

b. As witnessed to by the Primitive Fathers

(1) Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, Asia (A.D. 116)

He speaks only of presbyters, and expressly calls the apostles themselves, presbyters.

(2) Justin Martyr (A.D. 140)

He treats this subject in his *Apology* from chapter 85 to 88. Neither the term bishop nor the term presbyter is used at all. He denominates the moderator of the Christian assembly "president" (προεστως) six times.

(3) Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, France (A.D. 178)

He is referred to as presbyter of that church. Yet there were other presbyters who were not bishops. The bishop then was the senior-presbyter, or one that had a primacy among his fellow-presbyters.

(4) Victor, bishop of Rome (A.D. 192)

He speaks of presbyters as the successors of the apostles, the constant rulers of the church.

(5) Clement Alexandrinus, presbyter in the church at Alexandria (A.D. 194)

He twice enumerates the officers of the church-under the names, bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Yet presbyters are the governors, shepherds, and pastors of the church. Thus the bishop should be viewed as the chief presbyter, the moderator, or presbyter who presided.

(6) Tertullian (AD. 200)

He speaks of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. In their assemblies, the presbyters presided. one, as *primus presbyter*, presided over the rest, and for distinction's sake, was called bishop. The order was usual, in the meetings of the ministers in the primitive church, for the ministers' chairs to be set in a semicircle. The middle chair was raised a little above the rest and the highest presbyter, or priest, sat in this, and the other presbyters sat round him. The deacons were never allowed chairs; they always stood.

Neander remarks that Tertullian stood on the boundary between two different epochs in the development of the church. There was, in the time of Tertullian, a growing elevation of the presiding elder, or presbyter-bishop, to which, however, a powerful opposition still existed.

(7) Origen, a presbyter (A.D. 230)

He speaks of bishops and presbyters as being the same order of ministry. Presbyters as well as bishops preside over the church. in his Tract 24, on Matthew 23, he makes the following statement: