

**THE ORGANIZATION OF THE
EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES:
EIGHT LECTURES DELIVERED
BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD, IN THE YEAR 1880**

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The organization of the early Christian churches: eight lectures delivered before the University of Oxford, in the year 1880 by Edwin Hatch

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EDWIN HATCH

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THE ORGANIZATION
OF THE
Early Christian Churches

EIGHT LECTURES

Delivered before the University of Oxford, in the Year 1880

ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE LATE REV. JOHN HAMPTON, M.A.
CANON OF SALISBURY

BY

EDWIN HATCH, M.A., D.D.

LATE READER IN ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
AND RECTOR OF PUSLEGG

Eighth Impression

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EXTRACT
FROM THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF THE LATE
REV. JOHN BAMPTON,
CANON OF SALISBURY.

— “I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates to the
“ Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of
“ Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all and singular the
“ said Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the intents and
“ purposes hereinafter mentioned; that is to say, I will and
“ appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ox-
“ ford for the time being shall take and receive all the rents,
“ issues, and profits thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations,
“ and necessary deductions made) that he pay all the re-
“ mainder to the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture Ser-
“ mons, to be established for ever in the said University, and
“ to be performed in the manner following:

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday in
“ Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly chosen by the Heads
“ of Colleges only, and by no others, in the room adjoining
“ to the Printing-House, between the hours of ten in the
“ morning and two in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity
“ Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St. Mary’s in Ox-
“ ford, between the commencement of the last month in Lent
“ Term, and the end of the third week in Asc Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following Subjects—to confirm and establish the Christian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics—upon the divine authority of the holy Scriptures—upon the authority of the writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as comprehended in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always printed, within two months after they are preached; and one copy shall be given to the Chancellor of the University, and one copy to the Head of every College, and one copy to the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one copy to be put into the Bodleian Library; and the expense of printing them shall be paid out of the revenue of the Land or Estates given for establishing the Divinity Lecture Sermons; and the Preacher shall not be paid, nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, unless he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge; and that the same person shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THE third edition of these Lectures is a reprint of the second.

The discussions to which they have given rise, both at home and abroad, seem to have turned less upon the leading propositions which they endeavour to establish, than upon the accuracy of the views which they express on points which, however interesting in themselves, are yet subordinate to the main issues. While, for example, there has been much debate as to the precise character of the original functions of the bishop, the larger and more important propositions that church officers were in no case part of an original framework, but arose out of subsequent historical circumstances, and that bishops and deacons arose out of different circumstances from presbyters, have not met with any serious opposition. On this latter, as on some other points, the views expressed in these Lectures have received a remarkable confirmation from the *Teaching of the Apostles*.

At the same time the writer is far from wishing to imply that the last word has been said as to the origin and early development of Christian organization. The study of primitive Christianity is only in its infancy: and the function of a work like the present is rather to stimulate enquiry, and to point out the lines along which enquiry must proceed, than to assume that its 'media axiomata' are the final inductions which competent scholars will be able to make when the evidence has been fully collected and adequately discussed.

OXFORD,

February 8, 1888.

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

THE METHOD OF STUDY.

The present Lectures are an attempt to apply to a particular group of historical phenomena the methods which have been fruitful of results in other fields of history: the preliminary assumption being made that, as matter of historical research, the facts of ecclesiastical history do not differ in kind from the facts of civil history pp. 1-3

But it will be fitting, before applying those methods to new subject-matter, to consider the special difficulties of that subject-matter, and thereby, incidentally, to ascertain some of the causes which have led to existing divergences of opinion p. 3

I. The first step in all historical enquiries is to test the documents which contain the evidence, with the view of ascertaining whether they are what they profess to be, and if they are not, what is their probable origin and their date. In the present enquiry the difficulty arises both from the great extent of the documents, and from the fact that the best literary criticism has not yet been applied to more than a few groups of them pp. 3-5

II. The second step in such enquiries is to weigh the value of the evidence. In the present enquiry the difficulties vary with the nature of the documents: