episcopate betraying the late age of the Epistle,  
falls to the ground) **(the)** **bishopric** (office  
of an *overseer* or *bishop:* but it is merely  
laying a trap for misunderstanding, to render the word, at this time of the Church’s  
history, ‘the office of a Bishop,’ without  
giving an explanation, what that office was.  
The “*episcopi*” of the N.T. have officially  
nothing in common with our *Bishops*. In  
Acts xx. 17, the A. V. ought to have been  
consistent with itself, and to have rendered  
the word *bishops* always, not *bishops* in one  
place and *overseers* in another, to suit  
ecclesiastical prejudices. It would be better  
to adopt the other alternative, and always  
to render it **overseers**, were not that word  
to common English readers appropriated  
to another kind of office. Thus we should  
avoid any chance of identifying it with a  
present and different office, and take refuge  
in the meaning of the word itself, which at  
the same time bears an important testimony to the duties of the post.—The identity of the “*bishop*” and “*presbyter*” in  
apostolic times is evident from Tit. i. 5—7:  
see also note on Phil. i.1), he **desireth a  
good work** (not ‘a good *thing:*’ but a  
good *employment*: see 1 Thess. v. 13:  
2 Tim. iv. 5: one of the “*good works*”  
so often spoken of). **It behoves then (then**is best regarded as taking up the term “*a  
good work*,” and substantiating that assertion: “a good work must be entrusted  
to good men”) **a bishop** (generic) **to be  
irreproachable** (Theodoret draws an important distinction: “not to afford *just*  
cause for blame: this is what he says, not  
that he should not be the object of slander,  
for this the Apostle himself was in many  
ways”), **husband of one wife** (two great  
varieties of interpretation of these words  
have prevailed, among those who agree to  
take them as *restrictive*, not *injunctive*,  
which the spirit of the passage and the  
insertion of the word *one* surely alike forbid. They have been supposed to prohibit  
either 1) *simultaneous polygamy,* or 2)  
*successive polygamy.* 1) has somewhat to  
he said for it. The custom of polygamy  
was then prevalent among the Jews [Justin  
Martyr says that their Rabbis even then  
permitted them to have four or five wives  
apiece. This was in the middle of the  
second century], and might easily find its  
way into the Christian community. And  
such, it is argued, was the Apostle’s reference, not to second marriages, which he  
himself commands ch. v. 14, and allows in  
several other places, e.g. Rom. vii. 2, 3:  
1 Cor. vii. 39. But the objection to taking  
this meaning is, that the Apostle would  
hardly have specified that as a requisite  
for the episcopate or presbyterate, which  
we know to have been fulfilled by all  
Christians whatever: no instance being  
adduced of polygamy being practised in  
the Christian church, and no exhortations  
to abstain from it. As to St. Paul’s command and permissions, see below. Still, we  
must not lose sight of the circumstance  
that the earlier Commentators were unanimous for this view. 2) For the view that  
*second marriages* are prohibited to aspirants after the episcopate,—is, the most  
probable meaning [see there] of “*wife of  
one husband*” in ch. v. 9,—as also the wide  
prevalence in the early Church of the idea  
that, although second marriages were not  
*forbidden* to Christians, abstinence from  
them was better than indulgence in them.  
See this proved by various authorities cited  
in my Greek Test. With regard to the  
Apostle’s own command and permissions  
of this state [see above], they do not come  
into account here, because they are confessedly (and expressly so in ch. v. 14) for  
those whom it was not contemplated to  
admit into ecclesiastical office. 3) There  
have been some divergent lines of interpretation, but they have not found many  
advocates. Some deny altogether the formal reference to 1) or 2), and understand  
the expression only of a chaste life of fidelity to the marriage vow: “that neither  
polygamy, nor concubinage, nor any offensive second marriage, should be able to be  
alleged against such a person.” But surely  
this is very vague, for the precise words  
“*husband of one wife.*” Bretschneider  
maintains that “*one*” is here the indefinite article, and that the Apostle means,  
a *bishop* should be the husband of a wife.  
This hardly needs serious refutation. Worse  
still is the Romanist evasion, which understands the “*one wife*” of the *Church.*—The view then which must I think be