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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.

convinced by his work to believe Christianity to have come from God, we shall rejoice to know it, but it will be owing, more to the merits of the cause than to the merits of the arguments adduced for its support. Real evidence in favour of Christianity is always of service, because there are some minds which will always find in such evidence an adaptation to their peculiar modes of thought; and we never accustom ourselves to look with indifference, much less with contempt, upon any argument, which, though not characterized by profoundness of thought, or originality, is yet faultless as regards its premises and conclusions. Learning and talent may not need it, but there are minds which may be assisted by it, and led to an abandonment of a cheerless infidelity. But such is not the case with the work before us. Its premises are questionable—when they ought to be beyond the reach of doubt, and its conclusions therefore cannot be expected to be perfectly satisfactory. It is designed especially for thoughtful minds, and by the very novelty of its subject is calculated to arrest the attention, and by the ingenuity of the discussion to fix it. We are sorry not to be able to say as much for its ability to convince the judgment. In this the only really important point, there is an essential and pervading fault which renders useless the whole volume; and in contrast with the lofty pretensions, and high sounding empiricism of the work, renders the failure little short of ridiculous.

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ART. VI.—*A Manual of Presbytery* (comprising tracts by the Rev. Dr. Miller of Princeton and the Rev. Mr. Lorimer of Glasgow.) Second edition, revised and enlarged. Edinburgh. John Johnstone. 1848. 8vo.

If it be true, as we believe, that there is no order of ministers superior to presbyters, now existing by divine appointment in the Christian Church, either as the successors of the primitive bishops, who were themselves no more than elders, or as the successors of the primitive apostles, who, in that capacity, had no successors; it follows, as a necessary consequence, that presbyters or elders, being thus the highest class of officers existing

by divine right in the church, must be invested with the highest powers now belonging to the ministry, including those of discipline and ordination, so that there cannot be higher ministerial authority than that which is derived from presbyters. This negative proof might be considered amply sufficient for the vindication of our orders from the charge of invalidity, so far as it is founded on the want of what is called an episcopal organization in our churches. To remove all doubt, however, and present the truth in both its aspects, we propose to exhibit, in a positive form, direct proof of the fact that presbyters, as presbyters, possessed and exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry, even in apostolic times, from which we may infer *a fortiori*, that the same authority is vested in them now.

It will be recollected, that the presbyterial office is coeval with the church, and that Paul and Barnabas, during their missionary tour in Asia Minor, not only planted churches, but "ordained them elders in every city." If then we can discover with what powers these early presbyters were clothed, we shall establish a sure basis for our subsequent inquiries. And in this investigation we are greatly aided by the preservation, in the Acts of the Apostles, of a valedictory address by Paul to certain persons of this class, when he was leaving Greece and Asia Minor for Jerusalem; in which address, we find not only strong expressions of his private feelings, and allusions to his ministerial labours, but advice to those whom he addressed, as to the right discharge of their official duties. It affords us, therefore, evidence, as to the functions of the primitive elders, which is none the less interesting or instructive, because furnished incidentally.

The statement here referred to is recorded in the twentieth chapter of Acts, where we read that "Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia," "and from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." When they were come, he appealed to them as witnesses of his fidelity to the churches of that region, in declaring unto them all the counsel of God. He then announces to them that their personal connexion was dissolved forever, and exhorts them to the diligent performance of the duties which would thenceforth be peculiarly incumbent on them. And in so doing, it is worthy of remark, that he makes no allusion to

the intended substitution of another in his place, as their official guide and counsellor, but speaks to them precisely as he might, or rather must, have spoken, on the supposition, that from that time forth they were themselves to exercise the highest powers in the church of Ephesus. If he had still expected them to act as mere inferiors and assistants, he would naturally, not to say necessarily, have comforted their grief at his departure, by the promise of a competent successor, and in warning them of dangers by which their church was menaced, would of course have exhorted them to faithful and diligent co-operation with their bishop. But the passage contains nothing of all this; a circumstance which, though it may prove little by itself, as to the organization of the church at Ephesus, affords, at least, an instance of remarkable coincidence with that hypothesis which we maintain, and, what is more important to our present purpose, fully justifies the inference, that the powers here ascribed to the Ephesian presbyters were powers to be exercised in virtue of their presbyterial character, and not by delegation from a higher class of permanent church-officers. For if the apostle could direct them to perform these acts, not only without making his own presence and concurrence a prerequisite, but in such terms as really exclude it, how much less reason have we to believe, that their validity was meant to be dependent on the sanction of a bishop, who is not so much as mentioned, and of whose existence we have no proof elsewhere.

Nor is this a mere negative deduction from Paul's silence, as to any superior authority at Ephesus; for the same thing is implied in the choice of his expressions. "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves,"—*therefore*, since you are now to be deprived of the extraordinary, temporary supervision which you have enjoyed, and to be left with the whole burden of the church upon you, under this change of circumstances, you must be watchful on your own account, not only for your personal safety and advantage, but for that of the church also—"take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock,"—not the flock of another shepherd, but their own, for which they were directly responsible—"over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," ἐπισκόπους or bishops. The bearing of this usage of the term upon the question of episcopal organization has been often discussed elsewhere. What is here important to

be noticed is, that these Ephesian presbyters were shepherds of God's flock, not described as under-shepherds, that is, as the deputies of any human shepherd, but as constituted such by God himself, and that not merely by his providential dispensations, but by a special designation of the Holy Ghost. This explicit mention of the *jus divinum* under which they acted, when viewed in connexion with the absence of all reference to any higher local power, either actual or prospective, makes it not only improbable, but scarcely possible, that what they are empowered or required to do, was to be done by delegation, or in any other way than by direct authority from God himself, bestowed upon them as the highest permanent and local rulers of the church of Ephesus.

With these views of the character in which the elders are addressed, and of the right by which their functions were to be discharged, let us now endeavour to determine in the same way, what these functions were. The answer to this question is afforded by the words immediately succeeding those already quoted: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, TO FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD, which he hath purchased with his own blood." As the church has been already represented as a flock, the official duty of these elders towards it is described by a cognate metaphor. The exact correspondence of the terms is less apparent in our version than in the original, where the word rendered *flock*, and that rendered to *feed*, are collateral derivatives from a common root, and stand in the same relation to the word which means a *shepherd*. To the verb, both etymology and usage give the sense, not of *feeding* merely, but of *acting as a shepherd, doing a shepherd's duty*, of which feeding is a most essential part, but not by any means the whole, since it would either be impossible or unavailing, without further care in guiding to the fold and to the pasture, in collecting and reclaiming, in protecting from the weather and from beasts of prey, and in other slight but indispensable attentions, all included in the literal vocation of a shepherd, and in both the literal and the figurative import of the Greek verb which Paul uses. Unless then the English verb to *feed* be taken with such latitude of meaning as to comprehend all this, it no more expresses the whole duty of a shepherd (as the Greek word does), than the verb to *shoot* describes

the business of a soldier or a hunter, or to plough that of a farmer. It is highly important that our exposition of this passage should be wholly unaffected by a prejudice, connected only with the English version, and arising from its failure to express the full sense of Paul's phraseology. Even when figuratively used, the verb ποιμαίνω is employed by the Greek writers to denote, not merely *nourishment*, but *care*, in the most extensive sense of the expression, such care as faithful shepherds give to helpless and dependent flocks. If, then, the church at Ephesus was a spiritual flock, and these its elders spiritual shepherds, the duty here enjoined upon them is not merely that of "feeding them with knowledge," by public and private teaching, but also that of governing, controlling, and protecting them, as well from the effects of internal corruption, as from those of violence and fraud *ab extra*. It is, in short, a metaphorical description of the ministerial office, in its whole extent, as comprehending all that is essential to the continued existence of the church, and the attainment of the ends for which it was established, just as the business of a shepherd comprehends all that is necessary to the safety and well being of the flock. There is no more reason in the text itself, for excluding any of the ministerial functions from the figurative import of the verb ποιμαίνειν, than there is for excluding some things in the nature and condition of the church from the figurative import of the substantive ποιμνιον; if the latter is a general description of the church, the former is a general description of the ministry, its duties and its powers. And this, which is the natural and obvious meaning of the figurative terms which the apostle uses, agrees, in all points, with his subsequent expressions. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves"—a common figure for false teachers—"enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." These are the two great evils, with which the church was threatened, error of doctrine, and schism as the consequence; for this is the relative position of the two things, as described in scripture, not the converse, as maintained by those who make purity of doctrine to depend upon external regularity, as we shall see hereafter. To prevent these evils, whether threatened from within or from without, and to prevent

them, not by private effort merely, but by authoritative action, is distinctly made the duty of the presbyters of Ephesus.

That the apostle refers not to personal but official influence, appears from the solemn mention of their designation by the Holy Ghost, with which he prefaces his exhortation. There would be something quite incongruous in making the divine right of these presbyters the ground of an injunction which was equally binding upon all true Christians. This would be tantamount to saying, since the Holy Ghost has placed you in a high official station, be assiduous in personal and private duties. If, on the other hand, the reference is clearly to the influence exerted by these presbyters, as such, and in the exercise of their distinctive functions, then the question meets us, how could they comply with this injunction, unless they were intrusted with the keys both of discipline and doctrine, with the power, not of teaching merely, but of maintaining purity of doctrine, by deciding controversies, trying heretics, silencing false teachers, and excluding from the ministry all such as were esteemed by them unfaithful or unfit? But these are acts supposing the possession of the highest powers now belonging to the ministry, not merely those of preaching and of ordinary pastoral control, but also those of ministerial discipline and ordination.

It may be objected, that the duty, to which the elders, in the next verse, are specifically called, is not that of judging or of acting with authority, but merely that of watching and remembering his former admonitions, and that this implies the existence of a higher power which alone was competent to check the evil. But if this be so, how is it, that he does not even mention or allude to such superior power? It cannot be imagined, that he merely meant to terrify the elders by predicting future evils to the church, without suggesting a preventive or a remedy; and yet this is undoubtedly the case, if those whom he addresses could do nothing more than watch and bear in mind his warnings. If it be said, that the elders must have been aware of the existence of these "higher powers," and needed not to be informed of it by Paul, it then becomes impossible to understand why he addressed his exhortations to the presbyters, and not to their superiors, who alone had power to prevent or remedy the threatened evil. Nor can this difficulty

be removed by taking it for granted, first, that there was a bishopric of Ephesus, above the eldership, and then that it was vacant, so that Paul was under the necessity, at this time, of addressing the "inferior clergy." For in that case he could hardly have omitted all allusion to the fact assumed, and all injunction to obey the bishop, when he should be sent, and cooperate with him for the prevention of the evils to be feared; whereas he seems, as we have seen, to throw the whole responsibility upon the elders, and addresses them precisely as he must have done, if he expected and intended the entire care of the Ephesian church to be devolved on them. To take the contrary for granted, in despite of the obvious tenor of Paul's language, is, in effect, to destroy the value of all proof derived from language, except in the case of an explicit, categorical assertion, which is granted, upon all sides, to be wanting here. A simple test of probability, in this case, is afforded by the fact, that no one, reading the apostle's exhortation, either could or would derive from it the notion of an ecclesiastical authority at Ephesus, above that of the presbyters, to whom the exhortation is addressed; and on the other hand, that no one so reading it, could fail to gather from it, in itself considered, that these elders were invested with official right and power to prevent or to redress the evils here predicted.

The truth is that the other supposition rests upon the foregone conclusion, that a prelatical authority, distinct from the presbyterate, did certainly exist at Ephesus, and that the subjection of the elders to it is implied or presupposed in the apostle's exhortation. But denying, as we do, that any proof of such authority exists in any quarter, and interpreting Paul's language by itself and by the context, without reference to any preconceived hypothesis whatever, we are forced to the conclusion, that he here addresses the Ephesian elders as the rulers of the church, and that when he exhorts them to be watchful and remember, he refers not to private but official vigilance, and to such a recollection of his warnings as should lead to the due exercise of their authority in quenching the insidious fires of heresy and schism, which they could not do without possessing all the power which a bishop, or derivative apostle, on the opposite hypothesis, could possibly have exercised. The objection to this argument from this address of Paul, that it does not

ascribe to the Ephesian elders the specific powers of discipline and ordination, proves too much; for it would prove that they were not even authorized to preach or to administer the sacraments, since these are not specifically mentioned, though included in the figurative meaning of ποιμαίνειν, which, however, includes more, and is descriptive of the ministerial work in general, as we have seen already. The apostle speaks of them, either as having all the ministerial powers, or as having none; because the terms which he employs are those of general description, not minute specification, and must either be descriptive of the office as a whole, or not at all.

But even granting, for the sake of argument, that ποιμαίνειν merely means *to feed*, and that feeding is a metaphor for preaching and the sacraments, it does not follow, that the powers of discipline and ordination, although not specifically mentioned, are excluded. It is clear, not only that the whole includes its parts, but also that the greater may include the less. As the general ascription of the ministerial powers to these elders would imply that they possessed each separately, so too the ascription of a higher ministerial power might imply that they possessed a lower. Now discipline and ordination, it will be admitted, derive their value from the ends which they promote, and which they were intended to secure. The end of discipline is to preserve purity, and to exclude the unworthy from the privileges of the church. The end of ordination is to secure a valid ministration of the word and sacraments. But the word and the sacraments themselves have an independent and intrinsic value. If the power of dispensing them had been conferred on any who thought proper to make use of it, without any special ordination to an office, whatever inconveniences might have attended that arrangement, it could not have impaired the intrinsic value of the word and sacraments. But if, on the other hand, there were no word or sacraments, ordination would be useless. And the same may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, as to government or discipline. These then, to wit, ordination and discipline, are subsidiary functions, which derive their value from the relation they sustain to others. The possession of these powers, therefore, might have been inferred from the possession of the higher powers upon which they are dependent, even if the latter had alone been mentioned. But the fact, as we have seen

already, is, that all the powers of the ministry collectively are comprehended in the metaphor of acting as a shepherd to the flock of Christ.

If it should be alleged in this case, as it has been in some others, that the powers, apparently ascribed to presbyters, were really intended to be exercised by bishops, here included under the generic name of elders, we reply, that such a mode of reasoning precludes the possibility of proving anything, except so far as the opposing party may think proper to allow it. If the ascription of a certain power to a certain class of officers, distinctly named, is not a proof of their possessing it, the fact is not susceptible of proof at all. And this extraordinary process, let it be observed, is equally available on either side of a disputed question. If one man may explain away the acts ascribed to presbyters as the exclusive acts of bishops, then another may explain away the acts ascribed to deacons as the exclusive acts of presbyters, and those ascribed to men as the exclusive acts of angels. It should also be observed, that if one of the official acts ascribed to presbyters may be explained away as the exclusive act of a superior order, any other of the acts so ascribed may be explained in the same manner. If, when presbyters are spoken of as exercising all the ministerial powers, one may argue that bishops are the only elders who are thus empowered to ordain, another may, with equal right, allege that bishops are the only elders authorized to preach or to baptize, and that the primitive presbyters did neither, by themselves or in their own right, but merely united, as assessors, in the preaching and baptizing acts of their superiors in office. To an argument which naturally leads to such results, it is sufficient to oppose a simple negative, by saying that as bishops or apostles are not mentioned in the text, the official acts ascribed to presbyters were meant to be considered as performed by them alone in that capacity. When therefore Paul describes the presbyters of Ephesus as having been divinely called to act as shepherds of God's flock, we must regard it as a proof that all the powers of the ministry, including those of discipline and ordination, were possessed and exercised by elders, even in the days of the apostles.

A large part of what has now been said applies, with equal force, to 1 Tim. v. 17, where the same apostle speaks, on a different occasion, not only of the same office, but of the same

men, not only of elders in general, but of Ephesian elders in particular. Supposing, as we have before done, that *πρεσβύτεροι* is here a name of office, it cannot be descriptive of the office of apostle or apostle-bishop, partly for the reason above given in another case, that the assumption is entirely gratuitous, partly because Timothy, according to the adverse theory, would then be represented as a hyper-apostolical church-officer, not only equal but superior to Paul, who was merely an apostle. If, on the other hand, the word denotes presbyters or elders, in the proper sense, then the apostle must be speaking of the powers which belonged to them in that capacity, and not as the mere agents of a higher power. That no superiority of Timothy to these Ephesian elders is implied in the apostle's words, has been often shown, and will be here assumed. Since then, it is of elders that he speaks, and of elders acting in their own right, we have only to inquire what official functions are ascribed to them, in order to determine what the powers of a presbyter or elder were, in apostolic times. "Let the ELDERS THAT RULE well be counted worthy of double honour." They are here distinctly recognised as rulers in the church, and this must surely comprehend the right of discipline, if not of ordination. It may be said, however, that *προεστῶτες* merely means presiding, holding the first place in the society, and therefore denotes relative position, but not office or official power. We have assumed, however, that *πρεσβύτεροι* denotes official rank; and whether *προεστῶτες* does not signify the exercise of an official power, is a question which can only be determined by a reference to usage. In Rom. xii. 8, ὁ προῖστάμενος cannot denote mere priority of rank or conspicuous position, for two reasons: first, because a man could not be exhorted to hold such a position with diligence; and secondly, because all the other terms connected with it signify specific actions. The same thing is evident from the collocation of *προῖσταμένους* in 1 Thess. v. 12, between *κοπιῶντας* and *νουθετοῦντας*, both denoting specific functions of the ministry. In 1 Tim. iii. 5, the bishop is described as one that ruleth well (*καλῶς προῖστάμενον*) his own house, which can hardly mean one who holds the first place in it, without any original jurisdiction over it. Let the sense which *προῖστημι* evidently has in all these cases, be applied to that before us, and it follows of course, that presbyters or bishops are here spoken of as ruling the church, just as really as they are

elsewhere said to rule their families. That the government referred to is that of the church, appears from what follows in the same verse, as to labouring in word and doctrine. If, then, *πρεσβύτεροι* is here a name of office, which must be allowed by those, at least, who use this text to prove Timothy's superiority to presbyters, then the officers described by it are clearly recognised as rulers in the church, without any reference whatever to a superior human power. Where shall we find an equally distinct ascription of the ruling power to apostles, not of the original thirteen?

Here then are two passages, in which the same apostle speaks of the Ephesian elders, first metaphorically as the shepherds of Christ's flock, then literally as the rulers of the church. Whatever doubt might be supposed to rest upon the meaning of the terms employed, in either case, may be disposed of by comparing them together. That *ποιμαίνειν* does not merely denote *feeding*, whether literal or spiritual, but the whole extent of the pastoral care, including government, may now be argued from the *προεστῶτες* of the parallel passage. And that *προεστῶτες*, on the other hand, includes the powers of discipline and ordination, is rendered still more probable by Paul's exhorting these same elders, in the other case, to duties which imply the possession of these powers. The two texts, taken in conjunction, so as to explain each other, warrant us in stating as a general fact, that the Ephesian elders are twice spoken of by Paul as rulers of the church, without any intimation that the power of ordination is to be excepted, or that they acted in subjection to a bishop. Now the terms of this description must be applicable, either to presbyters in general, or to the presbyters of Ephesus exclusively. The latter supposition would imply, that there was no uniformity in primitive church-government, the same class of officers possessing different powers in different cases, a hypothesis destructive of all arguments against presbyterian orders, founded on alleged deviations from the apostolic model.

We have moreover a direct proof that this organization was a general one in the first epistle of Peter, where he addresses the elders, not of one church merely, but of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; calls himself their fellow-elder, and exhorts them to "feed the flock of God"—the same expression used by Paul to the Ephesian elders—"taking the

oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage,"—this implies that they were under a temptation so to do, which could scarcely be the case, if they were mere assessors to a bishop—"and when the chief shepherd shall appear"—this clearly implies that they were under-shepherds only to the head of the church—"ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." If it can be supposed that all the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, were accidentally deprived of bishops at this time, it would go far to prove that the privation was a matter of but little moment. If, however, this description has respect to presbyters in general, we have proof that the primitive presbyters were rulers of the church, and no proof that discipline and ordination were excepted from their powers.

With the general view, which we have thus obtained from scripture, of the presbyterial office as a whole, let us now compare the more specific language of the same apostle in the same epistle, when he says to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) If this does not relate to ordination, there can be no reason for supposing that the parallel passage in 2 Tim. i. 6, relates to ordination; and as the transaction recorded in Acts xiii. 1—3 was nothing more than a solemn designation to a special service, the result is, that we have in the New Testament no proof that any rite of ordination was considered necessary, nor any instance of its having been performed, the word sometimes rendered by the English verb *ordain* being a general expression for the act of constituting or appointing. So far, then, from the act of ordination, as distinct from that of designation or appointment, being formally reserved, as the peculiar prerogative of a superior order in the ministry, it would not seem to have been used at all, and the general terms in which the presbyters are spoken of, as rulers of the church, are to be understood as comprehending all the powers necessary to its maintenance and government. But even granting that the text relates to ordination in the proper sense, it has been alleged that the ordaining act is not ascribed to presbyters, as such, but to apostles.

In support of this assertion, very different positions have been taken. In the first place it has been alleged, that the presbytery may have consisted wholly of apostles. Not to reiterate the reasons which have been already given, for resisting all gratuitous assumptions, tending to reverse the natural import of language, and to render proof impossible, we answer this objection by a counter allegation, that the presbytery may have consisted wholly of mere presbyters. The two possibilities will balance one another, and in choosing between them, the word *πρεσβυτέριον* must have due weight. It is certainly more likely, in the absence of explicit proof, that *πρεσβυτέριον*, if it means a body of men at all, means a body of mere presbyters, than that it means a body of apostles. The apostles, being presbyters, might be included in the name; but as they had a distinctive title of their own, it is natural to suppose, that if their distinctive functions were the subject of discourse, their distinctive title would be used, and, on the other hand, that when the generic title is employed, the functions spoken of are not the peculiar functions of apostles, as apostles, but those which are common to them and presbyters. Or even if *πρεσβυτέριον* here denotes apostles, the use of the name in this connexion shows that it was in the character of presbyters that they ordained. It seems incredible, that if they held two offices, a higher and a lower, those acts which they performed by virtue of the former, should be connected with the title of the latter. The bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church are, in some cases, rectors of particular parishes. When we read therefore, of a man as rector of a certain church, we may be reading of a bishop; but no one acquainted with the true facts of the case would speak of a bishop by the other title, when ascribing to him acts which, according to the customs of that church, could only be performed by him as bishop. No clergyman of New Jersey, it may be presumed, would speak of having been ordained by the rector of St. Mary's, Burlington. On the other hand, the official record of a baptism, as having been administered by the rector of that church, would be regarded as conclusive evidence that parochial clergymen have power to baptize; nor would it be invalidated by the allegation, that as the rector in question was a bishop, it was in the latter character alone that he baptized; much less by the suggestion that he

may have been a bishop, and that ordinary rectors therefore had no such authority. If, then, the apostles are here mentioned as ordainers, and as forming a *πρεσβυτέριον* for the purpose, it must have been in the character of presbyters that they ordained. Supposing, then, that *πρεσβυτέριον* means a body of men, it matters not of whom it was composed; for, whatever else they may have been, they must have been presbyters, and as such they ordained.

To escape from this dilemma, it has been alleged, that *πρεσβυτέριον* denotes, not the ordainers, but the office of a presbyter. To this there are two very serious objections. In the first place, the construction is unusual and unnatural, the laying on of the hands of an office. According to all usage and analogy, the genitive, after *χείρων* must denote the persons, to whom the hands belonged, and by whom the imposition was performed. Can it be fortuitous, that, out of more than a hundred other cases, in which some form of *χείρ* is followed in construction by the genitive, there is not one in which it can be supposed to signify any thing, except the person whose hands are mentioned? Or can it be supposed, that the relation of *τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου* to *χείρων*, in the case before us, is different from that of *μου* to the same word, in the precisely parallel expression, 2 Tim. i. 6? The other objection to this interpretation of the word is, that in the only other places where it occurs in the New Testament, it means, and can mean, nothing but a body of *πρεσβύτεροι*.\* Before we can explain it of the office, therefore, we must adopt, first, an unnatural and unparal-leled construction, and then, an unauthorized meaning of the principal word. That is to say, it cannot be so explained, without doing violence both to lexicography and grammar.

But there is still another method of evading the conclusion, that presbyters are here represented as ordaining. This is by asserting, that even if *πρεσβυτέριον* does mean a body of elders, *μετά* does not mean *by* but *with*, denoting mere participation, not authoritative action, so that presbyters are not represented as ordaining, but merely as joining in the ordination. This view of the passage takes for granted, first, that the preposition cannot mean *by*, but must mean *with*; and then, that if it does mean *with*, it must connect the action of the presbyters, as mere

\* Luke xxii. 66. Acts xxii. 5.

assessors, with the authoritative act of the apostles, as ordainers. Both these assumptions are entirely unauthorized. The Greek *μετὰ*, like the English *with*, has sometimes the secondary sense of *by, by means of*. The origin of this secondary meaning seems to be, that the agent acts *with* his instrument, in the strict sense, i. e. in company with it; and thus the preposition, which strictly conveys this idea only, conveys by implication that of instrumentality. The transition from the one sense to the other may be seen in such expressions as the following. 'Pursue him with the sword, and then destroy him with the sword.' In the first phrase, *with* denotes merely that the sword is to accompany the pursuers; in the second it denotes, that the sword is the instrument, by which they are to act. This etymological analysis is confirmed by the usage of the New Testament. "Thou shalt make me full of joy with (*μετὰ*) thy countenance." (Acts ii. 28.) This cannot mean 'thou, together with thy countenance, shalt make me full of joy'—nor, 'thou shalt make me, together with thy countenance, full of joy'—but 'thou, by means of thy countenance (or presence), shalt make me full of joy.' The same thing, in substance, may be said of Acts xiii. 17: "and *with* an high arm brought he them out of it." In Acts xiv. 27 we read, that when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, "they gathered the church together and rehearsed all that God had done with them (*μετ' αὐτῶν*)," and again, Acts xv. 4, "they declared all things that God had done with them." This does not mean "to them," as it might possibly in English, because *μετὰ* is not used elsewhere in that sense, and because the context shows that the historian means what God had done to the Gentiles *by* them or *through* them, as his instruments. These examples will suffice to show, that *μετὰ* may mean *by*, as well as *with*, and that it is not, therefore, to be taken for granted, that it here expresses a different kind of action. Granting, however, that it does mean *with*, in the strict sense, what two things does it connect? The imposition of hands with what? The adverse argument assumes, not only that it may, but that it must, connect the imposition of hands by the presbytery with the ordaining act of the apostle, which is not mentioned at all. Now if any rule of construction can be looked upon as fixed, it is that what is expressed, other things being equal, must be preferred to what is not expressed, but

merely conjectured or supposed. According to this principle, *μετὰ*, if it merely means *together with*, must connect the imposition of the hands of the presbytery with the prophecy or revelation, mentioned just before. How was the gift conferred on Timothy? By means of a divine communication, *διὰ προφητείας*. By that alone? No, but by revelation, *together with* the laying on of hands, which is essentially equivalent to saying, 'by revelation *and* the imposition of hands.' Whatever force the *διὰ* has in relation to *προφητείας* it has in relation to *ἐπιθέσεως*, the *μετὰ* serving merely to connect them.

We are then reduced to this alternative. If *μετὰ* is a mere connective, it connects *προφητείας* with *ἐπιθέσεως*, and implies that the ordination was as much effected by the one as by the other, or that both were alike instruments or channels of communication, by which the gift of God was conveyed to Timothy. But if *μετὰ* is more than a connective, and itself denotes *by means of*, then the act of the presbytery is itself described, as the medium or instrument of ordination. On the whole, then, it appears, that unless we give to *πρεσβυτέριον* a meaning which it has not elsewhere, and connect it with the words before it in a manner which is utterly at variance with the usage of the language, or assume, without necessity or right, that it here denotes a body of apostles, or that the action of apostles, although not expressed, is understood, and that of the presbytery made dependent on it, we are under the necessity of drawing the conclusion, that presbyters, in apostolic times, ordained. And this, which is the only exposition of the text that harmonizes fully with the usage of the words and with the principles of grammar, that supposes nothing and imagines nothing, but allows the text to speak for itself, is moreover recommended by its perfect agreement with the natural and obvious meaning of the passages before considered, in which presbyters are spoken of as bearing the whole burden of church government, and called to duties which imply the power not only of discipline but of ordination.

But although these passages contain enough to warrant the conclusion, that the primitive presbyters possessed and exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry, it cannot be denied, that this conclusion would be rendered more completely satisfying, if it were possible to cite a case, in which there could be no dispute or doubt, in relation either to the acts described,

or to the persons represented as performing them, on both which points there is some room for diversity of judgment in the cases just considered, though the balance of probabilities appears to us decidedly in favour of the ground which we defend. But this preponderance would be the more decided and conspicuous, from the collateral evidence afforded even by a single case, in which all parties could agree that certain persons are described as exercising certain powers. Now the fact is, that we have it in our power to adduce not only one case of the kind supposed, but two, which we shall now proceed to state.

It is granted, upon all sides, that Timothy in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete, possessed and exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry. So fully is this fact admitted by our adversaries, that they build upon it their most specious argument, to prove that the apostolic office is perpetual. Our objections to that argument have been already stated; but the fact upon which it is founded, we agree with our opponents in asserting. We maintain, with them, that there are no ministerial functions now existing in the church, which were not exercised by Timothy and Titus, who are clearly recognised as having power not only to preach and administer the sacraments but to ordain and govern. It is, however, a matter of some moment to observe the nature of the evidence, which forms the ground of this unanimous conclusion. The point at which we differ is the question whether the possession of these powers necessarily supposes a superiority of permanent official rank in Timothy and Titus above presbyters. Our reasons for believing that it does not, have already been detailed, and what we now design is merely to direct attention to the nature of the evidence, by which the opposite opinion is sustained, and which is certainly not destitute of plausibility. The argument may be succinctly stated thus, that since the right of ordination and of ministerial discipline is recognised by Paul, in his epistles to these two men, as belonging to them, they must of necessity have been superior to the presbyters whom they were to ordain and discipline.

This conclusion is vitiated by the false assumption, upon which it rests, that ordination to an office in the church can only be derived from one who holds a higher office, and that ministers of equal rank cannot mutually discipline each other. But

for this defect, the reasoning would be conclusive. They are clearly commanded to ordain and exercise authority, and this, if inconsistent with equality of rank and identity of office, would demonstrate their superiority to presbyters. It will not, however, be contended, even by the warmest advocates of this opinion, that the evidence of this superiority, contained in Paul's epistles, is the strongest that can be imagined. They will grant, not only that a formal categorical assertion of the fact disputed would be stronger proof than that which is derived by inference from Paul's instructions, but that even in default of such assertion, the contested point might possibly have been much more indisputable than it is. If, for example, it had been recorded, as a historical fact, that Timothy and Titus acted towards the presbyters of Ephesus and Crete as their official inferiors, directing all their movements, and controlling the discharge of their official duties by minute instructions, our opponents would no doubt regard the proof of their superiority as stronger than it now is. And the evidence would surely be regarded as still more decisive, if among the books of the New Testament there were epistles written by Timothy and Titus to the presbyters of Ephesus and Crete; containing no recognition of equality beyond what is habitually used by modern bishops to their youngest clergy; directing the movements of the elders in a positive and peremptory manner, without any reference to their own inclination or opinion; the superior rank of the two writers would be looked upon as quite indisputable. But if, in addition to all this, the elders were required to exercise their highest powers as the representatives or delegates of Timothy and Titus, with directions to pursue a certain course, until the writers should be personally present, and with kind but authoritative hints as to the personal improvement of the presbyters addressed, it must be owned that the denial of superior official rank in Timothy and Titus would be hopeless. Now it happens, unfortunately for the adverse argument, that no such evidence exists, in reference to Timothy and Titus, whose superiority to presbyters must stand or fall with the assumption, that the power of ordination and of discipline implies a permanent diversity of rank. But what we wish especially to bring before the reader is the interesting fact, that the very evidence, which

would be universally acknowledged, as sufficient to establish the superiority of Timothy and Titus, with respect to presbyters, does certainly exist, in the case of Paul, with respect to Timothy and Titus themselves. The facts, which constitute this evidence, have been already stated in detail, but in different connexions. That their bearing on the question now before us may be seen, a brief recapitulation will be necessary, under several particulars.

And first, let it be observed, that in the other books of the New Testament, that is to say, exclusive of the three epistles to Timothy and Titus, they are mentioned in a manner, which not only furnishes no proof of their equality to Paul, but naturally leads to the conclusion of their being his inferiors, in rank and office. In the Acts of the Apostles, it will not be disputed, that Timothy appears as Paul's inferior, a young man chosen to attend him in his missionary travels, as a helper and a confidential messenger. It may be said, indeed, that it would not be fair to argue, from the first stage of Timothy's career, that he was always Paul's inferior; and this is true. But if we find Paul subsequently speaking of and to him, in a tone precisely suited to this original relation of the parties, it will surely make it highly probable, to say the least, that this relation still continued to subsist. And that this is really the case will be perceived upon comparing the place occupied by Timothy, as Paul's *διάκονος* or *βηρπέτης*, in the Acts of the Apostles, with the way in which Paul speaks to the Corinthians of having sent Timotheus to them and requests that he may be among them without fear, and that no man may despise him, and that he may be sent back to the Apostle in due time (1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11.) It is plain from these words, not only that Timothy was acting as Paul's messenger, and under his direction, but also that the service was a temporary one, and that when it was accomplished, he was to return to his accustomed duties, as the apostle's personal attendant. And that this was not a solitary case of such employment, is apparent from the first epistle to the Thessalonians, where Paul speaks first of having sent Timotheus to them (ch. iii. 2,) and then of his return and of the news which he brought back (v. 6,) to which may be added Phil. ii. 19, where he intimates his purpose to send Timotheus to them, not to remain there, but to bring him an account of their condition. In this last case, the execution of the purpose is left dependent upon

Paul's own movements and convenience (v. 23), with an intimation that the sending of Timothy was merely meant to be a substitute for the apostle's personal attendance (v. 24.) The relation between Timothy and Paul, apparent in these passages, may be compared to that between an aid-de-camp and his commander, the two main duties, in both cases, being those of personal attendance and of active service in communicating orders. That the relative position of Titus was the same, may be inferred from Paul's allusions to "the coming of Titus," as of one who had been absent upon special duty, to the report which he had made of the state of things at Corinth, and to the effect produced upon him by his visit to the church there. (2 Cor. vii. 6, 7, 13, 15.) It may also be observed that the Apostle speaks of the obedience and respect with which the Corinthians had treated Titus, as a mark of their submission to his own apostolical authority (vs. 15, 16.) Another incidental reference to Paul's employing Titus in this manner may be found in 2 Tim. iv. 10, where he is mentioned among Paul's immediate followers. "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia; only Luke is with me; take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable for me *εἰς διακονίαν*," not "for the ministry" in general, but as a *διάκονος* or personal assistant in my labours. It seems plain that all the persons here named bore the same relation to the apostle, and were equally under his authority. Although Titus, therefore, is not mentioned in the Acts, there can be no doubt that his course began, like Timothy's, in personal attendance upon Paul in his journeys, to which indeed we find express allusion in Gal. ii. 1, 3, where his Greek descent and circumcision are referred to, and the fact recorded of his having gone with Paul and Barnabas, on a particular occasion, to Jerusalem.

Both from the history and the epistles, therefore, independently of those addressed to Timothy and Titus, it would naturally be inferred, that these men were inferior to Paul, and acted under his direction. It may, indeed, be said, that they are clearly recognised as ministers, that Timothy is mentioned as Paul's work-fellow (Rom. xvi. 21), "one that worketh the work of the Lord even as I do" (2 Cor. iv. 17,) as a "brother" (2 Cor. i. 1), who had "served" with Paul "in the gospel" (Phil. ii. 19;) that

Titus likewise is described as his "brother" (2 Cor. ii. 13), his "partner and fellow-labourer" with respect to the Corinthians (2 Cor. viii. 23.) All this is very true, and proves conclusively that Timothy and Titus were duly ordained ministers, and as such held the rank of presbyters or elders. But this, so far from proving their equality to Paul, strengthens the proof of their inferiority, by bringing their acknowledged ministerial standing into contrast with the manifest assumption of superiority on Paul's part. His continuing to regulate their movements after their admission to the ministry, shows clearly that he was superior, not only as a minister to private Christians, but as an apostle to mere presbyters or elders.

If it should be alleged, however, that Timothy and Titus were themselves invested with this same superiority, and that it is in this capacity that Paul addresses them, this is a question which can only be determined by an examination of the three epistles. If it be true that Paul's superiority to Timothy and Titus ceased before the date of his epistles to them, we may certainly expect to find the tone of his address to them materially altered, and the habit of express command exchanged for that of brotherly suggestion. And we find indeed many strong expressions of fraternal, or rather of paternal love, but mingled with peremptory and direct commands, as well as incidental intimations of superior authority, upon the writer's part, some of which might be considered dubious or of little moment, if we did not know the mutual relation of the parties at an earlier date. The hypothesis that Timothy had now attained equality of rank with Paul, though not contradicted, is certainly not favoured by those parts of these epistles, in which Paul speaks of having left him at Ephesus for a special purpose (1 Tim. i. 3) and renews the commission under which he acted (v. 18); gives him particular directions for his conduct until he shall come (ch. iii. 14, 15: iv. 13, 14), and summons Timothy to come within a certain time (2 Tim. iv. 21) and take the place of those who had just left him (ch. iv. 9—12), bringing Paul's cloak and parchments with him (v. 13.)

Titus also is described as being left in Crete by Paul, to finish that which he had left undone (Tit. i. 5), and is required to rejoin him, when relieved by Artemas or Tychicus (Tit. iii. 12.) All this goes to prove that no such change had taken place in

the relations of these men to Paul as would make them no longer his inferiors in office. And the same thing, though it could not be directly proved, is certainly corroborated by the numerous advices which he gives them with a view to their personal improvement, as when he exhorts Timothy to hold faith and a good conscience (1 Tim. i. 19), to refuse profane and old wives' fables and exercise himself unto godliness (1 Tim. iv. 7), to give attendance to reading, exhortation and doctrine (v. 13), to let his proficiency appear to all (v. 15), to take heed to himself and to the doctrine that he may be saved (v. 16), to avoid covetousness and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (ch. vi. 11), to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life (v. 12), to keep Paul's commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 14), to avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called (1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 16), to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. ii. 1), to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (v. 3), to avoid foolish and unlearned questions (v. 23), to flee youthful lusts and follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace (v. 22,) to continue in the things which he had learned of Paul (2 Tim. iii. 14,) and to endure afflictions (2 Tim. iv. 5.)

It may be said, that all these are expressions, which might naturally be used by a man of Paul's celebrity and standing in the church, even to those holding the same office, if much younger than himself, and still more if they were his spiritual children. Admitting this to be a sufficient explanation of the general tone of Paul's epistles, and of his exhortations to mere personal and private duties, will it answer the same purpose, with respect to his authoritative directions for the discharge of their official duties? Can it be supposed that such minute instructions, as to public worship, ordination, discipline, the duties to be enjoined upon different classes of society, as are contained in these epistles, would have been given to any but inferiors in rank and office? Such a hypothesis might be admissible, if every thing else in the epistles favoured it; but not when their whole drift and tenor make it scarcely possible to doubt that Timothy and Titus are addressed as Paul's inferiors. There are several classes of objections to the opposite opinion, every one of which would seem decisive unless countervailed by other circumstances. The general tone of the epistles is almost enough

to show that Paul was their superior in office. It would fail to do so, if there were express recognitions of equality; but there are none. His dictation to them, with respect to the discharge of their official functions, would be almost enough to prove the point. Above all, the distinct allusions to their acting merely as Paul's messengers and delegates, without renouncing their relation to him as his personal attendants, make it almost certain. Now as each of these distinctive features of the three epistles is almost sufficient of itself to prove what we allege, and as none of them detracts from any of the others, but confirms them, we may safely state as the most probable conclusion from the data generally, that the men, to whom these three epistles were addressed, were no less subject to Paul's authority, and consequently no less inferior in official rank, when labouring at Ephesus and Crete, than when attending him in Greece or Asia Minor or Judea.

If any should still think, however, that the supposition of their inferiority is not necessary to explain the tone and contents of these epistles, let them look at the question in another point of view. Let them suppose, though merely for the sake of argument, that these men were not only younger than Paul, and his spiritual children, but inferiors in office, and that Paul, in writing to them, had this inferiority in view, and was influenced by it, both in matter and in manner. How could he, without saying *totidem verbis*, you are my inferiors, have more distinctly conveyed that idea, than he has done here? What form of address, what selection of topics, what turn of expression, what peculiar tone, what allusions to his own superiority and their subjection to him, could have made the matter clearer than it is? If an air of paternal condescension, if repeated exhortations to fidelity, if positive commands as to official acts, if peremptory orders, as to times and places, and express injunctions to return to personal attendance on the writer, do not prove inferiority of rank in those who are addressed, it must be because no proof of the fact is possible, except by formal categorical assertion. If, however, it be true, that Paul addresses these two men precisely as he must have done if they were his inferiors in office, we believe a vast majority of readers will think this a decisive proof that they were so. Nor can it be rejected, with-

out flagrant inconsistency, by those who plead for a perpetual apostleship. The proof of that opinion rests, almost exclusively, upon the fact, that Timothy and Titus are directed to ordain and discipline presbyters, from which it is inferred that they were more themselves. But if their being thus directed can prove their superiority to elders, how much more does Paul's directing them prove his superiority to them. Those very powers, the imputed exercise of which is made a proof that they were more than presbyters, were exercised at Paul's command, and in conformity with his minute instructions. The least that can be argued from this fact is that Paul's superiority to Timothy and Titus is as clearly proved as theirs to presbyters. But this is only a small part of the whole truth; for while the proof of their superiority to presbyters is wholly insufficient, that of Paul's superiority to them is perfect. The former, as we have before seen, rests upon the false assumption that a presbyter could neither be ordained nor disciplined by those of the same order. But the fact of Paul's superiority to Timothy and Titus does not rest upon his having ordained them or acted as their judge; but upon his actual control of their official functions, and their actual subjection to his apostolical authority. The very fact of their ordaining and exercising discipline at all may be described as doubtful, in comparison with that of Paul's governing themselves. That they governed and ordained, is a mere inference from Paul's advising them how they should exercise these powers. But that they themselves were ruled by Paul, is no such inference. The act itself is upon record in these three epistles, which are nothing more nor less than three solemn acts of apostolical authority.

The fact, then, that Timothy and Titus were inferior to Paul, in rank and office, is not only upon all common principles of reasoning, but even upon those which are peculiar to the adverse party, fully established. But if they were inferior to Paul in office, they must either have been presbyters, or something intermediate between that and apostles. The assumption of an intermediate order sweeps away, of course, all arguments to prove that certain persons were apostles, simply because they were superior to presbyters. It also gives a license to assume as many intermediate orders as may be required to

demonstrate different hypotheses. In point of fact, however, it has never been assumed. It is one of the conceded points, on which the parties to this controversy meet, that there was no office in the primitive church system, above that of presbyter, excepting the apostleship. If, then, Timothy and Titus were inferior to Paul, they could not have been more than presbyters, and must in that capacity have exercised the right of ordination and of discipline. If, as a last resort, it be alleged, that these powers were exercised by virtue of a special commission, and not as ordinary functions of the eldership, it still remains true, even granting this assertion, that presbyters were competent to exercise these powers, without being elevated to a higher office. What they were thus occasionally authorized to do by the original apostles, they might still do, even if there were apostles in the church; but if, as we have seen already, there are none, then what was occasionally done by presbyters at first, must now be done habitually by them, as the highest class of officers existing, by divine right, in the church. Much more must they possess this right as the successors of the primitive elders, if the latter, as we have the strongest reason to believe, possessed it, not occasionally merely, but as a necessary function of their office.

The result of our inquiry may be briefly stated thus; that Paul addresses the presbyters of Ephesus, as if the whole care of the church was to devolve on them, representing them as shepherds of Christ's flock, a metaphor implying the possession of the highest powers and employed here in its widest sense, because connected with the prediction of dangers which could only be averted by the exercise of great authority, and also because Peter, in addressing the presbyters of Asia Minor, speaks of them as shepherds, subject to no chief shepherd but the Lord Jesus Christ, and possessing powers which might easily become despotic in their exercise. We find too that Paul elsewhere speaks of the presbyters of Ephesus as "ruling," the word employed being the same used to denote the government of families, and therefore in its application to the church, implying the possession of the highest powers, not excepting those of discipline and ordination. And accordingly we find the ordination of Timothy ascribed to

a presbytery, which, on any natural interpretation of the term, can only mean a body of presbyters acting in that character. We find too that Timothy and Titus, while actually exercising the highest powers now belonging to the ministry, are distinctly recognised as Paul's inferiors in rank and office, and therefore as something less than apostles, and nothing more than presbyters, whether acting in the ordinary course of duty, or by virtue of a special commission.

From these special testimonies, singly and together, we infer that presbyters, in apostolic times, possessed and exercised the highest powers now belonging to the ministry. And having thus established our position by direct proof, we may briefly advert to certain passages and detached expressions, which although they may prove nothing by themselves, and are susceptible of different explanations, and have therefore not been used by us in argument, may nevertheless serve as incidental confirmations of the truth which has already been established. Of these the first which we shall mention is the account of the council at Jerusalem, to which the church of Antioch referred an interesting and important question, sending Paul and Barnabas and others to Jerusalem, "unto the apostles AND ELDERS, about this question." (Acts xv. 2.) "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the apostles AND ELDERS." (v. 4). "And the apostles AND ELDERS came together, for to consider of the matter," (v. 6), and after due deliberation and discussion, "it pleased the apostles AND ELDERS (v. 22) to send a letter to the church at Antioch, with this inscription, "The apostles AND ELDERS and brethren send greeting," &c., (v. 23), and we afterwards read that Paul and Silas, in their missionary tour through Asia Minor, "as they went through the cities, delivered unto them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles AND ELDERS which were at Jerusalem." (Acts xvi. 4). All that we now mean to infer from this transaction is that, even while the most of the apostles were still present at Jerusalem, the church there had elders, and that these were not regarded as mere teachers, or leaders in public worship, but as men clothed with authority.

If any should object that the same reasoning would prove the ordinary members of the church to have possessed the same

authority, because it was "the church" that received the messengers from Antioch, (Acts xv. 4), because it was "the apostles and elders WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH" that decided the question (v. 22), and because the epistle was written in the name of "the apostles and elders AND BRETHREN," (v. 23), we answer, first, that though the brethren, or church at large, are mentioned in these cases, they are not in the others which have been already quoted, whereas the elders are invariably named whenever the apostles are; secondly, that, according to the principles of government laid down both in the Old and the New Testament, the church could only act through the apostles and the elders, and especially the latter, who were really the representatives of the church at Jerusalem, so that it does not even certainly appear, that the church-members were in any sense present except in the person of their representatives; the word translated "multitude" in v. 12 being indefinite and relative in meaning; lastly, that we are citing this case only in corroboration of the fact, already proved from other quarters, that the presbyters were rulers, whereas no such proof exists of the powers of government having been exercised by the people generally.

That this constitution of the mother church was copied into others, as they were organized, is plain from the practice of Paul and Barnabas, who, as they passed through Asia Minor, "ordained them elders in every church," (Acts xiv. 23), and from Paul's leaving Titus in Crete to "ordain elders in every city." (Tit. i. 5). The powers of these elders were no doubt the same as in the mother church, and though they are not often mentioned, it is always in a manner to confirm the supposition that they were familiarly regarded as the highest local rulers of the church; as when James says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church," (Jas. v. 14), and Peter tells the presbyters of Asia Minor, that he is "also an elder," (1 Pet. v. 1), and John calls himself, in the inscriptions of his two epistles, ὁ πρεσβύτερος. That in the last case it denotes the senior apostle, and that in the others it is a generic title for church-officers in general, is no doubt possible; and all that is intended is to point out how completely even the incidental notices of presbyters agree with the hypothesis which we have been defending.

It may be a matter of surprise and even of objection, on the part of some, that so few positive testimonies to the truth of that hypothesis are found in scripture. But let such remember that church-government is very seldom spoken of at all, and ordination scarcely ever, so that in proportion to the space allotted to the general subject, the foregoing proofs may be considered ample. One effect of the comparative neglect of all such matters by the sacred writers, is that something, upon any supposition, is to be supplied by inference or analogy. The only question is, which hypothesis requires least to be conjectured or assumed? As this would be no unfair criterion of truth, we are willing to submit our doctrine to a rigorous comparison, in this respect, with that of our opponents. They admit that the presbyterial office was established in the primitive church and was intended to be permanent, that it was clothed with the important powers of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments, and that it is repeatedly spoken of in terms which, taken by themselves, would imply the possession of the highest powers now belonging to the ministry. But this conclusion they avoid by assuming that although this office was intended to continue, and entrusted with some functions of the greatest moment, it was not empowered to ordain or exercise supreme authority, that these prerogatives were specially reserved to a superior order. This, however, cannot be maintained without supposing, that on various occasions when the mention of this higher class would seem to have been almost unavoidable, the sacred writers did nevertheless pass it by in silence, and not only pass it by, but apply the very language, which would best describe its powers, to the lower order which had no such powers. However this extraordinary fact may be accounted for, it must be assumed, or the adverse doctrine cannot be maintained. Our own hypothesis, on the contrary, takes words and phrases in their usual sense and their most natural construction, and adds nothing to the facts which are admitted by both parties, but setting out from the conceded fact that presbyters were officers of high rank and entrusted with important powers, it concludes that when they are referred to as the highest local rulers of the churches, they were so in fact; that when certain duties are enjoined upon them, it was meant that they should do them;

in a word, that the obvious and natural meaning of the passages which speak of elders, is the true one, and that no other need be sought by forced constructions or gratuitous assumptions. By the application of this safe and simple method of interpretation, we have reached the conclusion that presbyters, as presbyters, possessed and exercised the highest ministerial powers, including those of discipline and ordination, in the days of the apostles; that the same rights and powers belong to them at present; and that no ministrations can be charged with invalidity, because they are performed under authority derived from presbyters.

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ART. VII.—*An Introduction to the New Testament, containing an examination of the most important questions relating to the authority, interpretation, and integrity of the canonical books, with reference to the latest inquiries.* By Samuel Davidson, LL.D. Volume I. The Four Gospels. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons. 1848. Svo. pp. 430.

IN our last number we gave a very imperfect outline of the history of opinion with respect to the Four Gospels. Had we been acquainted then with the elegant volume now before us, our labour might have been greatly abridged by reference and extracts, and we should certainly have withheld or qualified our closing statement, as to the total want of books in the English language, presenting a correct view of the German speculations without any undue deference to their authority or gratuitous adoption of their principles. The general fact as to this deficiency in English literature is stated by Dr. Davidson himself in still stronger terms than we employed, and with an expression of contempt for the "stereotype-minded," and for those who creep along in "the ruts of hereditary or prevailing opinion," which we think less suited to correct the evil than to raise an unjust prejudice against his own work, as neologizing in its tendency; whereas its chief characteristic is the rare combination of a thorough knowledge of the German writers, with a total freedom from that slavish submission to their dicta,