

which is not placed between the article and the noun. The "you" referred to is the "you" implied in the imperative.

In John 10:14 and 21:15, etc., Christ calls the sheep "mine"; in Acts 20:28 Paul writes "the church of God." We meet such genitives quite regularly; in 4:17 we have "the house of God." "Flock" brings to mind all the shepherd imagery found in the Scriptures: the sheep gentle, defenseless, liable to stray, needing a shepherd, happy, peaceful under his care, pitiful when lost, scattered, etc. This is "God's flock" that was bought at a great price (Acts 20:28), that is exceedingly precious in his sight, a great trust placed into the hands of human shepherds who are to pattern after Yahweh, the Shepherd (Ps. 23:1), and Christ, the Archshepherd (v. 4). What shepherd could have the care of any part of *God's* flock and treat it carelessly! Peter's words are sparing but overflow with tender and serious meaning.

Some texts omit *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, but it is singularly appropriate, especially also for introducing all the following adverbial modifiers. This participle introduces the other designation for "elders," namely *ἐπίσκοποι*, "overseers" (Latin *episcopus*, our "bishop"). "Overseeing" is often taken to be an activity that is different from "shepherding" (*ποιμάνατε*) as if the latter were the preaching and the teaching and the overseeing the practical management. Some sheep (congregations) even want to do the latter themselves, the pastor is only to conduct the services. Strange sheep! Both terms have the same meaning, the figurative "shepherd the flock" is explained by the literal "overseeing." To oversee is to shepherd, and vice versa.

Thus the main point appears in the adverbial modifiers which are negative and positive. "Not constrainedly but voluntarily," not because they must but because they want to; not like drafted soldiers but like