recognise so many departures from the simplicity of apostolic times. We discover in all parts of the work before us evidences that the process of declension begun under the eyes of the apostles themselves, had made great progress, affecting every portion of the constitution of the church, doctrine, discipline, worship and government. It does not fall in with our design to inquire what form of government the first preachers of the gospel established, nor to discuss the question whether the church in all ages is bound to conform herself to this precise model, without the least modification; whatever may be the true answers to these questions, it seems perfectly obvious to us that the system of government existing in the second or third or fourth century must have diverged in a greater or less degree from that founded by the apostles, for the reason mentioned above—the gradual but constant declension of the church from primitive purity. To say that the constitution of the ministry remained intact, while ministers were becoming more and more ambitious and worldly, while the faith and worship of the church were being slowly corrupted by heresy and superstition is to affirm the opposite of what is declared by all the analogies of history.

Although the scheme of government portrayed in the Constitutions and Canons may be termed in a certain sense, prelatie, it does not follow that modern *jure divino* prelacy can derive support for its claims from this fact. On the contrary, the views every where given of the relations, and duties of bishop, the presbytery, the deacons are totally inconsistent with the supposition that prelacy as it now exists, existed then, as those who adopt the high *jure divino* principle are bound to show. To argue that the two systems are entirely or even substantially the same, because of an identity of name is sheer sophistry. When we examine into the relations and the duties of the an-

cient bishop, or prelate if you will, and of the ancient deacon we find that they discharged very different functions from those belonging to the officers bearing the same name under prelacy as it now exists. The one was congregational; the other diocesan prelacy. The ancient bishop was a pastor of the *people*, bound to instruct and watch over them in person. The modern bishop, as a bishop, is the pastor of his *clergy*, and has nothing to do directly with the people. The ancient deacon, though called a clergyman, in common with all officially connected in any way with the church, was not a minister of the word, but a helper of his pastor in managing "the outward business" of the congregation. The modern prelatial deacon is an incipient minister of the word, holding a position whether viewed in his relation to "his ordinary," or to the Christian people entirely different from that of his ancient name-sake. We are quite ready to admit that congregational prelacy was gradually expanded into—perhaps we may say, prepared the way for—diocesan, after the ancient paganism had been laid low, and the church was united with the state; but this result is far from showing that the systems are identical; the utmost that it can prove is that there were certain moral affinities between them. If prelacy in its present form could be contracted again to its ancient dimensions, we apprehend there are many even among presbyterians, who would look upon the difference between that system and their own as hardly worth contending about. The prelacy of the Constitutions, so far as its outward form is concerned bears a much closer resemblance to presbyterianism, than to any other system—(though when accurately compared we find a material dissimilarity between them,) and this fact is as it seems to us, an important element in the historical argument to prove that the general principles of presbyterianism were practised in the earliest and purest times of the church.

In conclusion, we beg to say that we hail with real pleasure the re-publication of this venerable monument of Christian antiquity. The pastor, and the student of theology are thus enabled to avail themselves of original sources of information, in prosecuting their inquiries respecting the internal state and condition of the church during a period when her voice is supposed by multitudes to be as authoritative as that of her Divine Master himself. The study of the Constitutions may neither beget nor

strengthen the conviction in the reader's mind that the presbyterian system is in all its parts *jure divino*; but if it be prosecuted with any measure of candour, we are perfectly certain that it will produce the persuasion that the modern *jure divino* prelatist who makes so much ado about the practice and testimony of antiquity, must stand self-condemned, for having departed so widely from what, on his principles, is the true and unalterable model of the church.

ART. III.—*The History of Catechizing.*

AMONG the works of Augustine, as scholars well know, is one on *Catechizing*.* It was written at the request of a Carthaginian deacon, named Deogratias. Now though it is not pretended that those who were contemplated in this instruction were children, or that the work was done by question and answer, yet when it is considered that the catechumens who came from heathenism were only children of a larger growth, often rudely ignorant, it will be readily believed that this book of the excellent bishop contains useful lessons for ourselves. The Carthaginian friend had lamented to him the hardness and tediousness of the work; and much of Augustine's treatise is intended to prevent this, and to show him how he may shed a most attractive cheerfulness over the whole business of catechizing. These advices are just as applicable to the catechist of modern times. "Remedies," says he, "are to be sought of God, whereby this narrowness of spirit may be enlarged, that so we may exult in fervour of soul, and take delight in the tranquillity of a good work: for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." He urges his correspondent to come cheerfully to the duties of teaching, however annoying, by adducing the example of Christ, and even of human nurses, who reduce the infant's food to the minutest portions, that the child may be able to receive it.

Who that has ever taught a class of children or youth does

* *Dc Catechizandis Rudibus.*