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# Irenaeus on the Authority of Scripture, the 'Rule of Truth' and Episcopacy (Part 1)

R.J.R. Paice

The issue of the relationship between the episcopate and the Scriptures has experienced a high profile in the Church of England for some decades. In 1984 the consecration of the Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, provoked controversy after the publication of his doubts regarding the virginal conception and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the 1990s the most contentious and frequent issue in connection with the teaching of bishops has been the status of homosexual relationships. In 1997 the Parochial Church Council of St. Oswald's, Walkergate, rejected the spiritual oversight of the Bishop of Newcastle due to his pronouncements in favour of homosexual relationships. In 1999 the Parochial Church Council of St. John's, Kidderminster rejected the spiritual oversight of the Bishop of Worcester for the same reason. It is no less of an issue in the wider Anglican Communion. In 1999 John Rodgers and Charles Murphy were consecrated in Singapore to serve as missionary bishops to those churches in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA) wanting Bishops who were traditional in their teaching on morals and doctrinal matters, particularly with regard to the issue of homosexual relationships. The tension between what the Scriptures teach and what Bishops teach is a live issue today, and arises because the teaching of the episcopate is being accorded higher authority than the teaching of Scripture.

The church historian R.A. Norris, writing for the 1988 Lambeth Conference, contrasted the sixteenth century Reformers' attitude to the episcopate with the common modern Anglican view: 'the one indispensable mark of the Church was taken to be its continuance in apostolic and scriptural teaching. Now, however, episcopacy has come to count as a factor that grounds the identity of the Church.'<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the institution of episcopacy has come to be regarded as supreme, rather than the canonical Scriptures. Indeed, bishops are

regarded as being instrumental in the development of the Church's doctrine. For example, a recent House of Bishops paper says of Bishops and the Church: 'as the process of discernment and reception proceeds towards the *consensus fidelium*, the faithful will bring to it a predisposition to expect that the guidance they receive from their Fathers in God is "trustworthy and true".'<sup>2</sup>

The early Church Father Irenaeus (c.130–c.200) is interpreted by many theologians as saying that proper episcopal succession should be the overruling factor in all disputes of church order. Obedience to the bishop is required, irrespective of whether his doctrinal or moral pronouncements concord with the Scriptures, because it is said that the process by which he was made bishop is the guarantee that he is in direct succession to the apostles.

Irenaeus was born around 130A.D., probably in Smyrna, since he refers to having heard Polycarp preach as a boy. He studied at Rome and then became a presbyter at Lyons. In 178 he became Bishop of Lyons. *Adversus Haereses* is his main work, a lengthy and detailed attack on Gnosticism and a defence of the orthodox Christian faith. The original Greek text survives only in part; a complete text is found in a Latin translation.

In order to ascertain Irenaeus's view of the episcopate, we shall look at his major work *Adversus Haereses*, examining his use of three concepts—Scripture, bishops and the rule of truth. By comparing various texts, we shall attempt to define each of these concepts, and then analyze the relationship they have with each other. This will enable us to ascertain Irenaeus's view of the episcopate and crucially, of its relationship to Scripture.

Irenaeus undeniably does regard episcopal succession as important. It is our contention, however, that his promotion of episcopal succession was due to the fact that he saw it as the means by which apostolic teaching had been handed down from the time of the apostles until his own day, and that he considered it to be the means by which it would be transmitted to subsequent generations. Unlike the earlier writer Ignatius of Antioch, he did not believe there to be an inherent quality in the office apart from the teaching, but rather saw that the authority of a bishop derived from that bishop's adoption of apostolic doctrine. We shall argue that the modern elevation of episcopacy above Scripture cannot be found in Irenaeus.

### A brief consideration of Gnosticism

The name 'Gnosticism' derives from γνωσις the Greek word for knowledge. Gnosticism as a movement appears to have emerged from pagan beliefs and practices being allied to Christianity. Its growth was rapid, and at the time when Irenaeus was writing it threatened to take over the Church. As a movement it was extremely variegated in its beliefs and practices, and it is not the task of this paper to engage in the complex task of explaining Gnosticism.<sup>3</sup> However, common to all strands is the idea that there is a γνωσις, known only to a select few, and that it is only the few who have this 'knowledge' who possess the true Christian religion. This secret knowledge was understood in some sects to have come down from the apostles through a special line: other sects attributed their teachings directly to their contemporary founder (for example, Marcion or Valentinus). Common to Gnostic teaching is the belief that the Creator God, or Demiurge, was different from the Divine Being. The Divine Being was the ultimate power, but could not be known. The Divine Being through some catastrophe produced the Demiurge through a series of emanations, or 'aeons'. Due to the distance from the Divine Being, the Demiurge was understood to be like a hampered craftsman, who could only produce an imperfect world. The saving hope comes in that some men have in them *a divine spark* and so through γνωσις and various rites this spiritual element in them can be freed from the bondage of impure physicality and their true selves can return to the Divine Being. In most Gnostic systems there were thus two groups of people, the πνευματικοί, the spiritual, and the σαρκικοί, the fleshly. These beliefs gave the Gnostics a distinct Christology: Jesus Christ was deemed to have brought γνωσις from the Divine Being, yet because Jesus was divine, he was not believed to have had a human body, and so could not have died at Calvary. In *Adversus Haereses* Irenaeus counters Gnosticism by his appeal to the Scriptures and to church order—particularly the episcopate by which the church was linked back to the teaching of the apostles through the 'rule of truth'. It is the examination of those three concepts, Scripture, rule of truth and bishops to which we now turn.

### Irenaeus's definition of Scripture

It is first necessary to ask what is meant by 'Scripture' in *Adversus Haereses*. At the time Irenaeus was writing, the canon of Scripture was yet finally and authoritatively to be closed. Geldenhuys points out, however, that the needs

of the times brought discussions of canonicity to the fore, 'so that what had been partly still latent all the years is now more explicitly stated in clear terms'.<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus thus has a view of what does and what does not constitute Scripture, and in some sense does regard certain portions of the canon as already closed; for example in III.xi.8 (p. 428)<sup>5</sup> he sets a limit on the number of gospels, although for reasons surprising to the modern reader;

It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the 'pillar and ground' of the Church is the Gospel and spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side and vivifying men afresh.

This comment is no doubt intended to curb the authority of the increasing number of Gnostic 'gospels'. He regards the four Gospels as inspired, quoting heavily from them—out of one thousand and seventy five biblical passages quoted in *Adversus Haereses*, six hundred and six are from the Gospels.<sup>6</sup> Beyond this, his view of the content of Scripture can be deduced by considering his writings where he discusses it. Irenaeus regards the Jewish Scriptures (our Old Testament), and even their translation into Greek, as divinely inspired; speaking of the different versions which each of the supposed seventy translators of the Septuagint produced, he asserts in III.xxi.2 (p. 452),

all of them read out the common translation [which they had prepared] in the very same words and the very same names, from beginning to end, so that even the Gentiles present perceived that the Scriptures had been interpreted by the inspiration of God.

Irenaeus does hold to a concept of canonicity, for he clearly distinguishes between that which is scriptural and that which is not. He says of the writers of his own day: 'Besides the above [misrepresentations] they adduce an unspeakable number of apocryphal and spurious writings, which they themselves have forged, to bewilder the minds of foolish men, and of such as are ignorant of the Scriptures of truth' (I.xx.1; p. 344). This is clearly part of his anti-Gnostic polemic, where he seeks to discredit the Gnostics' secret writings to which they are appealing, alongside the Scriptures, as a basis for the Christian faith. At the same time, he includes books which would not be

found in modern Protestant Bibles: for example, in V.xxv.1(p. 565) he cites 1 Baruch iv, 36ff. although he remembers it as Jeremiah. He also cites the *Shepherd of Hermas* as follows: 'Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, "First of all believe that there is one God" (IV.xx.2; p. 487). What of his attitude to the rest of the New Testament Scriptures?

In *Adv. Haer.* i.3.6 he speaks of 'the writings of the evangelists and the apostles' and of 'the law and the prophets', and then designates all by the term 'Scripture'. Two paragraphs earlier (i.3.4), after quoting from a number of Paul's epistles, he speaks of 'these and like passages to be found in Scripture'.<sup>7</sup>

Irenaeus clearly and explicitly refers to the apostolic writings as Scripture. He has no doubt that the authority of the apostle Paul is the same as that of the prophets of the Jewish Scriptures—it is inspired by God himself, and has God's authority. This view of the divinity of the apostolic writings is backed up by Irenaeus' many quotations from them, for example he cites at length the apostle Paul's speech to the Athenians of Acts 17 in III.xii.9 (p. 433). Irenaeus also refers to the New Testament epistles, Hebrews and Revelation. F.F. Bruce comments: 'the only letter he does not mention is the short letter of Philemon, which he had no occasion to cite'.<sup>8</sup> This omission is not serious in our assessment of Irenaeus's view of the inspiration of the New Testament documents, given it is such a brief and minor epistle.

The way in which Irenaeus makes use of the documents is significant: he does not merely cite them but often allegorizes them, 'because he is among the first writers to treat the New Testament unreservedly as inspired Scripture'.<sup>9</sup> He makes allegorical use of the material because he assumed that it had a deeper than surface meaning, given that it was inspired by God. If he considered a document to be inspired Scripture, it was included in his canon. From Irenaeus's description of the Marcionites' attitude to Scripture, we learn what Scriptures he regarded as authoritative (III.xii.12; pp. 434-5);

Wherefore also Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, they assert that these are alone authentic, which they themselves have thus shortened.

He regarded the Apocalypse of John as divinely inspired too, for he often cites it as having an authoritative bearing, for example at I.xxvi.3 (p. 352)—

The Nicolaitans are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practise adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Wherefore the Word has also spoken of them thus: ‘But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.’

There is a definiteness in pronouncements of the content of Scripture; what is especially noticeable is that Irenaeus and his contemporaries make these statements in such a way as to show that they presuppose a longstanding belief on the part of their readers in what they give expression to. There is no sign whatsoever that they felt that their views were innovations or that they made certain discoveries of truths that had previously been unknown. From beginning to end they take it for granted that their readers realize that what they declare is in full accord with what has been the accepted belief of the Church from earliest times.<sup>10</sup>

We can conclude that Irenaeus regarded the whole of the Old Testament (including the wording of the Septuagint), the four Gospels and the vast majority of our New Testament documents as divinely inspired. He also regarded some Apocryphal material as canonical, namely the Shepherd of Hermas, The Wisdom of Solomon and 1 Baruch. Most importantly, we saw that Irenaeus equated the authority of the apostolic writings with the authority of God—

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith (III.i.i; p. 414).

Irenaeus would have regarded those who resisted the authority of the apostolic Scriptures as resisting the authority of God.

We turn next to examine the 'rule of truth', the most controversial and least clear of the three terms under consideration. We have in mind two questions: first, what is the *content* of the rule of truth? And secondly, what is the role of the rule of truth?

It is important to note that the content of the rule of truth is set out in different ways in *Adversus Haereses*. First, there are seven passages where the term 'rule of truth' is used. These are: I.ix.4 (p. 330); I.xxii.1 (p. 347); II.xxvii.1 (p. 398); III.xi.1 (p. 426); III.xii.6 (p. 432); III.xv.1 (p. 439); IV.xxxv.4 (p. 514). These should be given the most weight in the analysis, since the content of the 'rule of truth' is explicitly stated therein and so is beyond dispute. Secondly, there are several passages which contain an element or elements of the phrase 'rule of truth'. This may amount to a very close approximation as in II.xxviii.1 (p. 399) where Irenaeus states 'Having therefore the truth itself as our rule', the only difference being the order of the words. There are passages which contain the word 'rule' without the word 'truth' but where 'rule' may justifiably be understood as referring to 'rule of truth', given the context; for example at II.xv.2 (p. 396) Irenaeus speaks of 'never failing to apply our rule' in the context of 'neither giving up the [one] artist nor casting off faith in the one God who formed all things, nor blaspheming our Creator'. Another example is at II.xxviii.3 (p. 400): 'If therefore according to the rule which I have stated, we leave some questions in the hands of God, we shall preserve our faith uninjured and shall continue without danger.' Thirdly, various terms are used which are synonymous with the 'rule of truth'. We can see that they are synonymous by comparing them with passages where the 'rule of truth' is spoken of explicitly. Predicated to these other terms are many of the doctrinal concepts which are components of the 'rule of truth'. For example in III.xi.7 (p. 428) Irenaeus lists under 'first principles of the Gospel', amongst other things, the fact that there is one God, who is Creator, and who is the same God as that of the Old Testament events and people. Elsewhere in III.ii.1 (p. 415). Irenaeus speaks of a 'system of truth', whereas in IV.xxvi.2 (p. 497) he uses the phrase 'certain gift of truth' and in IV.xxxiii.8 (p. 508) refers to a 'very complete system of doctrine'.

We can conclude that in *Adversus Haereses* we are concerned with two categories regarding rule of truth: statements where the phrase 'rule of truth' is explicitly used; and statements synonymous to 'rule of truth'.



What is the content of the rule of truth? There are many different characteristics of God included in the rule of truth. Irenaeus begins with the premise that there is only one God and that there is no other God besides or above this one God. This same God, he says, is the Creator of all, who creates directly rather than through agents and who continues to govern creation. This God called Abraham and Moses, gave the Law, and sent the Prophets. He is also the Father of His only Son, Jesus Christ, through whom He offers salvation. God gives His Spirit to His people so that they might know Him fully. Many of these elements are seen in fullest form in I.xxii. 1 (p. 347)—

The rule of truth which we hold, is, that there is one God Almighty, who made all things by His Word, and fashioned and formed, out of that which had no existence, all things which exist. Thus saith the Scripture, to that effect 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them, by the spirit of His mouth'. And again, 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made'. There is no exception or deduction stated; but the Father made all things by Him, whether visible or invisible, objects of sense or of intelligence, temporal, on account of a certain character given them, or eternal; and these eternal things He did not make by angels, or by any powers separated from His Ennoea. For God needs none of all these things, but is He who, by His Word and Spirit, makes, and disposes, and governs all things, and commands all things into existence—He who formed the world (for the world is of all)—He who fashioned man—He [who] is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, above whom there is no other God, nor initial principle, nor power, nor pleroma—He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall prove.

There is considerable overlap in what is ascribed to the rule of truth in the different passages which discuss it, with the result that a list of common themes can be drawn up. By far the most repeated element is that there is only 'one God': this occurs in all seven of the passages that explicitly mention the 'rule of truth', together with all the other passages that discuss the content of the rule of truth, i.e., II.xxvii.2 (p. 398); III.xi.7 (p. 428); IV.xxxiii.7 (p. 508); IV.xli.4 (p. 525).

Indeed the only passages which do not mention the unique existence of God are those which refer to the role of the rule of truth, rather than its content.

Where the content of the rule of truth is discussed, 'one God' appears to be a non-negotiable element. Another element which is very common is that the rule of truth concerns the God of the Old Testament dispensation—seen in such phrases as 'announced by the prophets,' III.xi.7 (p. 428) and 'gave the Law,' IV.xli.4 (p. 525).

Christ's role in creation as the 'Word' or the 'Son' is a repeated element in the passages where the content of the rule of truth is discussed, I.xxii.1 (p 347); II.xxvii.2 (p. 398); III.xi.1 (p. 426) and IV.xxxiii.7 (p. 508). The statement that God is the Father of Jesus Christ also occurs three times, I.xxii.1 (p. 347); III.xi.7 (p. 428); and IV.lxi.4 (p. 525). Finally, God's words are spoken of as the rule of truth in IV.xxxv.4 (p. 514), 'But as we follow for our teacher the one and only true God, and possess His words as the rule of truth'. There are several other items which appear as components in the definition of the rule of truth, in a couple of passages, or only once.

We can see then that the content of the rule of truth consists of core elements of the Christian faith taken from the Scriptures: that there is only one God (not many gods); that God has made himself known directly through Jesus Christ (rather than through various emanations). The rule of truth does not include anything which does not come from the Scriptures because its only source is the Scriptures. Being derived from the Scriptures, the rule of truth is necessarily subordinate to them.

The rule of truth is not another authority alongside the Scriptures. It is only authoritative because it is composed of elements from the Scriptures put together in a way that honours the Scriptures.

#### What is the role of the rule of truth?

Passages which discuss the content of the rule of truth also include remarks on how it operates. Particular common items stand out. That the rule of truth forms one clear, unchanging and coherent system against which other systematizations of the Christian faith are to be measured is stated in eight passages, II.xxvii.1 (p. 398), II.xxvii.2 (p. 398), II.xxviii.1 (p. 399), III.ii.1 (p. 415), IV.xxvi.2 (p. 497), IV.xxxiii.7 (p. 508), IV.xxxiii.8 (p. 508), IV.lxi.4 (p. 525). It is spoken of as definitive and fundamental, and should be retained. In contrast there are many Gnostic variants of the faith 'as many schemes

of “redemption” as there are teachers of these mystical opinions’, I.xxi.1 (p. 345), and so the rule is used to draw a clear distinction between the true faith and these variants. For example, the cult of the Marcionites did not believe that the God of the Old Testament was the same God as that of the New, and following their founder they rejected the Old Testament as authoritative together with those parts of the New Testament which referred to the Old, ‘Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those [passages] which he still retains’ (III.xi.7; p. 428). The rule of truth stresses the continuity between the Old and New Testaments against such teaching: ‘Such, then, are the first principles of the Gospel: that there is one God, the Maker of this universe; He who was also announced by the prophets, and who by Moses set forth the dispensation of the law.’

The rule of truth therefore has a polemical role against non-orthodox beliefs. The coherent system of the rule of truth, Irenaeus says, can be passed on and taught, as illustrated by the response of the apostle of John to the heretics: ‘The disciple of the Lord, therefore desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church...thus commenced His teaching in the Gospel.’ John did not establish the rule of truth in an exclusive sense, however, since we have already seen how there are Old Testament components to the rule of truth such as God sending the prophets. The rule of truth is established through the teaching of Scripture as a whole.

The rule of truth thus recognizes Scripture as authoritative, but it also requires the correct handling of Scriptural texts, for the Gnostic heretics often use the same Scriptures as Irenaeus and the rest of the Church but abuse them by taking texts out of their contexts and twisting them to generate doctrines of their own devising. Irenaeus parodies the Gnostics’ manipulation by performing a similar exercise with various texts of Homer, cobbling them together to form an entirely new story. After this illustration, he says in 1.ix.4 (p. 330)—

In like manner he also who retains unchangeable in his heart the rule of the truth which he received by means of baptism, will doubtless recognise the names, the expressions, and the parables taken from the Scriptures, but will by no means acknowledge the blasphemous use which these men make of them. For, though he will acknowledge the gems, he will

certainly not receive the fox instead of the likeness of the king. But when he has restored every one of the expressions quoted to its proper position, and has fitted it to the body of the truth, he will lay bare, and prove to be without any foundation, the figment of these heretics.

The rule of truth also acts as a benchmark against which other proclamations can be measured, I.xxii.1 (p. 347): 'Holding therefore this rule, we shall easily show, notwithstanding the great variety and multitude of their opinions, that these men have deviated from the truth.' Thus the rule is a formulation which can be used to exclude heterodox opinions; it does not assimilate every idea but stands against those which are not part of the truth. It is spoken of as a foundation, 'the first principles of the Gospel' (III.xi.7, p. 428).

The notion that the rule of truth is a basic summary of the Scriptures correlates with Robert M. Grant's statement that 'Irenaeus' rule of faith or truth is the same as the 'hypothesis' of the scriptures'.<sup>11</sup> Grant explains that he is using 'hypothesis' in the classical rhetorical sense: 'the presentation (sometimes in a summary) of a plot or structure intended by an author'.<sup>12</sup>

Irenaeus' constant objection throughout *Adversus Haereses* is that the heretics' summary of the Scriptures is their 'striving [...] to adapt the good words of revelation to their own wicked inventions' (I.iii.6; p. 320). For Irenaeus, there is one divine mind behind Scripture, 'the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit' (II.xxviii.2; p. 399), and therefore a *hypothesis* of the different scriptural documents, written by different people at different times, can be given, because he believes that they were inspired by the one, same, and consistent God. As Grant says, Irenaeus 'was treating the hypothesis as the plot of the whole sacred story from creation to the coming of God's kingdom'.<sup>13</sup>

Sometimes the Scriptures are used to illustrate the doctrinal propositions stated, as in III.xi.1 (p. 426), but we do not at any point get in Irenaeus the statement 'the rule of truth is' followed by selective quotations of the Scriptures. This is probably because Irenaeus would regard that as 'prooftexting', the error of the Gnostics, and he would be keen to avoid being seen to use similar techniques, so as to distance himself from them as much as possible.

### Conclusions about the Rule of Truth

The content of the rule of truth can be said to be: there is only one God who creates and sustains all things, who called Abraham and Moses, who gave the Law and sent the prophets, who is the Father of Jesus Christ, and who sent His Spirit. Thus the rule of truth is a summary of basic concepts taken from the plotline of the Scriptures in such a way as to constitute orthodox Christian belief. The rule of truth is similar to a creed, laying out the ‘bare bones’ of the shape of the Christian faith. It is different from the later creeds, because it does not have a fixed form: the different elements change across the different passages where the rule of truth is referred to. At the centre stands the claim that there is ‘one God’ (seven times) and that He is a Creator God (eight times).

### Bishops

The final concept which we need to identify is ‘bishop’. The Greek terms were fluid in the Early Church, as they were in the New Testament documents. First, ‘bishop’ can be a synonym for apostle, for example in II.xx.2 (p. 388) where Acts 1:20 is quoted and Matthias’ appointment to apostleship is referred to as a ‘bishopric’—

Then again, as to their assertion that the passion of the twelfth Aeon was proved through the conduct of Judas, how is it possible that Judas can be compared [with this Aeon] as being an emblem of her—he who was expelled from the number of the twelve, and never restored to his place? For that Aeon, whose type they declare Judas to be, after being separated from her Enthymesis, was restored or recalled [to her former position]; but Judas was deprived [of his office], and cast out, while Matthias was ordained in his place, according to what is written, ‘And his bishopric let another take’.

Secondly, ‘bishop’ can be used to refer to people who were direct successors of the apostles, e.g., in III.iii.3 (p. 416) he refers to Linus, mentioned in the Epistles to Timothy: ‘The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy.’ Thirdly, ‘bishop’ is used for those beyond the immediate successors of the apostles: ‘Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded

Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric.' That the word 'bishop' was used to refer to the apostles themselves and to those remote from them by several generations indicates that it was used for those who were regarded as being in the line of the apostolic faith.

'Presbyters' and 'bishops' are used interchangeably in the text, e.g., in IV.xxvi.5 (p. 498): Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: 'I will give thy rulers in peace and thy bishops in righteousness.' Swete observes that 'bishop' was used for presbyter, citing IV.xxvi.2 (p. 497): '[Wherefore] it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles'. Swete asks why 'presbyter' is used rather than 'bishop'. Among the different reasons he mentions that it could be because 'presbyter' is rendering another word other than *πρεσβυτερος* he mentions that elsewhere Irenaeus uses *επισκοπος* of bishops of an older generation but says that this is an unlikely reason here because antiquity is not the issue; perhaps most intriguing is the suggestion that Irenaeus may have deliberately used *επισκοπος* because he will not give the title 'bishop' to those who are not truly bishops.<sup>14</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Quoted by D. Holloway, Reform Discussion Paper no.1, p. 6 (revised , April 1996).
- 2 "Bishops in Communion: collegiality in the *koinonia* of the Church," House of Bishops Occasional Paper (London: Church House Publishing, 2000).
- 3 On which are further: U. Bianchi, *Selected essays on Gnosticism, Dualism and Mysterosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); F. Giovanni, *A history of Gnosticism* (Oxford. Blackwell, 1990); Robert M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (London: OUP, 1959); J.G. Harris, *Gnosticism: beliefs and practices* (Sussex Academic Press, 1999); G.E. Ladd, *The Pattern of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968); E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980); James M. Robinson, (ed), *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (Leiden: Brill, 1977).
- 4 J.N. Geldenhuys, *Supreme Authority* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1953), p. 111.

- 5 We shall employ a standard notation throughout, referring to the reprint of the Edinburgh edition of *The Ante Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* transl. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); for example III.iii.1 (p. 415) means that the quotation can be found at section 1 of ch. 3 in Book 3 on p. 416 of that edition.
- 6 B.M. Metzger *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).
- 7 J.N. Geldenhuys *Supreme Authority*, p. 113.
- 8 F.F. Bruce *The Canon of Scripture* (Glasgow: House, 1988), p. 176.
- 9 R.P.C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 122ff. cited in F.F. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 267.
- 10 J.N. Geldenhuys, *Supreme Authority*, p. 111f.
- 11 Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (London: Routledge, 1987), p. 49.
- 12 *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- 13 *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- 14 *cf. note 1*, p. 124.