

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

AND THE

SEE OF PETER

BY THE REV.

LUKE RIVINGTON, M.A.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

Null obstat.

SYDNEY F. SMITH, S.J.

Imprimatur.

HERBERTUS CARDINALIS VAUGHAN,

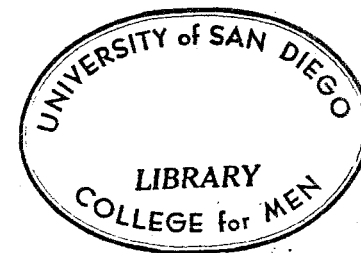
ARCHIEPISCOPUS WESTMONASTERIENSIS

Die 19 Martii, 1894.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER



LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

AND NEW YORK : 15 EAST 16th STREET

1894

All rights reserved

INTRODUCTION

BY THE
CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

OF course we desire to convert all men—especially our own countrymen, as loving them best—to the Catholic Religion. Could it be otherwise? We believe the Catholic religion to be the one only true religion, founded by Jesus Christ upon the Rock. We should fail, then, in love for God did we not strive to extend His Kingdom, which is His Church upon earth; and in love for our neighbour, did we not endeavour to persuade him to become one of God's liegemen and a sharer with us in the Divine life of the Faith and of the Sacraments. It is no matter of doubt or of indifference that is at stake, but absolutely the most vital, the most personal, the eternal interest of man.

But any kind of conversion will not do. The conversion must be real, genuine, and based on solid grounds. That is to say, it must rest not only upon conviction, but upon a right conviction, a conviction rooted in the right fundamental principle. To come into the Catholic Church simply on account of the beauty of her ceremonial, the reasonableness of this or that set of doctrines and practices, or her venerable antiquity and her attractive traditions, or as a mere

refuge from persons or systems that have bred dissatisfaction and distrust, is to enter the Church without a conviction rooted in the right fundamental principle. What is that principle? Simply this: that the Catholic Church is the Divine Teacher, set up in the world by Jesus Christ, and that our attitude towards her must be that of a Disciple. The Disciple does not pick and choose according to his taste, nor, when the Divine Teacher is once accepted, can he be ruled by private judgment and understanding. Our Lord Himself shows us this by His own method of procedure. When He had announced, 'My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed,' many said, 'This saying is hard, and who can hear it? And after this many of His Disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?" And Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. We have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God"' (John vi.). Christ, therefore, gave no countenance to those who would believe only that which was agreeable to their notion of fitness or possibility. He gave them no explanation of *how* His Flesh and Blood were to be eaten and drunk. He demanded this, and this alone, that they should recognise the Divine Teacher, and having found Him, that they should take up their due position as learners or disciples. There was no compromise, no halting; if unwilling to accept this fundamental principle, the position of a Disciple, they might all go away, aye, even the twelve. The vital question, then,

is, Where is the Divine Teacher? Some, prompted by private motives, with subtilty and sophistry, evade the question, or answer it in a way to leave themselves an escape from the plain obligation of a disciple. Their aim is to stay as they are. To them the Church is a vast organisation incapable of articulate speech, or it is made up of branches, each of which has an independent voice, but without any one living, visible, audible authority to control the whole.

Now it is best, in this matter, to come to close quarters, and to deal with a definite member of the Church—namely, with the Head. If the Church is visible at all, it must have a visible Head, at least as visible as the body itself. It is the essential business of the head to speak and direct. It controls the body, according to certain divine laws. It secures to the whole unity of thought and of action. Without its presence and influence the members must either fall into dissolution or destroy one another. Where, then, is the visible Head of the Catholic Church? For a thousand years the English people professed, with one accord, the Pope to be their religious Head. They acknowledged one centre of authority, the See of Peter; were led by one Supreme Shepherd, the successor of Peter; and they were consequently united, by the profession of the same Faith and Sacraments, in one religion, with the whole of Christendom.

There is one passage, so aptly setting forth the doctrine of the Catholic Church, in a letter from King Edward II., A.D. 1314, directed to the Sacred College of Cardinals, during the vacancy of the Holy See, that I

quote it not only for its own intrinsic merit, but as showing the belief of the English nation.

‘When Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, had consummated the mystery of man’s redemption, and was about to return to His Father, lest He should leave the flock He had bought with the price of His Blood bereft of the government of a shepherd, He delivered over and entrusted the care of it, by an immutable ordinance, to blessed Peter the Apostle, and in his person to his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, that they may govern it in succession. He willed that the Roman Church, who, for the time, presiding as the Mother and Mistress of all the faithful, holds, as it were, the place of God upon earth, should by salutary teachings direct the peoples of the said flock, scattered over the whole world, in the way of salvation, and show them at all times how they should behave themselves in the house of God’ (Wilkins, vol. ii. p. 450).

Three hundred years earlier King Edward the Confessor notifies in a solemn charter the extraordinary devotion which the English people had ever had towards St. Peter and his successors: ‘*summam devotionem quam habuit semper gens anglorum erga eum [Petrum] et vicarios ejus*’ (Wilkins, vol. i. p. 319).

And three hundred years before that, again, Bede was teaching and writing that ‘Whosoever shall separate himself in any way whatsoever from the unity of Peter’s faith, and from his communion, can neither obtain pardon of his sins nor admission into heaven’ (*Hom. xxvii. Giles*).

The lesson of history teaches unmistakably that the

unity of the visible Church can be preserved only by its normal union with its visible Head.

The Churches, planted among different and antagonistic races and tongues—for instance, the French, the German, the Italian, the English Churches—are all one in Faith and the Sacraments, through their submission to the See of Peter.

So long as the spiritual authority and headship of the Pope was recognised by the English people, they remained united in creed and religion. It was not Canterbury, but Rome that was the source and the touchstone of unity. Though after the apostacy of the sixteenth century the names of the old sees were retained, with their accumulated wealth, their extensive patronage, their State protection, Canterbury and the rest of them were unable to hold the English people in unity of faith and practice for a single generation. Though backed up by the sovereign and the whole legislative power of England, and by a code of the most drastic penal laws, they were speedily reduced to the pitiable condition of seeing the people fall away from them in all directions. The nation that had been conspicuous for its religious unity during a thousand years became, from the moment it rejected the authority of the Holy See, a by-word throughout Europe for religious rebellion and sporadic dissent. Had there been, as we are assured by some, no essential change in religion, but only a healthy reform and a purification from errors and abuses, how came it to pass that this purified and perfected religion began its career by falling into discredit with the people of England,

and to such an extent that religious dissent has become quite as characteristic of the last 300 years in England, as religious unity and peace had been of all the preceding ages of our history? I will only add that the leaders of the Established Church need not throw the blame of this upon the English people. Had the various countries of the Continent, which are still united in one faith, withdrawn, like England, from the guidance of the Chief Shepherd, they too, like England, would long since have been similarly torn to pieces by religious strife and discord.

The recent revival of Catholic doctrines and practices in the Church of England is very wonderful. It is a hopeful sign. It is a testimony to the patristic dictum that the human mind is 'naturally Christian.' It exhibits a yearning, and a turning of the mind and heart towards the Catholic Church. It is a national clearing the way for something more, and is to be regarded as a grace from above. It may be all this; but it is not yet obedience and submission to the Divine Teacher. A whole cycle of Catholic doctrines might be picked out one by one and strung together, and passionately professed, upon grounds of private judgment; but that is not submission. It is one thing to recognise that the pasture is sweet and wholesome, and another thing to recognise and to obey the voice of the Shepherd. Goats may enter into the pastures of the sheep, and may select at will the herbs, the grasses and clovers they most fancy, and may doubtless deem them sweet and delicious; but this does not constitute them sheep of the fold. The sheep hear the voice of their Shep-

herd and they follow Him. He chooses the pastures; He leads His sheep into them. The relations of sheep and Shepherd correspond to those of disciple and Teacher. And hence it is clear that no one ought to be received into the Catholic Church unless he come into the fold through the gate, of which Peter, the chief shepherd, is the keeper.

Indeed, I may add, that people who, through negligence or inadvertence, have been admitted into the Church without having mastered the fundamental doctrine that they are to be disciples and learners of a living Divine Teacher, are apt, upon encountering temptation, scandal, contradiction, or disappointment, to leave her. They had indeed been within the fold, but they were not of it, because they had never really recognised the Shepherd.

A word on two classes of difficulties raised against the Catholic Church by her professional opponents.

First, intellectual difficulties: no doctrine is free from them, not even the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Difficulties arise from the limitation of our faculties, from mists of ignorance, from prejudices, antipathies, and sinful conduct. The sun is shining, but we see it not while dense fogs or clouds and storms interpose between it and ourselves. We see it not when our vision has become gravely affected, or when we close our eyes. It is a common practice with the opponents of the Catholic Church to endeavour to hold souls back by arraigning before them a multitude of difficulties and objections against the doctrines of the Church. To this two things may be said.

First, it would be easy to string together a most formidable array of difficulties quoted and examined by Catholic theologians in their great scientific works on theology. But it is obvious that it would be necessary to be a trained theologian, or to spend a lifetime in research, were it needful to give detailed answers to them all. Then there are works, like those of Dr. Littledale and others, written in order to blind and mislead: made up of calumnies, misquotations, and a calculated admixture of truth and error. These are often intended to shock and alienate the moral sense quite as much as the intellectual. If they do not finally succeed in this, at least they may succeed in creating perplexity, anxiety, and delay.

Now, instead of entering into a maze of objections, into a labyrinth of difficulties, a shorter and more satisfactory course should be taken. Find the Divine Teacher, find the Supreme Shepherd, find the Vicar of Christ. Concentrate all your mental and moral faculties upon finding the Head of God's Church upon earth. This is the key to the situation. The learned work to which these words serve as introduction is intended to aid this inquiry, by setting forth for this doctrine various of its reasonable motives of credibility. If only you find the Divine Teacher, you may leave all objections to the doctrines he teaches to answer themselves. And if you find him not, then answers to the difficulties brought against his teaching will go for little.

Secondly, moral difficulties have to be met—ingrained antipathies, traditional prejudices, fears and anxieties: fear to offend and grieve parents, guides,

and loved ones; fear of temporal consequences, loss of station, of influence, of fortune, possibly poverty and want; anxieties as to whether the call be of God, whether to trust Him without clear insight into the future; perplexities as to the difference between the motives of credibility and the divine certainty of faith. All these are very real and sharp trials; but these, or others, are to be expected, for it is said, 'Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation. Humble thy heart, and endure; incline thy ear, and receive the words of understanding, and make not haste in the time of clouds. Wait on God with patience; join thyself to God and endure, that thy life may be increased in the latter end' (Ecclus. ii.).

Faith is a gift of God. No man can acquire faith by study alone, as by his own skill. 'No man can come to Me, unless it be given him by My Father' (John vi.). Or, to quote the Council of Trent:

'If any man saith that without the prevenient inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and without His help, man can *believe*, hope, love, or be penitent as he ought, so as that the grace of justification may be bestowed upon him, let him be anathema' (Sess. vi.).

The motives of credibility which may be learnt by reading and study do not produce the absolute and perfect certainty of faith. They lead a man to see that the objects of faith are worthy of belief; they show him that he is under an obligation to give to them the assent of faith. But it is grace, it is God, who inspires the soul with the pious inclination to believe, the '*pia*

affectio ad credendum. The certainty of faith rests, not indeed upon the motives of credibility, or upon facts or arguments that may or may not be evident in themselves, but upon the veracity of God Who has revealed them.

Or, as the Vatican Council defines it :

‘Faith is a supernatural virtue, whereby, inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe that the things which He has revealed are true; not because of the intrinsic truth of the things, viewed by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God Himself Who reveals them, and Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.’

And again :

‘Though the assent of faith is by no means a blind action of the mind, still no man can assent to the Gospel teaching as necessary to obtain salvation, without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Who gives to all men sweetness in assenting to and in believing the truth. Wherefore, faith itself, even when it does not work by charity, is in itself a gift of God, and the act of faith is a work appertaining to salvation, by which man yields voluntary obedience to God Himself, by assenting to and co-operating with His grace, which he is able to resist.’

And further on the same Council declares :

‘That we may be able to satisfy the obligation of embracing the true faith and of constantly persevering in it, God has instituted the Church . . . which both invites to itself those who do not yet believe, and assures its children that the faith which they profess

rests on the most firm foundation; and its testimony is efficaciously supported by a power from on high. For our merciful Lord gives His grace to stir up and to aid those who are astray, that they may come to a knowledge of the truth; and to those whom He has brought out of the darkness into His own admirable light He gives His grace to strengthen them to persevere in that light, deserting none who desert not Him’ (*Cap. de Fide*).

All this shows that the assent of faith is concerned with the will as well as with the intellect, and that a man who is seeking to come to a knowledge of that article of faith which declares that God has left a Divine Teacher to guide men safely in the affairs of salvation, must give himself to prayer and to humble repentance and contrition as much as to study and to reading. ‘The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the Most High behold’ (Ecclus. xxxv.).

HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN,

Archbishop of Westminster.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE particular theory opposed in this book lies at the root of the controversy which we are forced to carry on with our Anglican friends on the subject of Church government at the present moment. It is the theory of the lawful independence of National Churches. Even the Magna Charta has been enlisted in the service of this theory by so able and respected a writer as Lord Selborne. The expression 'Let the Anglican Church be free' is held by his Lordship to express the determination of the Church of England in that century to be independent of Papal jurisdiction.¹ The present jurisdiction of the See of Canterbury is referred to the general question of the independence of National Churches by so eminent a writer as Dr. Stubbs.² Mr. Gore goes so far as to deduce from the teaching of St. Cyprian the fundamental independence of each bishop in the whole world.³ And the present Archbishop of Canterbury writes that the 'individual independence of elected bishops' was the Cyprianic doctrine, but that it is applicable only to 'States which have not that intimate union with the Church which the ideal of a Christian nation requires.'⁴ In other words, the ideal condition, according to his Grace, is the independence, not of each bishop, but of

¹ *A Defence of the Church of England*, by Roundell, Earl of Selborne, fourth edition, 1888. He lays emphasis on the expression 'Anglican,' as though it involved independence of Rome, p. 9.

² *Eastern Church Association Papers*, No. 1.

³ *R. C. Claims*, p. 117, third edition.

⁴ *Dict. of Chr. Biog.* (Smith and Wace), art. 'Cyprian.'

each national Church. And this was certainly the doctrine of some of the most eminent teachers in the Establishment in previous centuries, as for instance, Bishop Overall, the author of part of the Catechism in the Church of England Prayer-book.¹

And this ideal of independence is asserted to be the teaching of history, the natural outcome of the principles which are to be discovered especially in the primitive Church. *There*, we are told, there was no dependence on Rome; *there* was no shadow of centralisation to be seen; *there*, if the Pope comes at times to the front, it is as the occupant of a See, great by reason of its relation to the empire, not because of any special relation to the Apostolic College. It was with this ideal of independence that, according to Dean Church, the Oxford movement was in special and profound sympathy.²

In the following pages, the doctrine set forth by John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his famous letter to King Edward the First, as that of the Church of England, is maintained as the teaching of the primitive Church.³ It is, of course, perfectly true that Magna Charta spoke of the Anglican Church being free; but the freedom claimed and granted was not from the authority of the Pope, but from the lawlessness of the king—in a word, it involved, amongst other things, freedom to appeal, when necessary, to Rome.⁴ 'The Anglican Church' at that time signified a religious body in the closest communion with Rome, and under her obedience in spiritual matters. For in that same Charter, the Archbishop of Canterbury is called a Cardinal of the Holy Roman

¹ See the thesis of his *Convocation Book*.

² *Oxford Movement*, p. 211. He also quotes (p. 47) Hurrell Froude's saying (*Remains*, edited by J. Keble), viz. 'Let us give up a National Church, and have a real one,' i.e. if a national Church means lack of discipline. Dean Church thinks that the Oxford movement purged the national Church of its deeper faults.

³ See quotation from this letter, *infra*, p. 381.

⁴ Hume says that by Magna Charta 'all checks on appeals were removed.' He is speaking of appeals to Rome.

Church, and the next words to those quoted by Lord Selborne proclaim the fact that the confirmation of 'the lord Pope Innocent' had been 'obtained' for this very matter.¹ It is maintained in this book that the close communion with Rome which the Church of England thus avowed, and which it cherished during all those centuries from St. Augustine to the sixteenth century, is a principle deeply embedded in the life of the primitive Church.

But when we say that Papal supremacy is found deeply embedded in the life of the primitive Church, what do we exactly mean? No one who appeals to the primitive Church professes to find in her actual life a literal transcript of his own present position. National Churches certainly did not exist in Europe; it would be hard to say what could be included under the national Church of Rome. The appeal must be to something else than a primitive presentation of the form and outward appearance of any system in the nineteenth century. What, then, do we ourselves mean when we say that the Papal régime was in existence in the earliest beginnings of Christianity? The question really is as to whether the alleged counterpart in the early Church differs from its successor in the present, in substance, in principle, in essential features. Is the difference, for instance, between the Papal régime of to-day and the position of the Papacy in the first four centuries of the Christian era more than between the oak and the acorn? Does the difference between the two argue a dissimilarity of constituent elements, or is it merely the necessary difference between various stages of normal growth?

On meeting some one whom we have not seen since his childhood we are often constrained to exclaim, 'I should never have known it to be you!' Yet it is the same person whom Almighty God brought into the world as an infant, whose powers and appearance have thus developed. This

¹ Viz. concerning the election of bishops.

simile of the child and the grown man; as well as that of the oak and the acorn, was adopted in regard to the Church by St. Vincent of Lerins, the author of the formula (though not of the truth) of the 'always, everywhere, and by all,' as a test of truth not yet defined.

And yet an idea has taken hold of many minds to the effect that when Dr. Newman wrote his book nearly fifty years ago, now called 'The Development of Christian Doctrine,' he was striking out a new theory,¹ instead of merely illustrating, with that force which belonged to the greatest religious genius of this country, the theory on which the Church has always proceeded in teaching Christian history. His first title may be thought to countenance the idea; but the second corrects it. And St. Vincent of Lerins is a sufficient witness that the theory which Cardinal Newman so expanded and illustrated was not new even in the fifth century.

Dr. Döllinger only reflected the general teaching of the Church when he wrote, sixty years ago, with his usual felicity of expression, the following passage:

'Like all other essential parts of the constitution of the Church, the supremacy was known and acknowledged from the beginning as a divine institution, but it required time to unfold its faculties; it assumed by degrees the determined form in which the Bishop of Rome exercised systematically the authority entrusted to him for the preservation of the internal and external unity of the Church.'²

And some years afterwards the same writer says of the Papacy:

'Its birth begins with two mighty, pregnant, and far-reaching words of the Lord. He to whom these words are addressed realises them in his person and in his acts, and transplants the institute to which he has been appointed into

¹ Cf. Canon Bright's *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers* (Preface), where he assumes this.

² *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche* (1835), vol. i. p. 365

the centre of the infant Church, to the Roman capital itself. Here it grows up in silence, *occulto velut arbor ævo*; and in the earliest times it manifests itself only in particular traits, till the outlines of the ecclesiastical power and action of the Bishop of Rome become ever clearer and more definite. Already even in the times of the Roman Empire the Popes are the guardians of the whole Church.'¹

I venture to call this view of the matter more in accord with history than that proposed by the respected writer to whom I have alluded,² which in effect prescinds all real development from the action of the Papacy, if it is to be acknowledged as of divine institution.

It is the repudiation of the necessity of a real development which seems to me the greatest blot in a book which appeared last year under the auspices of the Bishop of Lincoln, who has made himself responsible for its general accuracy as well as its thesis. I have incorporated in this book an answer to the main points of that work. I have not, however, included an account of the Acacian troubles, because I have dealt with these elsewhere;³ but, in point of fact, the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon (with which this book closes) is such as to establish the fact that the law of Christian life is communion with Rome, and any seeming exceptions must be treated as such, and must not be quoted as establishing a principle of action in the future. To the history of that council I venture to draw the especial attention of the reader, because I am not aware of any English work that contains as full an account of its various acts. And it is only by seeing certain expressions in their context that their full value can be gauged, as establishing, not what St. Leo claimed (though that has its value),

¹ *The Church and the Churches*, p. 31. Eng. trans.

² Bright's *Lessons*, &c.

³ In the *Dublin Review* for April 1894, where I have shown that communion between Rome and the East was not broken off at that time, but only suspended in some of its effects, and that consequently no argument can be derived from the existence of sanctity in some members of the Eastern Church.

but what the Church at large received without consciousness of novelty or usurpation.

I have sometimes referred the reader to the original of Dr. Döllinger's writings, but more often to the English translation, since the former is much less accessible than the latter.

I have, in conclusion, to thank his Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster for so kindly enriching this volume with an introduction, and the Censor Deputatus, Father Sydney Smith, S.J., for going beyond the necessities of his office in the way of many helpful suggestions.

NOTE.—Since the above lines were written, a book has appeared¹ by the Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford, containing a chapter on 'Papalism and Antiquity,' which consists for the most part of a *critique* on a book of mine published in 1889.² Lest the following pages (especially the last two hundred) should seem a miracle of anticipation, I may as well say that the chapter in Canon Bright's work, to which I allude, is a reproduction or recension of an anonymous article by that writer in the 'Church Quarterly Review' for October 1889, characterised by much bitterness against the 'Church of Rome,' calling it an atmosphere of untruthfulness.

I do not propose to descend into the arena of vituperation and invective. But I am able to say that the following pages contain a direct answer to most of the arguments advanced in Canon Bright's 'Papalism and Antiquity.' For after reading his article in the 'Church Quarterly,' when it appeared in 1889, I came to the conclusion that there was need of a fuller account of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon than has yet been given in English, with special reference to the points urged in that article, and now repeated in Canon Bright's recension of the same. It rarely falls to the lot of a writer to be able to produce an answer to such representations of history as Canon Bright proposes in his new book, within a few weeks of their appearance. But it is my good fortune

¹ *Waymarks in Church History*, by W. Bright, D.D., Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History. 1894.

² *Dependence; or the Insecurity of the Anglican Position*. By Rev. Luke Rivington, M.A. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. 1889.)

to have been able to do this through the accident of having selected the original draft for particular refutation. I would draw especial attention to the treatment of the twenty-eighth Canon of Chalcedon, on pages 437-449, as meeting one of Canon Bright's chief points.¹

But I feel bound to add a few words here on one passage in Canon Bright's chapter on Papalism, referring to this very subject.² The Regius Professor says (p. 234), 'When Mr. Rivington tells us that "nothing more transpired concerning the canon, and it was omitted from the authorised collection of canons even in the East," he omits, and it is no small omission—it is a real *suppressio veri*—to say after Hefele that the Greeks did not adhere to the profession made by Anatolius, and that his successors continued to act as patriarchs under the terms of the new canon, with the full approval of their emperors, and in despite of the protests of Rome.'

Will it be believed that Canon Bright has altered my words by a most important, nay, crucial omission? My words are ('Dependence,' p. 60), 'Nothing more transpired concerning the canon. *No further appeal was made to it at that time*, and it was omitted from the authorised collection of canons even in the East.' Now this statement is absolutely true. Hefele, to whom Canon Bright appeals, says the same: 'From that time Leo continued to exchange letters with Anatolius, and his successor Gennadius, but there was nothing more said between them on the subject of the twenty-eighth Canon' ('Hist. of the Councils,' § 207). But Canon Bright has omitted the all-important words, which I have placed in italics, and thus made my statement refer to the future instead of the present only. The strangest part of the matter is that in his anonymous article, of which he calls this chapter a 'recension' (cf. Preface, p. vii), the words I have italicised above appear in their right place, and he there accuses me only of '*going near to suppressio veri*' ('Church Quarterly Review,' October, 1889, p. 133); whereas now, having in his 'recension' omitted the crucial words of my statement, he accuses me downright of that form of literary dishonesty.

But, further, I had actually said on the same page, 'What Constantinople did was to continue its encroachments.' And on the next page but one (p. 62) I have given an instance of an attempt to revive the canon, and of the emperor's fruitless endeavour to induce Rome to recognise it. How, then, can Canon Bright say

¹ This canon is cherished as suggesting that Rome's primacy was due to her secular position alone.

² His accusation of 'carelessness' on p. 227 will be seen by reference to p. 409 *infra* to be based on a misinterpretation of the passage as a whole.

that I even suppressed this? Nor is this writer correct in saying, 'It is all very well to talk of "the canon invalidated," i.e. from the Papal stand-point, but it is the canon which has practically prevailed.' The canon was invalidated from the high Anglican stand-point; for as Le Quien ('Oriens Christianus,' p. 51) points out, a canon, to be a canon of the whole Church, must be accepted by the West. This was repudiated by the West. Even the Illyrians did not sign. And when, centuries after, Constantinople was allowed to take precedence of other Eastern sees, it was not on account of this canon; and in the previous centuries it was not the canon that prevailed, but unjustifiable encroachments. Does Canon Bright imagine that a canon passed under such disgraceful circumstances as I have described below (cf. p. 440)—dropped by the archbishop and emperor in whose reign it was proposed—could override the Nicene settlement? The Pope said, No. And when Acacius came on to the scene and acted on the canon, it was to place heretics, who opposed the doctrine of the Incarnation, as defined at Chalcedon, in the Eastern sees—heretics like Peter the Fuller at Alexandria. Canon Bright, in the same paragraph, quotes Liberatus against me; but my account altogether agrees with that of Liberatus, who in the same chapter speaks of the 'usurpations' of Anatolius, and in the passage quoted by Canon Bright is stigmatising the Erastianism and encroachments that went on under the pretext of that canon, and in the following chapter describes the usurpations of the heretic Acacius ('detectus hereticus').¹ In fact this whole passage in Canon Bright's book is, I regret to say, a tissue of misrepresentations, his accusation of *suppressio veri* being actually supported by omitting the very line which confines my statement to the present, whilst the truth supposed to be suppressed is concerned with the future.

¹ *Breviarium*, cap. xviii.

L. R.

THE PRESBYTERY, SPANISH PLACE,
LONDON, W.
March 30, 1894.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION BY THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER	v
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	xvii

PERIOD I. A.D. 96-800.

CHAPTER I.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. CLEMENT; OR THE TYPE SET.

- § 1. The Church of Rome intervenes in the Schism at Corinth, p. 1. § 2. Reasons why St. Clement omitted his Name, 2. § 3. The authoritative Tone of the Letter, 7. § 4. Probably a Case of Appeal, 8 . . pp. 1-10

CHAPTER II.

THE CLEMENTINE ROMANCE.

- § 1. St. Clement's Personality, p. 11. § 2. The Clementine Literature, 12. § 3. Its Use by the Tübingen School, 13. § 4. Use by anti-Papal Writers to account for the Expression 'See of Peter,' 13. § 5. Impossibility of this Supposition, 15. § 6. The List of Hegesippus anterior to the Romance at Rome, 17. § 7. Irenæus on the See of Peter, 22. § 8. The Clementines at Rome later than Tertullian, 25. § 9. Historical Results, 29 . . pp. 11-31

CHAPTER III.

ST. IRENÆUS, OR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

- § 1. His Statement of the Rule of Faith, viz. Agreement with Rome, p. 32. § 2. Protestant Endeavours to wrest his Meaning: e.g. (a) Rome's Orthodoxy secured by the Confluence of Strangers, 34; (b) her 'principalitas' only Primitiveness, 35; or (c) due to her secular Position, 36; (d) *undique*, not = everywhere, 36; (e) *in quâ*, not = in communion with, 37 . . pp. 32-38

CHAPTER IV.

ST. VICTOR, OR THE GUARDIAN OF THE COMMON UNITY.

- § 1. The Modes of observing Easter, p. 39. § 2. St. Victor's Attempt to produce Uniformity, 40. § 3. St. Irenæus' Intervention, 42. Note on Mr. Puller's Interpretation, 44 pp. 39-

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTRINE OF ST. CYPRIAN ON UNITY.

- § 1. St. Cyprian on the Authority of St. Peter, p. 47. § 2. The Occasion of his Treatise on Unity, viz. (a) Danger to the Episcopal Authority, 50; (b) an unlawful Bishop at Rome, 55. § 3. Teaches Papal Supremacy incidentally, 57. § 4. St. Peter in the Treatise on Unity, 60. § 5. Corollaries, 62 . . . pp. 47-64

CHAPTER VI.

ST. CYPRIAN ON APPEALS TO ROME.

- § 1. *Résumé* of the Saint's Teaching on Unity, p. 65. § 2. Fortunatus denounced for going to Rome, but not the Principle of Appeal, 67. § 3. Case of Marcian referred to Rome, 70. § 4. Spanish Bishops may be, but do not deserve to be, restored by the Pope, 72. Note on Mr. Puller's Interpretation . . . pp. 65-76

CHAPTER VII.

ST. CYPRIAN'S ERROR ON BAPTISM BY HERETICS.

- § 1. Doctrine of Unity misapplied; his threefold Error, p. 77. § 2. Convoles a Council on the Subject, 81. § 3. Second Council and Letter to Jubaianus, 84. § 4. Refers the Matter to Rome, 86. § 5. Meanwhile holds third Council and decides in favour of Rebaptising, 88 . . . pp. 77-93

CHAPTER VIII.

ROME'S DECISION AND CYPRIAN'S IRRITATION.

- § 1. St. Stephen's Decision, p. 94. § 2. St. Cyprian's Legation to Rome, 97. § 3. Letter to Pompeius and Firmilian, 97. § 4. Firmilian's passionate Reply, 100. § 5. Did St. Stephen actually excommunicate St. Cyprian? 105. § 6. Did St. Cyprian retract? 111. § 7. Corollary as to Papal Infallibility, 114 . . . pp. 94-116

CHAPTER IX.

ROME, ALEXANDRIA, AND ANTIOCH, SEES OF PETER.

- § 1. Only Peter left a Successor of his Apostolate, p. 117. § 2. Rome the Rallying-point from the first, 118. § 3. The three Sees of Peter, 120. § 4. Relationship of Rome to Alexandria, 121. § 5. Relationship of Rome to Antioch, 122. § 6. Why these three Sees chosen, 125. Appendix on the Popes' witness to their Office, 127 . . . pp. 117-136

PERIOD II. A.D. 300-384.

CHAPTER X.

THE DONATISTS AND THE COUNCIL OF ARLES.

- § 1. The Origin of the Donatist Schism, p. 139. § 2. The Donatists appeal to the Emperor, who refers them to Rome, 140. § 3. The Papal Sentence, 141. § 4. Final in the Eyes of Augustine, as that of Peter's See, 142. § 5. Case reheard to sift additional Facts, 144. § 6. British Bishops at Arles, 146. § 7. Donatist Erastianism, 147. § 8. Archbishop Laud's Mistranslation, 148 . . . pp. 139-152

CHAPTER XI.

THE COUNCIL OF NICEÆA.

Part I.—Reasons of its Meeting.

- § 1. The good Results of Heresies, p. 153. § 2. Need of a Council compatible with Papal Infallibility, 154. § 3. The Circumstances, 155. § 4. Papal Consent, 157. § 5. Why the Pope desired a Council, 159.

Part II.—The Council itself.

- § 1. The Pope presided, p. 161. § 2. Papal Jurisdiction not in Question, therefore not directly mentioned, 164.

Part III.—The Sixth Canon.

- § 1. The three Sees of Peter, p. 166. § 2. Alexandria's Jurisdiction rested on Rome's Example, 167. § 3. Or on her Arrangement, 169. § 4. The original Beginning of the Canon, 170 . . . pp. 153-172

CHAPTER XII.

THE POPES THE GUARDIANS OF THE NICENE CANONS.

Part I.—St. Julius.

- § 1. The Post-Nicene Struggle, p. 173. § 2. Pope St. Julius and Alexandria, 175.

Part II.—The Sardican Canons.

- § 1. Canon III. not concerned with Appeals to Rome, p. 179. § 2. Canon IV. supposes Appeals, 180. § 3. Canon VII. leaves it to Rome to decide the Mode of Appeal, 180. § 4. Received in the East, 181. § 5. Honouring the Memory of St. Peter, 182. Note on these Canons . . . pp. 173-184

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REIGN OF LIBERIUS.

Part I.—His Personal Grandeur.

- § 1. Defends St. Athanasius, and is exiled, p. 185. § 2. His supposed Fall, 186.
 § 3. His Stand after the Ariminian Catastrophe, 188.

Part II.—The Meletian Scandal at Antioch.

- § 1. The Consequence of Meletius' Election, p. 190. § 2. The Council of Alexandria on the same, 194. § 3. The precipitate Action of Bishop Lucifer 198. § 4. Eusebius of Vercellæ settles nothing, 199 . . . pp. 185-202

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. DAMASUS.

- § 1. His Sanctity, p. 203. § 2. His Election, 207. § 3. His central Position, 208. § 4. His Condemnation of Heresies, 211. § 5. St. Basil looks to the West, 213. § 6. St. Damasus differs as to the best Remedy, 215. § 7. Sides with Paulinus at Antioch, 218. § 8. St. Basil's Irritation, 219. § 9. His petulant Expression not Disbelief, 222. § 10. Believed in Rome's Jurisdiction in the East, 224. § 11. St. Damasus neither approved nor repudiated St. Meletius, 226. § 12. St. Jerome's Witness, 227. § 13. St. Meletius and Paulinus come to Terms, 229 . . . pp. 203-232

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOMAGE OF KINGS; OR GRATIAN'S RESCRIPT.

- § 1. The ideal Relation between Church and State, p. 233. § 2. Realised for awhile under Gratian, 234. § 3. Relationship between Gratian and St. Ambrose, 235. § 4. Gratian gives civil Facilities for the exercise of Rome's Supremacy, 235. § 5. Mr. Puller's Theory as to Gratian's Rescript refuted: (i.) by the Absence of any Protest, 238; (ii.) and by the Words of the Rescript compared with the Letter of the Roman Synod, 239 . . . pp. 233-242

CHAPTER XVI.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (A.D. 381).

Part I.—Theodosius and the Imperial City.

- § 1. Theodosius made Emperor, p. 243. § 2. Issues a Law defining the Term 'Catholic,' 244. § 3. Gregory and Maximus in Constantinople, 245.
 § 4. Theodosius resolves upon a General Eastern Council, 246.

Part II.—The Council.

- § 1. St. Gregory's Election confirmed, p. 248. § 2. St. Meletius dies, 249.
 § 3. Flavian elected to Antioch, 250. § 4. St. Gregory resigns, 253.
 § 5. Nectarius appointed in his Place, 255. § 6. How the Council came to be œcumenical, 256.

*Part III.—New Rome; or the Third Canon, p. 258.**Part IV.—The Western Disapproval of Flavian's Election, p. 263.*

Note on Mr. Puller's Proof that St. Meletius was out of Communion with Rome, p. 267. Conclusion of Second Period. Councils of A.D. 382 at Rome and Constantinople, 269 . . . 243-279

PERIOD III. A.D. 400-452.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHURCH OF NORTH AFRICA IN THE DAYS OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

Part I.—The Letters of St. Innocent.

- § 1. Celestius, condemned in Africa, appeals to Rome, p. 284. § 2. The Synods of Carthage and Milevis write from Africa to Rome, 286. § 3. St. Innocent's Rescripts—their Doctrine on St. Peter's See, 288. § 4. Their Reception by the African Fathers—its Witness to African Belief, 289.

Part II.—St. Zosimus' Support of the Faith.

- § 1. Did not sanction Pelagian Statements, p. 291. § 2. Cautiousness of the Pope, 293. § 3. St. Augustine and Dr. Pusey, 293. § 4. St. Zosimus' Encyclical 'confirming the Brethren,' 295.

Part III.—Apianus and Papal Jurisdiction.

- § 1. A Canon quoted of which the Africans ignorant, p. 297. § 2. Legates *a latere* deprecated, 298. § 3. The whole Matter a Question of Procedure, not of Principle, 300. § 4. The Genuineness of the chief Letter open to Question, 303 . . . pp. 283-304

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS—ITS PRELIMINARIES.

- § 1. The Matter in Dispute, p. 305. § 2. St. Cyril's Action, 306. § 3. The Papal Intervention, 306. § 4. St. Cyril asks the Pope for Judgment, 307. § 5. St. Celestine appoints Cyril his Plenipotentiary, 309. § 6. Conclusions as to the Pope's Position, 311. § 7. Anglican Writers on the above, 313. § 8. Cyril's Action as Plenipotentiary, 315. § 9. Nestorius, having the Emperor's ear, makes for a Council, 316. § 10. Meets at Ephesus, without the Bishop of Antioch, 319. § 11. Celestine (Pope) the real, Cyril the acting President, 321 . . . pp. 305-328

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ACTS OF THE COUNCIL.

- § 1. Nestorius refuses to appear, p. 329. § 2. The Relation of the Bishops' Judgment to that of the Pope, 330. § 3. The Action of the Council, 332. § 4. The Council's Sentence, 333. § 5. Anglican Writers on the Council's Sentence, 336. § 6. The immediate Result of the Sentence, 336. § 7. The Arrival of Legates from Rome, 338. § 8. The schismatic Synod, 341. pp. 329-343

CHAPTER XX.

THE SEE OF PETER 'CONFIRMING THE BRETHREN.'

- § 1. The Papal Legates' Judgment, p. 344. § 2. The Council's Witness to the Supremacy of the Pope, 345. § 3. John of Antioch condemned by the Synod, but referred to the Pope, 350. § 4. The Pope's fatherly Care, 354. § 5. The Case of the Cyprians, and Canon Bright on the Expression 'worldly Pride,' 356. Conclusions, 361 pp. 344-361

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FOURTH GENERAL COUNCIL—PRELIMINARIES.

- § 1. Introductory Remarks on the Council of Chalcedon, p. 362. § 2. The Origin of the Council—Eutyches' Perversion of St. Cyril's Writings, 364. § 3. Eutyches condemned at Constantinople, 365. § 4. Eutyches appeals to Rome, 365. § 5. St. Leo blames Archbishop of Constantinople for not sending Report, 367. § 6. Eutyches makes for a Council, 368. § 7. Archbishop of Constantinople prefers a Papal Brief to a Council, 369. § 8. The Position of the Pope in the Thoughts of Christendom, 371. § 9. The Tome of St. Leo, 372. § 10. Revises the Acts of the Synod of Constantinople, 373. § 11. Leo consents to a Council to convict Eutyches, 374. § 12. Describes his Tome as an *ex Cathedra* Pronouncement, 375. § 13. Describes the Office of the Council, 376 pp. 362-377

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LATROCINIUM, OR ROBBER COUNCIL.

- § 1. Its uncanonical Composition, p. 378. § 2. Eutyches is acquitted, Leo's Tome suppressed, Flavian condemned, 379. § 3. The Inadequacy of a Primacy of Honour to meet the Case, 380. § 4. The Supremacy exercised by Leo, 382. § 5. Flavian's Appeal to Rome, 383. § 6. Leo insists on another Council, 384. § 7. Demands the Enforcement of the Niceno-Sardinian Canon, 385. § 8. The Emperor and Empresses write to Theodosius, 388. § 9. Leo describes his Duty to the whole Church, 390. § 10. The new Emperor decides on a Council, 391. § 11. Anatolius, Archbishop of Constantinople—his Antecedents, 392. § 12. Leo requires his Profession of Faith in accordance with his Tome, 393. § 13. Anatolius sends it and receives Directions, 396. § 14. St. Leo's Tome signed by Anatolius and other Bishops, 397 pp. 378-398

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DEPOSITION OF DIOSCORUS.

- § 1. The Work before the Council, p. 399. § 2. Dioscorus condemned, 400. § 3. The Sentence pronounced in the Name of the Pope, 403. § 4. On the Matter of Faith nothing new needed after Leo's Tome, 408. § 5. The so-called Review of Leo's Tome, 409 pp. 399-418

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEFINITION OF FAITH.

- The Bishops in Danger of adopting an insufficient Formula, p. 419; are kept right by the Commissioners and Papal Legates, 420. They have to answer the Question of Obedience to Leo's Decision, 421; Principles that emerge, 424 pp. 419-425

CHAPTER XXV.

THEODORET AND MAXIMUS.

1. Theodoret appealed to the See of Peter, p. 427; the Sentence against him annulled, 429; his Presence objected to at Chalcedon, 430; allowed the Position of Bishop, 431; acted as such in the Council, 431; compelled to anathematise Nestorius, 432; not a Review of Leo's Judgment, 432. II. Maximus of Antioch irregularly ordained, 433; condoned by Leo, *ib.*; his Position accepted on that ground, 434 pp. 426-436

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BYZANTINE PLOT; OR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CANON.

- The Ambition of Constantinople, p. 437; Rebuff at Chalcedon, 440; Opening for a Move, 441; some Bishops passed a Canon, 442; the Papal Legates protest, 443; Imperial Commissioners side with the Bishops, 445; Value of the Canon, 447 pp. 437-449

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EASTERN'S RECOGNITION OF PAPAL SUPREMACY.

- The Bishops write to Leo, p. 451; express full Doctrine of Papal Supremacy, 452-454; Anatolius does the same, 455; Leo and the West repudiate the Canon, 458 pp. 450-460

CONCLUSION [pp. 459-460]

APPENDICES

	PAGE
I. REV. F. W. PULLER'S INTERPRETATION OF ST. CYPRIAN	461
II. ARE THE SARDICAN CANONS NICENE?	467
III. REV. F. W. PULLER ON ST. AMBROSE	475
IV. THE APOSTOLIC SEE; MEANING OF THE PHRASE	479
INDEX	483

ERRATA

- P. 188, lines 10, 9, 8 from bottom: *for* but its numbers after an interval . . .
 belied its beginning *read* but its numbers fell off as it continued its sessions
 after an interval, at the emperor's command, and its end belied its beginning.
- P. 189, line 2, *for* mission *read* minion.

PERIOD I.

A.D. 96-300.

CHAPTER I.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. CLEMENT

OR

THE TYPE SET.

I. In the very first document belonging to Christian history, outside the pages of Holy Scripture, the Church of Rome steps to the front in a manner that is suggestive of supreme authority, and that tallies with her whole future attitude towards the rest of the Church. The occupant of the See of Rome comes before us, speaking in the name of his Church, within the lifetime of the Apostle St. John, and settles a disturbance in a region naturally more nearly related to that Apostle than to the Church of Rome. And he comes before us both as in possession of a tradition of divine truth, and as its authoritative exponent to a distant Church. He lays down the law of worship and government for the whole Church as of Divine institution.

The circumstances were as follows:—The Church in Corinth had for some time been torn by dissensions, and had caused the utmost scandal on all sides (§ 47).¹ A few fiery spirits, with a considerable following, had succeeded in extruding probably their bishop and some of his presbyters, if not, indeed, one or more bishops in the neighbourhood, from their sacred office (*ἐπισκοπή*, § 44).² The Church of Rome came to the rescue. The persecutions under Nero and Domitian had alone prevented her from intervening earlier (§ 1). But as soon as possible St. Clement wrote a letter entitled, 'The

¹ The references to St. Clement's letter are from Dr. Lightfoot's edition—the second, posthumously published in 1890.

² St. Clement calls it a schism (§ 46).

Church in Rome to the Church in Corinth,' which Dr. Lightfoot characterises as 'almost imperious' in tone, and which St. Irenæus spoke of as 'most powerful,' or 'most adequate.'² In this letter St. Clement speaks of the tradition which the Church of Rome had received from the Apostles themselves (§ 44), as to a succession of rulers in the Church, to prevent strife 'about the name [*i.e.* dignity] of the office of bishop (*ἐπισκοπή*s).' Speaking of this government of the Church, he finds its type in the Old Covenant, in the High Priest, Priests, and Levites. He says that the Apostles, in order to obviate strife, ordained as successors in the ministry (*λειτουργίας*) bishops and deacons. He magisterially reproves the ring-leaders of the disturbances in Corinth for attempting to extrude such successors of the Apostles,³ and says that 'it will be a sin in us' to depose them from their 'sacred office (*ἐπισκοπή*s).' Further on, in a passage only discovered of late, he claims their 'obedience unto the things written by us through the Holy Spirit' (§ 63), as he had said a little previously: 'If any disobey the things spoken by Him through us, let them know that they will involve themselves in transgression and no small peril' (§ 59). The letter concludes with saying that they hope soon to receive back again the legates whom they have sent, with a report from Corinth that the peace, which they desire, has been restored.

Such was the first recorded act of the Church of Rome. And it is spoken of in terms of enthusiasm by St. Irenæus, from whom we gather that the Corinthians amended their ways, and the desired result was achieved. It is also alluded to with commendation by St. Ignatius on his way to his martyrdom.

II. Dr. Lightfoot lays great stress on the fact that the name of St. Clement does not appear in this letter, but only

¹ *St. Clement of Rome*, vol. i. p. 69. 1890.

² *ἱκανωτάτην*, *Adv. Hær.* iii. 3, 3.

³ *τοὺς . . . κατασταθέντας ὑπ' ἐκείνων* [*i.e.* the Apostles] *ἡ μεταξὺ ὑφ' ἑτέρων* . . . *οὐ δικαίως νομιζομέν ἀποβάλλεσθαι*, κ.τ.λ. (§ 44). Notice the present tense in the latter word. The Church of Rome treats the action of the Corinthians as incomplete.

that of the Church of Rome.¹ He admits, however, that the letter was written by St. Clement, and calls it an 'incident in his administration' of the Church.² But he thinks that St. Clement 'studiously suppressed' ³ his name, as not being in such a position of authority as is involved in the monarchical idea of the episcopate. He thinks that, in consequence, 'his personality is absorbed' ⁴ in the Church of Rome, and that in this we may discern a vital difference between the first century and the fifth. He says that 'the language of this letter is inconsistent with the possession of Papal authority in the person of the writer;' that 'it does not proceed from the Bishop of Rome, but from the Church of Rome.' It is spoken of, he says, in the second century as 'from the community, not from the individual.'

It will be well at once to warn our readers of a general misconception involved in the use of the word 'monarchical' as applied by certain writers (such as Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Salmon and others) to the episcopate, and above all, to the Bishop of Rome.

When we speak of the Bishop of Rome as the infallible guardian of the faith, we do not mean that he is placed in a position in which he can act in isolation from the rest of the episcopal body. The very doctrine of Papal Infallibility implies that he never can act apart from the general teaching of the Church. We can always be sure that his utterances, when attended with those conditions which are implied in the exercise of his infallibility, are the exposition of the Church's mind as a whole. If we were to suppose the case of the Pope on the one side, and the whole of the episcopate arrayed against him on the other, we should be obliged to hold that the Pope would be in the right and the rest of the episcopate in the wrong. But such a case never has occurred, and never can. It is involved in our Lord's promise of His presence with the Church in her teaching 'all days unto the consummation of the world,'⁵ that the body will never be separated from the head. The Holy Father speaks in the name of his children; and

¹ *Loc. cit.* p. 69.

⁴ P. 69.

² P. 84.

³ P. 352.

⁵ St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

his children will never, as a whole, protest against his teaching.

But not only so. The Bishop of Rome, throughout the ages, has adopted the principle on which St. Cyprian, who especially expounded the monarchical idea of the episcopate, says that he ever proposed to govern his diocese—viz. with consultation. So nothing is more characteristic of the government of the Church by those great Popes, like St. Damasus and St. Leo, in the fourth and fifth centuries, than their use of episcopal assessors. As St. Ignatius speaks of the bishop of the diocese having his *corona*—his circlet—of presbyters, so the Bishops of Rome ever had their circlet of bishops, and made use of their advice in all great matters concerning the general welfare of the Church. When, then, the Popes used the plural 'we,' they were not only using the majestic plural, but they had gathered into their utterances with a special closeness a portion of that great whole in whose name they were justified in speaking. They had held their synod. They were not acting in lone majesty, but in concert with others whom they had gathered into a special closeness of contact with themselves.

Again, the supremacy which belongs strictly to the Bishop of Rome, as the successor of St. Peter, is often attributed, not to the Bishop of Rome, but to the Church of Rome. In the later history of the Church we constantly meet with the supremacy of the bishop spoken of as though it belonged to the *Church* of Rome. To this day we constantly speak of 'Rome' doing this or saying that, while of course we believe that the informing power of the whole is the bishop himself, as successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ. Martin V., in the Council of Constance, condemned the proposition of Wicliffe, that 'it is not of necessity to believe that the Roman Church is supreme amongst the other Churches;' and in the Creed of Pope Pius IV. a similar expression is used by converts on their reception into the Church, viz.: 'I acknowledge the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church to be the mother and mistress of all Churches,' just as in the profession of faith prescribed by Clement IV. and Gregory X., and made by the Greeks after the second Council of Lyons, the words

are: 'The holy Roman Church has the supreme and full primacy and sovereignty over the whole Catholic Church.' And, lastly, the Vatican decree runs thus (Constit. 'Pastor Æternus,' cap. 3): 'We teach and declare that the Roman Church, by the ordinance of Christ (*disponente Domino*), has the sovereignty of ordinary power over all other [Churches].'

Consequently, if primitive Christian history presents us with the spectacle of the *Church* of Rome calling herself by this name, and stepping to the front to act with authority in guarding the faith of the Church as to the Apostolic succession of her rulers, and restoring unity to a divided Christian community at a distance, this does not constitute anything like a vital difference between this early expression of authority and the most recent instance of Papal rule. It is at most a difference of terminology. It would not follow that, because an act of authority was done in the name of the Church of Rome, it was not done by the authority of the *Bishop* of Rome.¹ Unless, then, Dr. Lightfoot had been able to show that there was no other possible reason for St. Clement suppressing his name in the letter to Corinth, the fact that he did suppress it would not prove that he did not occupy the position in the minds of the early Christians that he occupies now in the Roman Catholic Church. And yet the argument from silence is the main point urged by Dr. Lightfoot in this matter. 'The language of this letter,' to which he appeals as showing a difference between earlier and later Popes, means its silence as to the name of its author.

But there is more than one possible solution of this silence. If the tradition which St. Epiphanius² gives is based on facts, to the effect that after the death of the Apostles Peter and Paul St. Clement refused to occupy the position of bishop in the Roman community out of modesty, the same deep humility might well operate in this, perhaps, first great act of discipline exercised by him towards a distant Church. On the Papal teaching concerning Church government it would be enough for St. Clement to mention the *Church* of Rome; she held 'the principality,' as St. Irenæus says, which, says St. Augus-

¹ Cf. *Life of St. Thomas of Canterbury* by Rev. J. Morris, S. J., p. 135.

² *Hær.* xxvii. 6.

time, 'was always in force.' St. Clement was successor of St. Peter because he was Bishop of Rome. He owed his relationship to the Divine Head of the Church, viz. that of His Vicar, to his position in the Church of Rome; and it would not be unnatural, in writing a letter of some severity to the Church at Corinth, that he should simply speak of the Church of Rome, and not mention his own unworthy name. This will only seem far-fetched and fanciful to those who do not reflect that our Lord's description of the vital difference between the head of His kingdom and those of the kingdoms of this world was that 'the principal one' in His kingdom would not 'lord it' over others, after the example of this world's rulers, but would be amongst the rest as He Himself was—their Ruler, their Lord and Infallible Teacher, and yet lowly and meek in heart.¹

But there is yet another possible, and indeed probable, solution of this suppression of his name, on which Dr. Lightfoot has rested his argument as to the difference between St. Clement and the Papacy in subsequent times. The Church had only just emerged from the most fiery persecutions, and might at any moment be exposed to another. All societies, organised without leave from the civil authorities, were illegal, and consequently the last thing that the head of the Christian community would do under such circumstances would be to flaunt their condition as an organised body before the world. A letter, of such authoritative tone as St. Clement's, with his own name at its head, might easily fall into the hands of strangers; and if St. Peter himself thought it advisable to call Rome 'Babylon,'² when writing of the Church of Rome, it might very well seem the part of prudence in the bishop to suppress his name when writing from Rome.

And yet neither of these suppositions is necessary to account for the fact of St. Clement's silence as to his name. Writing as the head of the Christian community, he could write officially in its name. A successor of his did

¹ St. Luke xxii. 25-27. And so from the time of St. Damasus the Popes have called themselves the 'servant of servants.'

² 1 St. Peter v. 13. Dr. Lightfoot so understands the word 'Babylon' in his *St. Clement of Rome*, vol. ii. p. 491, 2.

the same, St. Soter. And Eusebius expressly says that Clement wrote in the name of his Church,¹ and St. Jerome, that he wrote in the person of the Church.²

And this is the explanation of a passage in Eusebius in which he speaks of this letter of St. Clement. St. Dionysius of Corinth, writing to the Church of Rome, describes the letter as 'your Epistle written to us by Clement;' whereas Eusebius says that Dionysius made 'some remarks relating to the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,' on which Dr. Lightfoot convicts Eusebius of making an assumption not warranted by the words of Dionysius.³ But the Greek historian, like all the world after him, considered it was all one, to call it, as Dionysius did, the letter of the Romans 'by Clement,' or the letter of Clement: just as St. Clement of Alexandria speaks of it in both ways, as the Epistle of the Romans,⁴ and the Epistle of Clement.⁵ All is explained by the principle which St. Cyprian laid down when he said, 'You ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop.'

It would not have been necessary to enter at such length into Dr. Lightfoot's interpretation of this omission of the name in St. Clement's letter, were it not that Dr. Lightfoot's name gives weight to everything that he says, and that many who heartily repudiate his views as to the Christian ministry⁶ yet follow him in this particular point.

III. The letter, then, of St. Clement was written in the name of the Church of Rome, and was, as Dr. Lightfoot says, 'the only recorded incident in his administration of the Church.' It was, according to the same writer, 'undoubtedly the first step towards Papal domination.' It would seem impossible to mistake its tone of authority, 'almost imperious,' says the same writer.⁷ Dr. Salmon, in his book on 'Infallibility,'⁸

¹ *H. E.* iii. 37.

² *De Viris Illustr.* 15.

³ *Loc. cit.* p. 358.

⁴ *Strom.* v. 12, 81.

⁵ *Ib.* iv. 17, 19.

⁶ Mr. Gore has an excellent reply to Dr. Lightfoot's erroneous conception of the episcopate in the early Christian Church in his *Church and the Ministry*, 1889, note A, p. 353 *seq.*

⁷ Mr. Gore (*ib.* p. 325) speaks of 'the teaching authority which breathes in his [Clement's] Epistle.'

⁸ Salmon's (*G.*) *Infallibility of the Church*, second edit. p. 379.

maintains that the tone 'is only that of the loving remonstrance which any Christian is justified in offering to an erring brother.' But in his article on St. Clement in the 'Dictionary of Christian Biography' (Smith and Wace), he says, 'Very noticeable in the new part of the letter is the tone of authority used by the Roman Church in making an unsolicited interference with the affairs of another Church.'¹ 'Already in St. Clement's letter an assumption, so natural as to be almost unconscious, of the right to advise and interpose underlies his pacificatory argument.'²

It is certainly singular that only a few years after the dogma of Papal Infallibility, always the general belief of Christians, had, in view of emerging denials, been made obligatory, a manuscript, in a Greek monastery, containing strong assertions of the divine authority with which the Church of Rome conceived herself to be speaking, should be suddenly unearthed. Dr. Lightfoot had substituted a long fragment from another writer, as possibly the substance of the long-lost portion of this invaluable letter, and most scholars admired his ingenuity. But a comparison with this suggested complement of the letter, and the actual fragment now recovered, will show how the imagination of a brilliant scholar differs from the actual thoughts of the great Bishop of Rome himself.³

IV. There is one passage which suggests an answer to the question, whether this letter from Rome was in answer to an appeal or was an unsolicited intervention. The writer says (§ 44) that 'we do not think that such as these' (*i.e.* men left there by Apostles and of good repute) 'are being justly cast out from the sacred ministry; for it will be no small sin in us, if we should extrude [or depose] from the episcopate those who have offered the gifts blamelessly and holily.'

¹ Dr. Salmon, in the preface to his book on the *Infallibility of the Church*, says that much of it was written years ago. It certainly contrasts strangely in its tone of abruptness and heat with his admirable *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, in which he takes the same view of St. Clement's letter as in Smith and Wace's Dictionary. Possibly the new ending had not been discovered when he wrote that portion of his work on *Infallibility*.

² Cruttwell's (C. T.) *Lit. Hist. of Early Christianity*, 1893, vol. ii. p. 404.

³ Lightfoot's *Clement of Rome*, 1890, vol. i. p. 178.

It certainly seems as though the case of these bishops (I use the exact equivalent, without meaning thereby to settle the question what exactly their office was) had been laid before the Church of Rome. The Corinthians had removed them from the exercise of their office, as is stated in the next sentence; but in this sentence the writer of the Epistle treats their deposition as not concluded; it is the present tense, as though their act awaited its completion at the hands of Rome. Whether this were so or not, the matter must have been brought before them in some way, for Rome passes most definite judgment as to whether these rulers deserved such treatment, instead of asking for further particulars. The passage in which St. Clement speaks of the 'report' having reached Rome,¹ which seems at first sight to suggest that the Romans had not been directly consulted on the matter, refers only to the statement that the disturbance, of which the main facts seem to have been brought very circumstantially before the Church of Rome, was due to only 'one or two ringleaders.' The expression in the beginning of the letter, 'the matters in dispute *among you*,' does not compel us to suppose that the matters of dispute among them had not been also referred to Rome. For if there had been no appeal, why should St. Clement excuse himself for not having attended to the matter sooner? On the whole, then, it seems most likely, though not certain, that the letter was written in answer to an appeal from Corinth.

Such, then, was 'the first step towards Papal domination' (Lightfoot), or, as we should prefer to call it, the first recorded exercise of authority towards a distant Church. There was no protest; on the contrary, St. Irenæus and St. Ignatius praised it, and Corinth treasured the letter and read it at Divine service on the Lord's Day for years to come.

Such is the dawn of uninspired Christian history. In that first century of the Christian era unity was restored at Corinth by the action of Rome writing a most powerful letter and sending legates² to the scene of disturbance; and, according to St. Ignatius, Rome was the teacher of others, with special allusion, it is thought, to this letter: 'Ye taught

¹ § 47, *ad finem*.

² Clem. *Ep. ad Cor.* § 45.

others' (Ign. 'Ep. ad Rom.' § 3) are words which, as Dr. Lightfoot remarks,¹ 'the newly discovered ending of St. Clement's letter enables us to appreciate more fully'—a letter in which the writer claims to speak with the authority of God.

The least that can be said of this first disclosure of Rome's position in the Church is that it fits in with her present position in Roman Catholic Christendom.

¹ *Loc. cit.* p. 71.

CHAPTER II.

THE CLEMENTINE ROMANCE.

I. 'It is very remarkable,' says a Protestant historian, 'that a person of such vast influence in truth and fiction, whose words were law, who preached the duty of obedience and submission to an independent and distracted Church, whose vision reached even to unknown lands beyond the Western Sea, should inaugurate, at the threshold of the second century, that long line of pontiffs who have outlasted every dynasty in Europe, and now claim an infallible authority over the consciences of 200,000,000 of Christians.'¹

Dr. Schaff here speaks of St. Clement, who, as Dr. Salmon says, 'speaks in a tone of authority to a sister Church of Apostolic foundation, and thus reveals the easy and innocent beginning of the Papacy,'² in a letter which, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, forms 'undoubtedly' 'the first step towards Papal domination.'³

The reasonable explanation is that he spoke as successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. The first recorded utterance of a Christian bishop in uninspired literature speaks in the name of his Church with the voice of infallibility, and that Church is the Church of Rome. His letter was bound up with Holy Scripture, and is to be seen this day in the British Museum amongst the contents of the great Alexandrian Codex of the Bible. According to Origen, Eusebius,

¹ Schaff's *Hist. of the Church. Ante-Nicene Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 639 (Edinburgh). 'He was regarded,' says Lightfoot, 'as the interpreter of the Apostolic teaching and the codifier of the Apostolic ordinances' (*St. Clem.* vol. i. p. 103).

² Salmon's (G.) *Introduction to the Study of N. Test.* p. 646.

³ *St. Clement of Rome*, second edition, p. 70. In the first edition it is 'Papal aggression.'

and St. Jerome, he was that Clement whose name St. Paul mentions as 'in the book of life.' According to some modern authorities he was a Jewish freedman, or the son of a freedman belonging to the household of Flavius Clemens (Lightfoot). There can be little doubt that his letter, read as it was in public worship in numerous Churches, as, for instance, in Corinth itself, for many years, made the name of Clement sufficiently well known for a large amount of spurious literature to gather round it in the second and third centuries—a literature which has played an extraordinarily prominent part in modern controversy. It furnishes, according to Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Salmon, the Bishop of Lincoln, and Mr. Puller, the key to the assertions made by the Christian writers of the third century to the effect that the See of Rome is the See of Peter. The same literature had already been seized upon with avidity by the Rationalist school of Tübingen, and still forms the basis of similar theories concerning the origin of Christianity.

II. This literature contains a romantic narrative in which St. Clement in his travels meets with relative after relative whom he had lost—hence called the 'Recognitions'—and a set of Homilies, containing a great deal of Ebionitish doctrine, and a letter of St. Clement to St. James, which forms a sort of preface to the version which obtained currency in Rome. In this letter St. Clement says incidentally that he was ordained by Peter, a fact which by no means forms a prominent feature of the narrative, and is accompanied in the same breath with the statement that he was commissioned by Peter to send certain sermons to St. James, as the head of the Christian Church. The position of St. James as the bishop of bishops is an important feature of the letter. 'Taken as a whole, the Clementine Romance is,' as Mr. Puller admits, 'entirely un-Petrine and un-Roman.'¹ Its whole tendency is also anti-Pauline—depreciatory, that is, of St. Paul as compared with St. James, in accordance with the Ebionitish doctrine which placed St. James before either St. Peter or St. Paul. It is supposed to have appeared in Rome either in the middle or the end of the second, or in the beginning of the

¹ Puller's (F.W.) *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, p. 45.

third century, or later still. It was never quoted as an authority by early Christian writers, but nevertheless obtained after a while an extensive circulation. It is written with skill and popular effect. To this day most of its readers will admit that there is a certain fascination about it, viewed merely as a romance.

III. Its anti-Pauline tendency was seized upon by Baur and the Tübingen school in general, and vastly exaggerated; and having been thus interpreted, was made to do service in connection with a passage in Holy Scripture which has, from the earliest days of Christianity, been pressed into the service of unbelief. The state of things supposed to be described in the Clementine Romance was held to be a survival of the state of matters which obtained in the early Church, as shown, according to this theory, by the conflict between St. Peter and St. Paul at Antioch. The difference between these two Apostles was held to be vital, instead of concerning only a matter of practical expediency; and so, according to this theory, the early Church began with a conflict as to the truth to be taught, of which we have the remnants in the Clementine literature. Every effort was therefore made to throw back the Clementine Romance into the second century, and as far back in that century as possible.

It would be outside the subject of this book to enter upon the complete and decisive answers which have been given by Christian writers to the Rationalist school of Tübingen on this head.

IV. But this spurious Clementine literature is, as I have said, now pressed into the service of anti-Papal writers. Dr. Salmon, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, one of the most vigorous opponents of the Papal claims, whilst he exposes the weakness of the Rationalists' deductions from the Clementine literature, nevertheless rounds off one of his paragraphs with the assertion that it 'has had a marvellous share in shaping the history of Christendom, by *inventing the story* that Peter was Bishop of Rome, and that he named Clement to succeed him in the see.'¹ He expresses the same theory elsewhere,

¹ *Introd. to the N. T.* fourth edition, 1889, p. 15. The italics in this and the following quotations are my own.

saying that as regards the story of Peter's Roman episcopate, 'the real inventor of the story was an editor of the Clementine Romance. . . . Though the doctrinal teaching of the Clementines was rejected as heretical, the narrative part of the book was readily believed.' He gives no proof of this, but continues, 'and in particular this story of Clement's ordination by Peter was felt to be so honourable to the Church of Rome that it was *at once adopted there*, and has been the traditional Roman account ever since.'¹ Dr. Lightfoot adopted the same theory, stating that 'its glorification of Rome and the Roman Bishop obtained for it an early and wide circulation in the West. Accordingly, even Tertullian speaks of Clement as the immediate successor of St. Peter.'² I would gladly give this author's proof, but I have been unable to find anything but assertion on this whole subject. The present Bishop of Lincoln has recently adopted the same position in his preface³ to Mr. Puller's book on 'The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome.' Dr. King is speaking, indeed, of a theory which no one, that I have been able to discover, ever held, viz. that St. Peter was the 'sole founder of the Roman See.' But it is evident that he alludes to the theory of St. Peter being held to have been the first Bishop of Rome, and he proceeds to say, referring to Mr. Puller's book (pp. 48, 49), that 'the anti-Pauline Clementine Romance may explain the source from which this invention was derived.' Mr. Puller himself has made it the pivot of his argument against Rome. 'If the author of the Clementine Romance had not been an Ebionitish heretic, with an inherited hatred of the memory of St. Paul, *the world would never have heard of the chair of Peter.* It is strange how, from the very first, the Roman claims have been based upon forgeries.'⁴ And when he comes to the crucial passage in St. Cyprian's writings, where that saint speaks of the See of Rome as 'the Chair of Peter and the principal Church whence sacerdotal unity took its rise,' he dismisses St. Cyprian from his array

¹ Salmon's *Infallibility of the Church*, second edition, 1890, p. 360.

² *St. Clement of Rome*, edition 1890, vol. i. p. 64.

³ P. xxi. Dr. King is here endeavouring to make room for our 'honesty.' But he starts with imputing to us the above theory, which no Catholic theologian ever held.

⁴ Puller's *The Primitive Saints*, p. 50.

of witnesses on this point, as 'under a prevailing delusion. *I need say nothing* about the expression, "Chair of Peter," as applied to the See of Rome. By the time of St. Cyprian Western Christians had learnt from the Clementine Romance to apply the title to the Roman See.'¹ Mr. Puller goes further (if his words are to be taken seriously) than his predecessors, for he says, 'No one had any suspicion that the Clementine Romance was a lie invented by a heretic,' for which there is no proof given; and, further, 'the story was accepted on all sides.' In other words, the whole Church believed that St. James was its visible head! 'Some,' he continues, 'like St. Cyprian, accepted it, but without allowing it to modify to any appreciable degree the traditional teaching of the Church. Others, more closely connected with the Church of Rome,'² fastened on the notion of the chair of Peter, and used that notion to provide an apostolic basis for the growing claims of the Roman See.' It is difficult to see how they would secure 'an apostolic basis' by extruding St. Paul. For the twin Apostles include St. Peter. It was not, therefore, a substitution of St. Peter for St. Paul, but of St. Peter for St. Peter and St. Paul.

V. But the Clementine literature is a subject which deserves a somewhat fuller treatment. I shall accordingly endeavour to show that, supposing 'the corporate pride of the Roman Christians' could be reasonably imagined to be so 'flattered' by the 'unique position which it [this romance] assigned to Clement,' which is Dr. Lightfoot's explanation, it has not been conclusively proved that this romance was the first to call St. Clement the successor of Peter in the bishopric of Rome. It may be shown that there was something else before it—namely, the lists of the Bishops of Rome.

But before entering on this proof I feel that it is necessary to enter a protest against the assumption virtually made by some that the local Church of Rome was in that early age filled with the spirit of the devil. How could this be, if, with Dr. Lightfoot and others, we explain the position of superiority accorded to the Church of Rome by her moral majesty? She

¹ *Prim. SS.* p. 54.

² Tertullian, for instance, St. Cyprian's master.

presided 'in love,' is his interpretation of *προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης*. The possibility of such a translation of St. Ignatius' words is not now the question; but so Dr. Lightfoot explains her position. This 'practical goodness,' as he chooses to translate the supernatural gift of *ἀγάπη*,¹ enabled her, according to these writers, to take, and justified her in taking the lead, and led others to acquiesce in a kind of primacy. This (they tell us), together with her position as the Imperial city, went to form her unique position. Was, then, the Church of Rome, the leading Church according to all these writers, so filled with the spirit of lying that she could take the suggestion of a romance in place of her own lists, which we know from Hegesippus she then possessed, whether by oral tradition or in writing?² Had she the heart to alter her tale, to drop the Apostle in whom she had gloried, and in whom, conjointly with St. Peter, she glories to-day, sending out her bulls in their twin name?—had she, I say, the heart suddenly to change her attitude towards her known and beloved founders? Did Tertullian, when he came to Rome, instead of examining the lists, instead of listening to what older men could tell him, take up with an incidental expression in a romance, which *no single writer of that time ever quoted*, so far as our records go, as an authority, and of which they rejected the heretical teaching, according to Dr. Salmon? Could all classes in the Church of Rome agree suddenly on a new platform, and no whisper of the fundamental change find its way outside, or produce the slightest protest against this change in the Church's idea of her own constitution? Is it reason, is it common sense, to suppose that in twenty years, which is the utmost space of time that is given,³ a change so vital was effected, as that the episcopal chair was no longer what it is assumed by these writers to have been, that of the two Apostles, but of one only?

But further, why should the 'corporate pride of the Roman Christians' be so flattered by the story of St. Clement being so prominent, and having been ordained by St. Peter, that it

¹ *Loc. cit.* p. 71.

² Hegesippus' expression, *διαδοχὴν ἐποίησα* may imply that there was no written official list. But he found at least a reliable oral tradition.

³ *Prim. SS.* p. 48.

henceforth adopted the idea of the see being that of Peter and not that of Peter and Paul? Was, then, St. Peter so far above St. Paul that it would flatter their corporate pride to call it the see of Peter instead of the see of both? Was the glorification of St. Clement sufficient to balance the depreciation of St. Peter, in the same narrative, below St. James? And could Rome ever bear any approach to an Ebionitish view of the Apostle of the Gentiles? Again, who are the writers who were thus, on Mr. Puller's theory, deluded? Men like Tertullian, who belonged to the Church of Carthage! But is it conceivable that Tertullian, with his forensic ability, the first Christian writer of the day, who had been at Rome before the year 200, had never heard of *what these writers suppose to have been* the earlier teaching, viz. that the See of Rome was not the See of Peter, but merely founded by the two Apostles, and that neither of these Apostles held to it any relationship different from the other? Or if they knew of this supposed earlier teaching, can we conceive of their deliberately falsifying or ignoring it without a word of explanation? Is this the way in which the phrase, which was henceforth common to all ages, sprang into existence? If so, the expression 'the chair of Peter' must be considered the symbol of the Church's utter inability to extrude a seriously erroneous doctrine.

Such are the insuperable philosophical difficulties in the theory that the Clementine Romance gave birth to the doctrine that the See of Rome is the See of Peter. There are, however, critical obstacles besides.

VI. We know that Rome possessed at least two lists of her bishops before the Clementine Romance appeared on the scene. In the reign of Eleutherius,¹ a converted Jew, named Hegesippus, came from Syria to Rome for the purpose of inquiring particularly into the lists of bishops from the Apostles' time. He desired, above all things, to establish the connection between the series of bishops and the Apostles in each case, in the East and in the West. Eusebius (not a Roman writer) wrote with the list as made out by Hegesippus under his eye.

¹ A.D. 175-189.

What, then, is the evidence supplied in this matter by Eusebius?

But first we must be clear as to what it is that we are engaged in proving. Catholic theology, then, has always spoken of the See of Rome as, in some sense, the See of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul. We join these two Apostles together in all our thoughts concerning Rome, when we wish to be precise and explanatory. Rome has inherited from St. Paul the merits of his martyrdom and a peculiar inheritance of watchful care, as her patron conjointly with St. Peter. But from St. Peter she has inherited his character of foundation in a unique sense, as compared with the other Apostles (who are also foundations), and that possession of the keys which was bestowed on Peter. This possession of the keys is something beyond their mere use and exercise, such as the rest of the Apostles received for the purposes of their temporary mission, as founders of Churches throughout the world. Those who do not belong to us are not generally aware that we never commemorate St. Peter in the Holy Mass, or the other sacred offices of the Church, without immediately also commemorating St. Paul, nor St. Paul without at once adding a memorial of St. Peter. The Feast of June 29 is not with us the Feast of St. Peter, as it is in the calendar of the English Church, it is the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. And every Pope sends forth his bulls in the name of the two Apostles. As, then, a person could not argue from the latter fact that the See of Rome is not held by us to be in a special sense the See of Peter, so neither could one argue from a mention in any early writer of a relationship of the See of Rome to the two Apostles that such a writer did not also believe in a special relationship to the Apostle Peter on the part of the same see. To prove similarity of teaching between primitive and modern Rome, we should look for the use of both expressions. This is exactly what we do find in Tertullian, who speaks of Rome as the see into which the Apostles Peter and Paul 'poured all doctrine (*totam doctrinam*),' and says at the same time that St. Clement was ordained to it by St. Peter.¹ Tertullian, I notice in passing,

¹ *De Præscr. Hæc.* 32 (A.D. 200).

does not say that St. Clement was the immediate successor of St. Peter, but simply that St. Clement, Bishop of Rome (whom all the world knew, and who was the teacher of others), was ordained by St. Peter himself. This is all that his argument requires, since it is to establish the apostolicity of the Church of Rome. It was necessary for this purpose to show not only that it was founded by two Apostles, but that they both, or (which was at the least the same thing) one of them, had instituted a successor, as in the case of the other Churches which he mentions.

And now to return to Eusebius. Dr. Lightfoot¹ has furnished us with a most exhaustive critical investigation of the relationship between the list made out by Hegesippus and the History and Chronicle of Eusebius, and has gone far to prove that the latter had the very list of Hegesippus in his hand, through the medium of a Syrian writer in the time of Elagabalus, named Julius Africanus. But that he had, somehow, the list of Hegesippus may be deduced from his own words.

What, then, does Eusebius, resting on the list made by Hegesippus in the middle of the second century, say concerning the relationship of St. Clement to St. Peter?

There is now no question as to his making him the next but one to Linus. What, then, was the relationship of Linus to Peter?

There are two sources from which we gather the witness of Eusebius—his History and his Chronicle. In his History he says² that Linus was the first appointed to the bishopric of the Church of the Romans after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter. This is an expression which decides nothing; for we should say that Henry III. was the first king of England after John, meaning to include John amongst the kings. The word 'after' may be used of a successor in the same chair, the first successor being called the first bishop *after* the original occupant.

¹ See the whole of the interesting discussion on the 'early Roman succession' (pp. 201-245) in his *Clement of Rome*, vol. i. Every line will repay perusal.

² *H. E.* iii. 2.

But immediately afterwards Eusebius uses an expression which suggests a difference of relationship between St. Peter and St. Paul to the bishopric of Rome. For he says¹ that Linus obtained the bishopric of the Church of the Romans 'first after Peter.' Here we have Peter alone connected with the bishopric. But further on there is another expression, when he speaks of Clement as 'holding the third place of those who acted as bishop after both Paul and Peter.'² Here the series of bishops obviously begins with Linus, but the exact relationship to the two Apostles is not defined. In another later passage³ he speaks of Telesphorus as receiving the bishopric 'seventh from the Apostles,' which may mean after their death, or in succession to them.

So far, then, Eusebius is found to speak ordinarily of Linus, coming after the Apostles, as the first bishop, but on one occasion he speaks of him as the successor of Peter alone. Both are true, according to the teaching of theology.

But besides his History, Eusebius drew up a Chronicle, which appears to have contained the list from which he took that which he gives in his History. This is a matter of general agreement. But that Chronicle is not extant. We have only a few extracts in Syncellus, a Greek writer of the ninth century, and three versions in other languages—viz. Armenian, Latin, and Syriac. The first of these, the Armenian, was, according to Petermann, who has translated it into Latin,⁴ from two sources—the original Greek and a Syriac translation. The first part, according to Petermann, with whom Lightfoot agrees so far,⁵ is from the original Greek. In this, whilst Clement is counted as third from the Apostles, there is a passage of supreme importance, in which the writer says: 'The Apostle Peter, when he had first founded the Church of Antioch, sets out for the city of Rome, and there preaches the gospel, and stays there as *prelate of the Church* for twenty years.'⁶ It also so happens that we have this very passage in the original preserved by Syncellus: 'but he [*i.e.*

¹ H. E. iii. 4.

² iii. 21.

³ iv. 5.

⁴ It can be seen in the British Museum in A. Schoene's beautiful edition, in which the various versions are placed side by side.

⁵ Loc. cit. p. 213.

⁶ ii. 150.

Peter], besides the Church in Antioch, also first presided over that in Rome until his death.'¹

And the Latin version by St. Jerome confirms this, for St. Jerome, who made the translation, says of Peter, 'He is sent to Rome, where, preaching the gospel for twenty-five years, he perseveres as bishop of the same city.' And yet St. Jerome calls Linus 'the first bishop after Peter.' Thus the Chronicle of Eusebius coincides with the History. St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, but being an Apostle also, the bishops are sometimes counted from Linus² and not from the Apostle, sometimes from one Apostle, sometimes from both.

The Syriac version again confirms the Armenian and Latin on this particular point. It has an excerpt from the Chronicon, which says that 'Peter, after he had established the Church at Antioch, presided over the Church at Rome for twenty years.'

The later Greek and Oriental chronographies establish the same point. Cardinal Mai published one which was drawn up professedly 'from the labours of Eusebius,' in which the lists of bishops open with the statement, 'Peter first acted as bishop (*ἐπεσκόπησεν*) in Rome,' whilst in the same century Nicephorus, the Patriarch of Constantinople, gives a list of 'those who acted as bishops in Rome from Christ and the Apostles—I. Peter the Apostle.'

Dr. Lightfoot has (it seems to the present writer) proved that both the History and the Chronicon of Eusebius derived their lists from Hegesippus.

But not only so. He seems to have established another point of great importance for our present purpose, and that is the connection between a passage in Epiphanius and the original list of Hegesippus. He thinks that this list really appears in Epiphanius, 'Hær.' xxvii. 6. Now St. Epiphanius speaks of both Peter and Paul as at once Apostles and Bishops in Rome, and gives the name of Linus next. He then goes on to explain how it was that although St. Clement was a con-

¹ ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς μετὰ τῆς ἐν Ἀντιοχίᾳ ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ πρῶτος προέστη ὡς τελειώσας αὐτοῦ (*ibid.*).

² This must not be understood as though Linus, Bishop of Rome, did not succeed to the pontificate of the Universal Church; but the apostolate was something besides that.

temporary of the two Apostles, yet the others succeeded 'to the episcopate before him,' viz. Linus and Cletus. Here, then, according to some very satisfactory reasons given by Dr. Lightfoot, we are in closest contact with Hegesippus, who wrote, be it remembered, in the middle of the second century. And the writer who is considered to give us most directly and unquestionably the results of Hegesippus' work in Rome is also the writer who enters most largely into the question of St. Clement's relationship to St. Peter. He was, according to St. Epiphanius, ordained by that Apostle, but could not be prevailed upon to take upon himself the responsibility of the sole episcopate on their death, until, Linus and Cletus having both died, he was at last 'forced' into it. It is, of course, only conjecture that the subject of Clement filled a special place in the 'memorials' of Hegesippus, as it did in St. Epiphanius' work; but, supposing this to be the case, we have another side-light thrown on the prominence which the name of St. Clement obtained in the East, whence came the Clementine Romance. Hegesippus was himself a Syrian Christian, who visited Corinth and Rome. Julius Africanus, through whom Eusebius derived his knowledge of Hegesippus' work, was a native of Emmaus. And the Clementine Romance hailed, in its original dress, also from the East.

The result of all that has been said is, that what we can glean from Eusebius and St. Epiphanius concerning Hegesippus' work, which was written in the middle of the second century, points to a belief already established, that St. Clement, at whatever interval, occupied 'the chair of Peter'—a belief, therefore, which was in existence before the Clementine Romance could, on any theory, have made its appearance in Rome or the West.

VII. But there is one more witness, and that of the first importance, viz. St. Irenæus himself.

In his list of the Bishops of Rome we have again, according to Dr. Lightfoot, the same work of Hegesippus, though this is denied by many scholars. However, the witness of St. Irenæus is of importance in itself, because it is often supposed to contradict that of Tertullian.¹ But that is an idea which

¹ *St. Clem. of Rome*, Lightfoot, p. 204.

arises simply from a misinterpretation. In his first mention of the succession of the Bishops of Rome ('Hær.' i. 27, 1), St. Irenæus speaks of Hyginus as *the ninth*, which makes St. Peter the first, as Hyginus was the eighth *after* the Apostle. He repeats this on another occasion ('Hær.' iii. 4, 3). Dr. Lightfoot here conjectures that the reading may be wrong; but admits that 'all the authorities are agreed' as to the correctness of the reading. His only reason for supposing that the reading may be wrong seems to be that it does not fit in with his theory that St. Peter ought not to be counted as a Bishop. The reading appears in St. Cyprian, Eusebius, and St. Epiphanius. But St. Irenæus also says in another passage ('Hær.' iii. 4, 3) that the Apostles Peter and Paul entrusted the ministry of the episcopate to Linus, and that Clement came 'third.' This seeming contradiction is explained by the consideration mentioned above, viz. that Linus might be called first after Peter, or second, according as the writer meant to speak of those who were only Bishops as one body by themselves, by reason of the apostolate of St. Peter, or of the bishops as actually commencing with him who was Apostle and Bishop all in one. The episcopate of Linus, although inheriting the peculiar powers of St. Peter's episcopate, i.e. of his universal pontificate (though not of his apostolate considered in its fullest sense), would naturally be due to the joint action of the two Apostles.

Thus the see was founded by the two Apostles; the first person who was bishop without being one of the Twelve was appointed by their common action. This bishop inherited those features of St. Peter's apostolate which were special to him, and accordingly he might be spoken of either as the second Bishop of Rome, or the first after Peter, or the first after the martyrdom of the two Apostles, or, in fine, the first after Peter and Paul, Apostles and Bishops: the former because of the relationship of St. Peter to Rome as the originator of its universal pontificate, the latter because of the connection of St. Paul with Rome as fellow-labourer with the Prince of the Apostles, and its joint patron in the courts of Heaven. No one of these terms excludes the other. St. Irenæus does not contradict Tertullian, nor Tertullian St. Irenæus. A see

founded by two Apostles is not necessarily the see of both or either. The expression settles nothing. St. Gregory founded the See of London, but was not its bishop. If it seemed good to one Apostle to take the See of Rome under his special care, and form to it a special relationship, there would be nothing in the fact of the foundation of the community having been due to co-operation to prevent his so doing. It cannot be said that St. James founded the See of Jerusalem, and yet he was its first bishop. And, conversely, although St. Paul, coming on to the scene after St. Peter, assisted in the foundation of the organisation of the Christian community at Rome, it was not necessary that he should also be its bishop in the same sense as St. Peter.

Why, then, should Tertullian speak of Clement as ordained by St. Peter if Linus was the first bishop? The two facts I have shown are not mutually exclusive. There is nothing unreasonable in the first part of the explanation given by Rufinus in his preface to his translation of the Clementine Recognitions, viz. 'Linus and Cletus were indeed bishops in the city of Rome before Clement, but during the lifetime of Peter, that is to say, so that they bore the care of the episcopate, whilst he fulfilled the office of the apostolate.'¹ We must, however, add that they also reigned after St. Peter, and when it came to the successor of the Apostle, now in glory, one must come before the other, and whether from humility, as St. Epiphanius thought, or from whatever other cause, St. Clement came third. But it is more likely that it was settled by the two Apostles that Linus should be the first successor of Peter before their death, and hence the account in St. Irenæus. They did not, they could not, hand on precisely their own position, for they were Apostles; but 'they committed the ministry of the episcopate to Linus' ('Har.' iii. 3, 3). St. Clement, however, especially from his great Epistle, filled a place in men's eyes which the others did not, and so for Tertullian's purpose it would be enough to say that he was ordained by St. Peter, not thereby excluding the other two. Tertullian wished to insist on the succession of doctrine, and mentions the connection between the well-known Clement and

¹ *H. E.* iii. p. 4.

St. Peter as sufficient. He received the bishopric from St. Peter, whether as first or third was not material to the point.

VIII. But this is not all. The question now occurs, When did the Clementine literature appear in Rome? Was it before Tertullian wrote? The Tübingen school did its best to force the composition of these writings as far back in the second century as the middle. The Bishop of Lincoln (Pref. to 'Prim. SS.' p. xxi.) fathers Mr. Puller's theory, which is apparently the same as that of Dr. Lightfoot, and nearly that of Dr. Salmon. The latter writer renders his own theory more difficult to maintain, by making this literature 'not older than the *very end* of the second century,'¹ in at any rate the form in which it appeared at Rome. In this case it would have been contemporaneous with Tertullian's account, and one does not see how Tertullian could possibly have gone counter to the supposed older tradition at once. Mr. Puller speaks of its appearance at Rome as 'an event which probably intervened between the time of St. Irenæus' treatise and the time of St. Cyprian,'² which is too vague for his thesis. Accordingly he settles its date further on, purely, however, on the grounds of his own assumption as to the effect of that literature. He says, 'There is much reason for supposing' (but, like Dr. Lightfoot, he does not give the reasons for this, which is the pivot of the whole argument) 'that the notion that St. Peter himself consecrated Clement to the Roman See is wholly due to the Clementine Romance, and *therefore* that romance *must* have established its influence in Rome some time during the last twenty years of the second century, between the year 180, which is the approximate date of the treatise of St. Irenæus, and the year 200, which is the approximate date of the treatise of Tertullian.'³

Mr. Puller realises the importance of establishing a date for the Clementine literature anterior to Tertullian's account of Peter having ordained Clement. And it is not too much to say that the argument of his book altogether halts if this

¹ *Introd. to N.T.* fourth edition, p. 14. The italics are my own.

² *Prim. SS.* p. 44.

³ *Ibid.* p. 48. The italics are my own.

cannot be established. The 'very end' of the century, which Dr. Salmon gives as its date, will not really serve the purpose; for who could believe that a new novel, making St. James the head of the whole Church, could in a year or two, or in five years, induce the Roman Christians to tell such a lie on behalf of their 'corporate pride' as to ignore their older lists and (supposed) older tradition on the authority of a book written in the interests of Ebionitism?

There is, however, an interesting piece of evidence which goes far to prove that neither the Tübingen Rationalists nor the anti-Papal writers are correct in assigning this Clementine literature to any part of the second century. In the 9th book of the 'Recognitions' of Clement, as preserved in Rufinus' translation, there are nearly ten chapters which are almost identical (in many places absolutely so) with a treatise of which Eusebius gives a copious extract, written by a Syriac theologian named Bardesanes, born at Edessa, and famous for his philosophico-theological speculations. The Syriac original of the treatise, of which Eusebius gives the extracts in Greek, was discovered by the late Canon Cureton in 1843 and published in 1855. Cureton thought that Bardesanes' himself wrote the treatise, but it was possibly written by a disciple of his, who incorporated the arguments of a treatise of his master. So that in that case what follows would apply to the substance of the Bardesanes dialogue, not to its form. But I will speak of it as Bardesanes'.²

The first question that arises is, which borrowed from the other—Bardesanes from the Greek 'Recognitions,' or the 'Recognitions' from Bardesanes? Dr. Hort points out what

¹ His proper name is Bardaisan. See a valuable article on this Eastern writer in Smith and Wace's *Dict. of Chr. Biogr.* by Dr. Hort.

² I.e. by way of giving to the maintainers of the earlier date the benefit of the doubt. I have no doubt myself that the writing is that of a disciple. I have not discussed the only supposition that would militate against the following contention as to the date—the supposition, namely, that an earlier form of the Clementine Romance reached Rome, and that the chapters from the treatise of Bardesanes were added in a subsequent edition. Probably no critic would maintain that. And it must be remembered that the crucial passage about Clement occurs in the Epistle to James, which is obviously the covering letter, so to speak, to the *Recognitions*, and no part of an earlier original. Rufinus, who had the original in his hands, expressly says that it was of later date.

most people will consider one adequate reason for believing that the 'Recognitions' borrowed from Bardesanes.¹ The Syriac original of Bardesanes 'contains various names and particulars pointing towards a Mesopotamian origin, which are obliterated partially in the Greek dialogue and still more in the "Recognitions."' If, therefore, we considered the 'Recognitions' to be the original, we should have to suppose that Bardesanes took the matter from them and inserted these names and other particulars into his Syriac narrative as he went along. On the other hand, if the treatise or dialogue of Bardesanes (or his disciple) is the original, from which the writer of the 'Recognitions' borrowed these chapters, he did what was only natural, viz. dropped the allusions to Mesopotamia in giving the narrative its Greek dress, a process usual with a compiler such as the author of the 'Recognitions' appears to have been, and even with a mere translator who might wish to recommend the story to Western minds. Probably few scholars will hesitate which theory to adopt. So that the 9th book of the 'Recognitions' may be said with good reason to have been taken from the famous treatise of Bardesanes.²

It only remains to determine the date of the original treatise or dialogue of Bardesanes. Now, there is a lengthy note of great value on this subject appended to an article by M. Priaulx³ on 'Indian Embassies to Rome, from the Reign of Claudius to the Death of Justinian,' contributed to the 'Journal of the British Asiatic Society,' in 1862, p. 289. The article is not written with reference to our present subject, but purely from an antiquarian point of view. M. Priaulx is showing reason why the date assigned to Bardesanes' writings by the early Christian writers is erroneous. His name is connected by these writers with Antoninus Pius, Antoninus Verus, and Marcus Antoninus, to whom Eusebius says Bardesanes presented a copy of his book, adding that he wrote it in consequence of the persecutions of the Christians by Marcus (A.D. 167–177), and about the time that Soter, Bishop of

¹ *Loc. cit.*

² The consensus of scholars is in favour of the Eastern origin of the Clementine Romance as against Baur.

³ Referred to by Dr. Hort, *loc. cit.* I have given a fuller account of this.

Rome, died (A.D. 179). Now, Bardesanes was born A.D. 154.¹ He was, therefore, only seven years old when Antoninus Pius died, and twenty-five when Soter died. But when he wrote the dialogue in question, or its substance (if it was that of his disciple Philip in its present form), he was able to allude to a former work of his, which makes it probable that he was in middle age. But there is a note of time, which forces us to place the earliest limit of the treatise considerably later. It says that '*as yesterday* the Romans took Arabia and abrogated all their ancient laws, and more especially that circumcision with which they were circumcised.' This could only refer to the conquest by Trajan (167), or by Severus (196), (cf. Eutropius, iii. 18), when Arabia was reduced to a province. In the one case Bardesanes would be only thirteen; consequently we must suppose that he wrote, not then, but soon after the death of Severus (A.D. 211). If we suppose this treatise to have been written in 214, it would have been written eighteen years after the conquest, and at the age of sixty. Now, at that time the Emessine Elagabalus was on the throne, who specially affected the name of Antoninus. Nothing would be more natural than for Bardesanes to present his book to the emperor, and to address him as Antoninus, the name by which he was known in Syria. Further, it would be most probable that the Christians would know of the honour of the book being thus presented, whilst it would also be most natural that amongst subsequent writers a confusion should arise as to the name Antoninus, as its application to Elagabalus was not known at that time, so far as we can tell, in Greece or Rome. Hence the mistaken transference of date to the time of the Antonines in the second century by Eusebius and others.

By this ingenious conjecture, based on sound principles, new light seems to be thrown on the date of the '*Recognitions*,' and Dr. Hort is probably quite correct in his estimate of that date. They could not have appeared at Rome until well into the third century. Consequently the theory of the writers with whom I have been dealing, as to Tertullian having adopted the incidental notice in the Clementine Romance

¹ *Edessene Chronicle*, A.D. 154.

about St. Clement having been appointed to the Chair of Peter, must be dismissed, and some other more solid ground for that writer's assertion must be adopted. No other needs to be sought than the list of the Bishops of Rome, which Hegesippus found in existence, whether orally or otherwise, in the middle of the second century, which, according to Eusebius, made Linus, Anencletus, and Clement all successors of St. Peter. There would be no difficulty in supposing that St. Peter ordained Clement, whether we accepted St. Epiphanius' explanation or not.

IX. There is also no difficulty in supposing that the Clementine literature, on being introduced into the West, would contain what I may now assume to be the common tradition of the West as to St. Clement having been ordained by St. Peter, although thinking him to be the first successor, as an Eastern story well might; whereas the idea that, in order to depreciate St. Paul, the Ebionitish writer made Rome the See of Peter only, and so determined the whole future of the Church, first misleading the keen apologist Tertullian into assuming as the common teaching of the Church an heretical trick of less than twenty years' standing, is in the highest degree improbable from the view of merely natural criticism; but when we look at it from the supernatural view of the Church, as the Body of Christ and the home of the Spirit of Truth, and remember that, according to the admission of all, the Church of Rome, the leading Church from any point of view, the Church which, according to Dr. Lightfoot, owed her great position to her moral ascendancy, as well as to her secular position: when, I say, we remember that she, the centre of the Christian world, adopted that view of her relationship to St. Peter which is implied in the supposition of this ordination, viz. that she is '*the chair of Peter*,' then the theory that '*the corporate pride*' of the Roman Christians led them to a guilty participation in a mere falsehood becomes quite untenable.

Novels are often based on facts, or at any rate contain a certain number of historical facts; and it is unreasonable to assume that every statement in the Clementine Romance is untrue because it is a work of fiction. Anyhow, Tertullian

in A.D. 199 or 200, could not have derived his ideas from a romance which does not seem to have reached Rome before the time of Elagabalus, *i.e.* well into the third century.

It results, then, from what has gone before, that (i.) St. Irenæus taught that, whilst the See of Rome was founded by the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, it was also in a special sense the See of Peter; that (ii.) so far as we can glean anything positive from Eusebius about the list of the Bishops of Rome, drawn up by Hegesippus in the middle of the second century, it also included a special relationship of St. Peter to that see; that (iii.) Tertullian, after or during his visit to Rome, wrote as an ascertained fact that St. Clement was ordained by St. Peter, although he does not say that he was his immediate successor; that (iv.) the Clementine literature reached Rome after Tertullian had left; and that (v.) in its Western dress it wove into its tale the common tradition of the West to which Tertullian had made allusion.

NOTE.—Since writing the above I have seen a very able essay on the Clementine literature in the 'Studia Biblica' (vol. ii.), edited by Professors Driver, Cheyne, and Sanday. The writer, Dr. Bigg, considers that Uhlhorn has conclusively proved the Eastern origin of this literature, and that 'there can be no reasonable doubt' that the work called the 'Homilies' 'was well known to the author of the "Recognitions"' (p. 188). He shows, as others before him, that there must have been an earlier form on which both the 'Homilies' and the 'Recognitions' drew, and says that this 'must not be fixed too early.' He suggests about A.D. 200. But his only reason for this seems to be his assumption that 'the Clement legend,' in which he seems to include the ordination by Peter, was contained in the older form. Dr. Salmon, rightly, denies this ('Dict. of Chr. Biog.' art. *Clem. Lit.* p. 511). Dr. Bigg admits that the argument against heathenism is of a late type. As yet, however, not a shadow of proof has been produced that the earlier original of the 'Homilies' and 'Recognitions' appeared at Rome. Much less can it be supposed, in the face of Rufinus' statement to the contrary, that the letter of St. Clement, which mentions his ordination by St. Peter, belonged to the earlier original. The 'Recognitions' is, obviously, the form in which the literature first appeared at Rome, and the said letter of Clement was, as Dr. Salmon says, 'the preface to the "Recognitions"' ('Dict. of Chr. Biog.' art. *Clem. Lit.*).

Dr. Bigg gives a very plausible account of the reason of the circulation of this literature at Rome. He thinks that Alexander of Apamæa brought with him to Rome, 'as a new Gospel, the volume which had been dedicated to Elxai among the Seres of Parthia by an angel ninety-six miles high. The particular article of this revelation, on which he relied for success, was a baptism which washed away all, even the most hideous sins, without any discipline or penance at all' ('Hom.' xi. 26-7). Alexander arrived in the city of Rome during the reign of St. Callixtus (A.D. 219-222), in the midst of the storm about remission of sins after baptism, and 'such an improvement on the terms of Callixtus might be expected to win over many of the looser Christians.'¹

Whatever may be thought of this ingenious conjecture, it suggests that there are other reasons for the popularity of this literature more probable than that given by Dr. Lightfoot and others.

But even if all these critical difficulties could be solved, one irrefragable proof of the untenableness of the view against which I have been contending would still remain. According to that view, the Romans wished that their see should be the See of Peter rather than the See of the two Apostles. It seemed to them more honourable; it 'flattered their corporate pride,' says Dr. Lightfoot. But why, unless St. Peter was superior to St. Paul? The mere fact that St. Peter was first in order, but not in jurisdiction (*primus inter pares*), could never be a sufficient reason for dropping the name of St. Paul. The Romans were not Ebionites that they should despise St. Paul. They must, on Dr. Lightfoot's theory, have considered Peter, on independent grounds, head and shoulders above his brother Apostle, if, in less than twenty years, they could reverse their (supposed) former history, and claim for their see the name of Peter only. St. Paul tells us that 'he laboured more abundantly than they all;' how could St. Peter tower above St. Paul, except on the supposition that our Lord had appointed him to be the supreme ruler of the Church? Our adversaries in this matter have to suppose the very point which they are concerned to deny, *viz.* the supremacy of Peter, in order to find a motive for the supposed adoption by the Romans of this Clementine literature as the guiding star of their local history.

¹ *Studia Biblica*, vol. ii. p. 189.

CHAPTER III.

ST. IRENÆUS, OR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE
CHURCH OF ROME.

THE Epistle of St. Clement is alluded to in a remarkable passage in the work of St. Irenæus against heresies. He has just given the Church's rule of faith, which is, agreement with the Church of Rome, by reason of her 'more powerful sovereignty' as compared with other Churches. He then proceeds to speak of one special instance of her exercise of sovereignty, viz. 'the letter of the Church in Rome to the Corinthians on behalf of (εἰς) peace,' which letter he describes as most adequate or powerful (*ἰκανωτάτην*). He describes it—according to one reading, the Church of Rome, according to another, her letter¹—as 'forcing them together (*συνβιβάζουσα αὐτοὺς*) and renewing their faith,' delivering 'the tradition which it had recently received from the Apostles,' i.e. St. Peter and St. Paul.

I. In the passage of which this is the sequel, St. Irenæus, I have said, gives the Catholic rule of faith. Nothing can be more clear and simple. It is, ultimately, agreement with Rome. The deposit of the faith was delivered by our Lord to the Apostolic College; and if we wish to know what that faith is, we have only to consult an Apostolic Church. But the easiest way of all is to consult the Church of Rome, because all must agree with, or (which comes to the same thing) have recourse to, that Church. She was founded by two Apostles, the most glorious of all, so the saint avers, and her Church is the most renowned and the greatest of all. She has a more powerful sovereignty than the rest, and by reason of this, all other

¹ Hær. lib. iii. 3, 2.

Churches must have recourse to, or agree with her, so that in her, by union with her, the faithful everywhere have preserved the deposit of revealed truth.

Such is the plain teaching of our saint, who united in himself such special qualifications for expressing the Church's rule of faith. St. Irenæus combines the experience of East and West, and unites the second century with apostolic times. He was an Eastern and had been trained by St. Polycarp, who himself had sat at the feet of St. John. And he was a Western bishop.

In the treatise from which the summary of his teaching, just given, is taken, he is engaged in pointing out the way in which the Christian faith may be known. Dr. Lightfoot observes that, in this second century, 'the episcopate is regarded now not so much as the centre of ecclesiastical unity, but rather as the depository of apostolic tradition.' The two things, however, go hand in hand. St. Irenæus himself mentions them together in specifying the effects of St. Clement's letter as 'compelling them to unity and renewing their faith.'¹ It was as the guardian of the faith that the Church of Rome presided over the Universal Church. St. Ignatius speaks of her as 'presiding in the place of the region of the Romans' (an expression which indicates not the extent, but the centre of her presiding authority), and says that she presides 'over the [covenant of] love.' Dr. Lightfoot translates this 'in love' instead of 'over the love,' and understands the love, not as the supernatural gift of the Holy Ghost, but as 'practical goodness,' in a word, philanthropy, instancing her great generosity in alms. But Dr. Döllinger appears to be right in regarding 'the love' as the equivalent of 'the Church.'² And it was as the guardian of the faith that the Church of Rome presided over the covenant of divine love. This involved her

¹ Hær. lib. iii. 3.

² 'Gleich darauf nennt er sie προκαθημένη τῆς ἀγάπης, was nicht wie die alte lateinische Uebersetzung hat, præsicens in caritate heisst, sonst hätte Ignatius ἐν ἀγάπῃ gesagt; ἀγάπῃ bedeutet wie ἐκκλησία bald . . . auch die grosse auf Liebe gegründete und durch Liebe zusammengehaltene Gemeinschaft aller Gläubigen,' &c. Cf. for the use of the genitive with προκαθημένη Theodoret's letter to St. Leo; he uses προκαθημένη τῆς οἰκουμένης (presiding over the world) of the Holy See.

being the centre of unity; for it is of the essence of the guardianship of the faith that those only should be admitted into the one teaching body, or remain in it, who hold the one faith, and this involves a central authority and source of decision.

Now this is what also results from the famous passage of St. Irenæus quoted above. The Church of Rome has a sovereignty, and it is connected with the preservation of the faith.

II. But, as Dr. Döllinger says, 'For three hundred years there have not been wanting writers who have endeavoured to wrest these words from their evident meaning.'¹

I shall here only deal with such as have been adopted by writers in this country. But first, I will give the translation ordinarily adopted by Catholic writers, amongst whom I am glad to be able to number Tillemont and Bossuet.

'It is necessary that every Church, that is, the faithful who are everywhere, should agree with this Church; in which that tradition which is from the Apostles has been preserved by those who are everywhere.'

To this rendering exception has been taken in the following particulars:—

(a) It is said that St. Irenæus does not say that every Church must *agree with* the Church of Rome, but *must resort* to it, and that by every Church is meant the individuals amongst the faithful who find their way to the city of Rome.²

Now, it may be admitted that the words *convenire ad* may mean physical recourse, but it must be remembered that it is to the Church, not to the city of Rome that this centripetal movement is said to be 'of necessity.' And it is every Church which must resort to the Church of Rome. The following words—'those who are from all sides'—explain, but must not be allowed to explain away, the word Church. It is as organised communities, not as individual men of business, that every Church must resort to the Church of Rome. The necessity also can hardly be that which arises from the fact that Rome was the centre of secular life. Men who came to

¹ *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*. Landshut, 1833, B. 1, p. 355.

² *Prim. SS.* p. 36. Gore's *R. C. Claims*, p. 97.

hawk their wares, or consult the market, or plead their civil causes, are hardly the persons likely to promote the integrity of the faith. Whilst such men as Hegesippus found their way to Rome, men like Alexander of Apamæa did the same. And, as a rule, it is either the wealthy, or the secular-minded, or the ne'er-do-wells of a community who bend their steps to the metropolis, and this would not contribute to the preservation of the faith. The mere fact of a confluence of streams will not keep the waters sweet; there must be some preservative power in the centre.

Nor is there any need to see in the word 'necessary' anything more than a deep-seated attraction which drew men to the Church of Rome on another ground. The word used by St. Irenæus is the regular word in ecclesiastical Latin, as is the corresponding word in Greek, for such necessity. St. Cyril uses it as expressing the obligation under which he lay of writing to the Pope about Nestorius.¹

It is, therefore, more natural to translate *convenire ad* as 'agree with,'² and to understand *necesse est* of that necessity which arose from the commanding position of the Church of Rome and the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost. But even if we translate *convenire ad* 'resort to,' it must be borne in mind that a *necessary* resort of all Churches to the Church of Rome implies supremacy in the latter.

(b) To what was the commanding position of the Church of Rome due according to St. Irenæus? Our answer is, to its superior sovereignty, as not only an apostolic but, as in after times it was called, the Apostolic Church; to its having, as St. Irenæus puts it, been founded by the two most glorious Apostles, to which we must add the fact that one of those two most glorious Apostles was he to whom our Lord had said, 'Thou art Peter,' which signifies a special association with the Rock of Ages.

¹ Cf. *infra*, p. 308. And also see the letter of the Council of Ephesus to St. Celestine: ἔχρην πάντα εἰς γνώσιν τῆς σῆς δσιότητος ἀνεχθῆναι τὰ παρακολουθήσαντα γράφομεν ἀναγκάως (Labbe, t. iii. p. 1196).

² This is Canon Bright's translation in *The Roman Claims tested by Antiquity*, p. 8.

Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble understood by the word 'sovereignty,' merely *primitiveness* or *origin*. They saw that the words must apply to the Church, and not to the city. Dr. Döllinger completely shattered to atoms this same translation, as given by Gieseler. 'Die Häretiker würden natürlich einen Beweis für diese absolute Nothwendigkeit einer Uebereinstimmung, die blos auf den Vorzug des Alters beruhen soll, gefordert, sie würden erwiedert haben, dass jüngere Gemeinden allerdings von dem Glauben der altern abweichen könnten.'

He scouts the idea that such an 'illogical conclusion ever entered the mind of St. Irenæus;' and he shows that the word 'principalitas' means in Irenæus' writings 'supreme authority,' and points out that Rome was not the oldest Church.¹ Indeed, it may be added that St. Irenæus expressly calls Jerusalem the mother Church in point of antiquity ('Hær.' iii. 12, 5).

(c) But whilst understanding the 'principality' as meaning sovereignty, others, as Mr. Puller, understand it of the imperial position of the city. But this is absolutely excluded by the context. It is the apostolic origin of any Church that gives it, according to St. Irenæus, its commanding position; it is the specially apostolic character of the Church of Rome that gives it its peculiar position amongst the apostolic Churches. Bossuet calls such an interpretation as that given by Mr. Puller 'trifling' with the matter; Hefele calls it 'ridiculous' (*lächerlich*); Perrone, 'most absurd.' For, as Bossuet says, St. Irenæus was speaking, in the previous sentence, of the Church of Rome as founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul, not in her imperial aspect. And the words 'more powerful' imply comparison with the Churches ('every Church') which he has mentioned in the same breath, and with which he contrasts the Church of Rome as 'the most ancient and the most universally known.'

(d) Some writers, as Mr. Gore and Mr. Puller, have laid great stress on the word translated 'everywhere.' It is literally 'from all sides.' And they seem to imagine that this suggests the picture of an assemblage of the faithful from all

¹ *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, p. 357.

quarters in the city of Rome. But it may equally represent the view of a writer regarding the faithful as living in all quarters of the globe, and connected with the centre not by physical movement, but by the tie of a common faith. It is, however, certain that the word is used by the Latin interpreter, and that the corresponding word in Greek was also used by St. Irenæus (for in this case we have the original in the Bodleian MS.), for 'everywhere' simply. St. Irenæus speaks of the four Gospels as 'breathing, or blowing, incorruptibility *everywhere* and revivifying men.' The word for 'everywhere' used here is the same as in the passage we have been considering;¹ and it is obvious that it means a radiation from a centre, not *vice versa*.

Further, St. Irenæus does not say that the apostolic tradition was preserved *through* these merchants, and lawyers, and appellants, and heretics, and faithful, that gathered haphazard to the city of Rome, but *by* them—which reduces the supposition that he meant these business travellers at all to an absurdity.

Once more, the interpretation given by Canon Bright (*loc. cit.*), viz. that the *principalitas* was 'a sort of "primacy," involving a moral guarantee of its soundness of belief, which led St. Irenæus to say that every Church that was itself true to apostolic tradition "must needs agree with it"'—implies the very doctrine which he is endeavouring to exclude. For it must be asked: If all orthodox Churches are *necessarily* found to be in agreement with the Church of Rome, what is this but ascribing infallibility to that Church? This, indeed, is what St. Irenæus does ascribe to Rome, an ascendancy in matters of faith which makes her teaching the test and norm of the Catholic faith. And so he goes on to show that as a matter of fact other Churches, such as Smyrna and Ephesus, do agree with Rome.²

(e) Lastly, it has been objected that the words 'in which' (*in quâ*) may refer to 'every Church,' and not to the Church

¹ *Hær.* lib. iii. cap. 11, n. 8. Gk. *πανταχόθεν*. Lat. *undique*. Cf. also *prædicationem vero Ecclesiæ undique constantem* (24, 1), and *prædicatio veritatis ubique lucet*.

² Mr. Puller has misunderstood this passage.

of Rome. But this, again, necessitates the absurdity of supposing that every orthodox Church is necessarily in agreement with Rome, and yet that Rome is not infallible, or the equal absurdity of supposing that the chance business men who found their way to Rome for secular purposes kept Rome right in the faith—or the people, for instance, who brought with them the Clementine Romance. The words *in quâ* are well explained by Dr. Döllinger, as stating that the faithful throughout the world were 'in' the Church of Rome—that is, in communion with it as the centre of unity. The corresponding word in Greek would be that which is used by St. Paul of our being 'in Christ,' and the exact phrase of the Latin interpreter, whose translation is all that we have of this passage in St. Irenæus, is used by the African bishop, St. Optatus, whose work St. Augustine recommended, viz. '*in which* one chair [*i.e.* the chair of Peter] unity might be preserved,' *i.e.* that in communion with this one chair, &c.¹

The plain and simple meaning, therefore, of St. Irenæus remains in possession. All Churches must agree with the Church of Rome, so that if you know the faith of the Church of Rome you know the faith of the whole Christian Church.

¹ 'D. h. in ihrem Schoosse, in der Gemeinschaft mit ihr als dem Mittelpunkt der Einheit' (*loc. cit.* p. 358).

CHAPTER IV.

ST. VICTOR, OR ROME THE GUARDIAN OF 'THE COMMON UNITY.'

ONE of the legal methods of preserving the evidence of a claim is to subject it, periodically, to a challenge *pro formâ*. And one method of discovering how far a claim holds good, such as that which Rome makes, is to see what happens under circumstances that press heavily on the obedience of those over whom it is made, leading them in the natural course of things to dispute it. Resistance does not disprove authority; while a resistance which falls short of disputing the authority itself indicates a sense of its lawful existence. Such an occasion occurred in the second century of the Christian era. A portion of the East came into collision with Rome on a matter on which *Rome proved to be right*, although the Pope thought it well not to press the matter beyond a certain point. The circumstances were as follows.

I. In the Asiatic Churches a multitude of Jews had entered the Christian fold, and had kept to various Jewish customs, under the eye and apparently with the sanction of the Apostle St. John. Amongst these customs was that of celebrating the Paschal Feast on the same day as their unconverted brethren. In the West it was observed on the Sunday after the 14th Nisan—always on a Sunday. Amongst those who now observed the feast on the same day as the Jews were some whose belief as to the idea of the feast was the same as that of the rest of the Christian world. But there were also some whose teaching as to the idea of the festival itself was erroneous, and whose observance of it differed altogether from that of the Church.¹ In fact, the observance

¹ 'Many of the orthodox Quartodecimans thought that the main feature of the Paschal Feast lay in the commemoration of the death of Christ, of whom

of this Queen of Festivals, on which St. John the Apostle appears to have allowed some external difference, had come to be connected with Ebionitish teaching. It would therefore only be a matter of time for an endeavour to be made to bring the whole Christian world into unison on such an important matter, for though it was not a matter of faith, it was closely connected with the faith.

Rome had her observance handed down from the Apostles Peter and Paul; and her observance was destined to be the rule of action for the entire Church. In the beginning of the century she had made an endeavour to achieve a greater uniformity, but had ended with acquiescing in the continuance of the dissimilarity of practice. Anicetus received Polycarp to communion at Rome, although Polycarp adopted the Asiatic mode of observing the Feast. Soter went a step further and insisted on uniformity, at least in Rome itself.

II. But when Victor ascended the throne matters had become much more serious, and the Asiatic observance of Easter was adopted by certain schismatics, who were also infected with Montanism.¹ It became a matter of moment to stop the dissimilarity of observance in the Church itself, or to dissociate it from false teaching. St. Victor decided upon the first, but succeeded only in effecting the second.

Mosheim, the German Protestant historian, has said that the action of Victor in this matter, and the reception with which it met, prove that in that age the power of the Roman Pontiff was not such as that he could cut off from the whole Church those of whose opinions and practices he disapproved. He has been followed in this by the author of 'The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome,'² who contends that the account of the matter in Eusebius shows that the loss of communion with Rome did not involve loss of communion with the rest of the Church. There is a sense in which this is true, but it is not the sense in which this writer uses the expression. There was, in early times, a measure of separation from Rome which was not *intended* to involve separation from the whole body.

the Paschal Lamb was the type.' Cf. Jungmann, *Diss.* ii. 65, who gives a short account of worse heresies into which some of the Quartodecimans were falling.

¹ Cf. Jungmann, *Diss.* ii. 79.

² Pp. 24-31.

This lesser separation was a serious loss, but was meant to fall short, by a great deal, of the excommunication under anathema.¹ For the latter a distinct and formal notification of its terrible infliction was necessary. Moreover, this latter and more extreme measure might be preceded by the former. With these remarks I will proceed to narrate what actually happened, and to show that matters never came to the point which would necessitate our speaking of these Asiatics as being under anathema, and so in actual schism.

St. Victor first collected the evidence of the whole Christian world,² except Asia, and then requested Polycrates, the Bishop of Ephesus, to summon the Asiatic bishops in council, in the hope of inducing them to relinquish their purely local practice. Polycrates obeyed. The Asiatic Churches, however, came to the conclusion that they would adhere to their own custom. Polycrates, their leader, went so far in the way of exaggeration as to speak of their own practice as though it alone were 'in accordance with the Gospel,' and they pleaded the authority of St. John the Evangelist and St. Philip. They may have meant only that their custom had been permitted by the Apostle. Anyhow, if they dreamt of an Apostolic *prescription*, we are not obliged to think that they were historically correct in their assertion.

The result of their answer to St. Victor was that he decided upon strong measures. The warmth with which they defended their custom must have seemed to him suspicious, as though they were erecting it into a matter of belief, or were really in danger of doctrinal error. For it must be carefully remembered, that the question of the Paschal observance involved not merely that of a day, but in many cases (known only too unhappily to the Pope) of the meaning of the feast.

St. Victor, therefore, decided, or at least threatened, to excommunicate the Asiatic Churches 'from the common unity,'³ as Eusebius expresses it. He set to work to do it; *he made the endeavour*; he took the first step.⁴ He issued his notice of

¹ Cf. Döllinger's *Geschichte*, Periode II. *ad finem*; and quotations from De Smedt in Jungmann, *Diss.* ii. 75.

² Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 23.

³ τῆς κοινῆς ἐνότητος.

⁴ πειρᾶται. Euseb. *in loco*. The word involves no more than the endeavour which the head-master of a school might make to enforce a salutary rule, but

excommunication, of downright excommunication, to the effect that they were cut off from the common unity (*ἀκοινωνήτους*). Unfortunately we do not possess St. Victor's letter; consequently it is impossible to say whether or no the excommunication was contingent on their obedience at the next Easter.¹ But it is most reasonable, and most in harmony with what we know of such excommunications in after times, as, for instance, St. Celestine's excommunication of Nestorius—to suppose that these Asiatics were to be excommunicate if they adhered to their custom at the following Easter. But as soon as they received the Papal injunction, or, at any rate, before the time came for compliance with it, *i.e.* before the following Easter, some bishops protested.² Their protest, however, consisted only of exhortation or entreaty: 'they exhorted,' says Eusebius. This they did in no measured terms, but went beyond the limits of the respect due to the office of St. Victor.³ Their complaints were probably a more bitter edition of Polycrates' previous letter, in which that bishop pleads his own virgin life as a reason why he should be heard, and says he cares for no threats—not a very edifying form of correspondence.

III. Peace, however, came from the mediation of the same saint, who wrote that 'it is necessary for every Church to agree with the Church of Rome, because of her more powerful principality or supremacy.' St. Irenæus (the author of the words) wrote from Gaul a letter couched in more deferential terms.⁴ He

from which he might desist owing to the fear of rebellion. Mr. Puller greatly exaggerates its force (*Prim. S. S.* p. 30).

¹ So Döllinger, *Geschichte*, p. 289.

² 'The sentence did not please all the bishops' are the words of Eusebius, which implies that there were some, probably many, who thought St. Victor in the right.

³ *πληκτικώτερον*. Mr. Puller has translated this 'very severely.' But *πληκτικός* implies bitterness—'objurgatione acri' is Dindorf's translation of the positive. 'Severely' is a word which suggests the tone of a superior rebuking the fault of an inferior, or of a usurper. 'Bitterly' (the correct translation) is a word which describes the tone of a dissatisfied inferior protesting against his superior's action. And 'very severely' misses the point of the ending of the word. It is not *πληκτικώτατον*, but is in the comparative degree, implying excess, 'more than the occasion warranted' in the judgment of Eusebius.

⁴ *προσηκόντως*. This seems to be in contrast with the *πληκτικώτερον* or excessive bitterness of the Asiatics. He was amongst the number of those who were displeased with Victor's determination, but differed from them in tone.

agreed with Rome about the observation of Easter, but realised the impossibility of bringing the Asiatics into line under present circumstances. Possibly also he did not realise as keenly as St. Victor did the mischievous tendency, under present circumstances, of the Asiatic¹ custom, which gave it a very different colour from the same custom in the time of his predecessors. He pleaded, as he had a right to do, that it was not in itself a matter of faith, which, of course, St. Victor himself allowed. And he 'warned' St. Victor of the consequences of persisting in his threat, or sentence.² The Asiatic blood was up, and a schism was possible. He referred to the precedents set by Pius the First, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Xystus, as not having 'cast off any merely for the sake of a form,' showing what he thought of the power possessed by the Bishops of Rome. He therefore advised³ St. Victor with all becoming respect (*προσηκόντως*) 'not to cut off whole Churches.' The Churches, therefore, were not, to the mind of St. Irenæus, as yet excommunicated; but it was, according to the same saint, within the power of St. Victor to cut them off. Bossuet exactly hits the point when he paraphrases St. Irenæus' advice as being to the effect 'that a rigorous right is not always to be used.' Not a hint is given all round that any one of the Churches disputed St. Victor's authority. Had any other portion of the Church talked of cutting off whole Churches from the common unity, it would only have made itself ridiculous. But when the threat comes from Rome the whole Church is astir; and there is one thing that no one says—neither St. Irenæus nor the rest of the bishops said, 'It is ridiculous, you have no such authority;' but they exhort, and protest, and warn, and entreat him not to do so.

¹ It must be remembered that Eusebius in speaking of Asia means, not the peninsula, but Asia in the restricted sense customary at that time. Cf. De Smedt, *Diss.* ii. cap. 1, note 1.

² I have put the alternative, because I do not think it possible to determine for certain which it was. Eusebius' account, not containing St. Victor's letters, is not sufficient to enable us to decide. Catholic writers are to be found on both sides. It seems to me that the evidence, on the whole, is in favour of a threat only.

³ *παρανεί* = recommend. We have hardly an exact English equivalent for the word in the original—'admonish' has with us more idea of superiority, and 'advise,' perhaps, a shade more of softness than the original.

St. Victor's endeavour failed; for he found the opposition to this exercise of discipline too serious. It was a bold attempt to effect the more perfect unity of the Church, and to prevent the intrusion of heretical tendencies. He had thought to enforce, under pain of excommunication, a more uniform observance of the Festival of the Resurrection throughout the Church. The endeavour unfortunately failed, owing to the passionate tenacity with which he found the Asiatics wrongly adhered to their national custom. He found he could not persist in downright excommunication, even of the lesser kind, with any hopes of gaining the end in view. It was not a matter of faith, and therefore, whilst he showed his care for the unity of the Church and his jealousy for the faith—not directly assaulted, but indirectly endangered by a line of action which easily lent itself to error—he showed his wisdom in ceasing to contend for his point when he saw the spirit of obstinate partisanship which his endeavour evoked. He desisted from the final step, in accordance with the respectful remonstrance of St. Irenæus. Eventually the Universal Church settled down to the Roman mode of observance. The whole incident discovers the actual centre of Church life in that century. St. Victor sets in motion synodical action throughout the Church, gathers up the results which are sent in to him, lays down the conditions of adherence to the common unity, and his ruling ultimately prevailed throughout the Church, as it does to this day, concerning the observance of the Queen of Festivals.

NOTE.—Mr. Puller contends that St. Victor cut off these Churches of Asia from communion with Rome, and *endeavoured* to go further, *i.e.* endeavoured to cut them off from 'the common unity,' but that in this he failed. From which he argues that no degree of loss of communion with Rome involves loss of communion with the rest of the Church.

It is to be noted that he appears to understand ἀκοινωνήτους, 'separated from communion,' as meaning separated from the local Church of Rome, and not 'from the common unity,' as the context in Eusebius suggests. And indeed he goes so far as to state that 'Eusebius tells us that, while Victor, *speaking for his own Church*, announced,' &c.; whereas Eusebius merely says that Victor an-

nounced, &c. And to clench the matter, in summing up he inverts the order of Eusebius' words, and so draws his conclusion from them. He puts the proclamation of St. Victor (to the effect that those Churches were excommunicated) first, and the endeavour to cut them off from the common unity last.¹ This is not the order in Eusebius. The endeavour was being made, and the first step was to issue the proclamation. So that unless they repented and altered their rule of observance at the following Easter, they incurred the downright excommunication (ἀρδην). The next step was not what Mr. Puller states it to have been. He says, 'The other bishops objected to Victor's proceeding; they refused to withdraw their communion from Polycrates.' This latter sentence is not contained in Eusebius' account. What the bishops did was not to 'refuse,' but to *exhort*, and to reproach with some bitterness. And since their exhortations, enforced by St. Irenæus' letter of more becoming tone, availed with St. Victor, matters never came to the point of *refusal* on the part of the bishops. The breach no sooner opened than it closed. So that the moral to be drawn from this incident in the early life of the Church is something very different from what Mr. Puller describes it. He says (p. 81—the italics are my own), 'The right way of dealing with such claims,' *i.e.* those of the Vatican Council, 'if we may judge by the example of St. Irenæus and other holy bishops² of his time, is to inveigh against the claimant strongly and to upbraid him severely, and to *refuse to give in to his claims*.' On the contrary, if we take the few facts we possess, there would be 'exhortation' to desist, there would *not* be the same upbraiding, for that was too bitter (πληκτικώτερον), there would be 'becoming' (προσηκόντως) admonition as to a too dangerous exercise of rightful authority, but there would not be (if we are to judge by Eusebius' account of the whole matter) any denial of the authority itself. Professor Harnack, the most brilliant German Protestant writer of the day, says that Victor 'ventured by an edict . . . to declare that any Church which did not adopt the Roman method was excluded as heretical from the communion of the one Church. How could Victor have ventured on such an edict . . . if it was not already established and recognised that it belonged to the Roman Church, as its distinctive prerogative, to determine the conditions of

¹ P. 30.

² The bishops who agree with Mr. Puller seem always to be holy. He denies the title of saint to Victor, just as he does to St. Stephen, St. Damasus, St. Gelasius, St. Celestine, St. Zosimus. These holy men were all Popes. In the same way Dupin and Tillemont are Roman Catholic divines, the Ballerini and others are only 'Ultramontane.'

the κοινή ἐνωσις, when essential doctrines of the faith were in question?' ('Dogmengeschichte,' i. p. 368.)

In the course of his description of this incident Mr. Puller also settles a question of translation without sufficient authority. St. Victor 'requested' Polycrates to summon the bishops in his parts, and Polycrates did so. Mr. Puller finds in this an argument against the supremacy of the Holy See. He considers the Greek word to imply equality. But the word used by Polycrates is equally applicable to the request of a superior, as may be seen by consulting Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, 7th edition. It would, indeed, be hypercriticism to the last degree to lay stress upon such an expression at all, for who does not know that superiors will often, out of courtesy, express their desires, as Popes usually do now, instead of issuing a peremptory demand? But in point of fact ἀξίω by itself implies neither superiority nor equality on the part of the person who makes the request. That must be determined by other considerations.

Once more. There is no authority for saying, as Mr. Puller does, that 'everything went on as if nothing had happened.' The obstinacy of these Asiatics had received a check, and it seems not improbable that some further measure of conformity to the Roman mode of observing the Paschal Feast followed upon the stand made by St. Victor; if we may trust the letter of Constantine, respecting the Nicene Council, it would certainly seem as if this incident had had an effect for good.

With regard to the question as to whether St. Victor actually excommunicated the Asiatics contingent upon their obedience by the following Easter, or only threatened to do so, it seems to me that Firmilian's evidence is very strong. He says in reference to the day of celebrating the Paschal Feast, that 'there was not at any time a departure from the peace and unity of the Catholic Church on that account.' ('Ep. Cypr.' lxxv.) Tillemont makes a poor attempt to get out of the plain meaning of this sentence. And Firmilian's position in Asia Minor makes him a specially valuable witness in this matter. It is true that I have given reasons for questioning his evidence in the rest of the sentence, but they do not apply to this point. Firmilian's argument is that St. Stephen, in excommunicating (so he asserted) the Bishop of Carthage on such a question as that of baptism by heretics, was acting contrary to St. Victor and others on the question of Easter.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTRINE OF ST. CYPRIAN ON UNITY.

THE teaching of St. Cyprian, and certain portions of his life, have been claimed as the special justification of the Anglican position in early history. Dr. Pusey, in his preface to the Epistles of this saint, says, 'The Epistles of St. Cyprian are the more deeply interesting to us in that he, who has been called "the ideal of a Christian bishop," has been almost involuntarily chosen as the model of our Church.' He considers that St. Cyprian 'maintained in act the abstract independence of Churches, which he had in theory maintained.'¹ Mr. Puller, in his book on 'The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome,' maintains that 'both his writings and the story of his life remain as a perpetual witness against the Papal and in favour of the episcopal constitution of the Church of God,'² and even goes to the length of saying, in another place,³ 'The defenders of the English Church may safely stake their case, so far as it relates to the Papal claims, on the witness borne by St. Cyprian.' It is necessary, therefore, to enter more fully into the teaching and life of this saint than would be otherwise natural, premising that to stake the defence of one's ecclesiastical position on a single saint is contrary to all Catholic ideas of divine faith in the Church.

I. It will be admitted on all hands that St. Cyprian's eye is perpetually fixed on one saying of our Lord's when he thinks of the government of the Church. 'Thou art Peter; and on this rock I will build my Church . . . and to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven,' are to

¹ *Lib. of the Fathers. St. Cyprian*, pref. p. xvii. [N.B. The references to St. Cyprian's writings are to the Oxford edition; but where the number of an Epistle differs from that in the Benedictine edition, I have referred to the latter thus, B.x.]

² P. 357.

³ P. 363.

St. Cyprian the all-important words in regard to Church authority.¹ At the same time, it is undoubtedly the case that St. Cyprian is full of the necessity of obedience to the *bishop of the diocese*, and that he distinctly speaks of the Church having been 'settled on the bishops.'²

The point, therefore, to be considered is the connection between the episcopate of the Church and the Apostle St. Peter—whether, according to St. Cyprian, it excludes the sovereignty of the Bishop of Rome.

Some of the most brilliant German Protestant writers, such as Neander and Harnack, and, amongst Americans, Schaff, maintain that St. Cyprian's teaching necessarily issued in the Papal form of government. Amongst Anglican writers, some agree with these German historians, whilst others, such as Dr. Pusey and his followers, hold that St. Cyprian maintained the necessity of the episcopate, and, at the same time, its entire independence of the See of Peter. The former hold that if the episcopate be considered as a matter of necessity, by reason of its relationship to Peter, its dependence on the successor of Peter (if there be such) necessarily follows; the latter, that if all bishops are the successors of Peter, there is no room for a special relationship to the Apostle on the part of any one see.

The position maintained in the following pages is that the Papal supremacy is already there. St. Cyprian regards the saying of our Lord to Peter as the root of all authority in the Church. Other Apostles were associated with Peter; but St. Cyprian *separates him off from the rest*, as well by the stress which he lays on the commission given to him (compared with the very rare occasions on which he mentions the rest), as by the definite expression so often repeated in his writings, that the Church was founded by Christ *on Peter*. It is to our Lord's saying to Peter that St. Cyprian perpetually recurs, which he regards also as giving the form of unity to His Church subsequently to the death of that Apostle (Ep. lv. 6, lix. 18). St. Peter was, in the teaching of Cyprian, the beginning of a divine institution, which issued in a stream

¹ Cf. Ep. xxxiii. 1, lxvi. 7, lxxiii. 7, lix. 8, lxx. 5, lxxi. 2, lxxiii. 7. *Tr. on Unity*, § 3.

² Ep. xxxiii. B. xxviii.

of bishops throughout the world. The Apostles founded various communities of Christians, each with their head to succeed themselves; but the authority of all is traced, in the Cyprianic literature, to the words of Christ to Peter, repeated in part, and in part only, to the rest of the Apostles.

Thus the bishops were the successors of the Apostles, but of the Apostles considered as a college, with Peter at their head. On Peter the Church was founded: *it was founded, too, on the Apostles*, but on these only, I must repeat, as forming a body of which Peter was the head; and the Church is for ever founded on the bishops, because the episcopate has succeeded to the rule of *Peter*,¹ having come into being through the missionary initiative of the several Apostles, scattered throughout the globe, who were all of them associated with Peter.

So that when St. Cyprian says that the origin of heresy and schism lies in the misfortune that 'the head is not sought,'² it is not our Lord simply, but our Lord considered as the Creator of an institution, whom he contemplates. In fact when he says 'the head is not sought,' he may be said to mean broadly that the *original institution* is overlooked, the originating words of our Lord, who is our Divine Head, are not borne in mind.³ By these words an authority was placed on earth; for the saint goes on to speak of Peter having received the keys. And this he insists upon by way of showing that the martyrs and confessors in their prisons were disturbing the unity of the Church, in overlooking the bishop of the diocese, who derived an authority from our Lord's

¹ Ep. xxxiii. St. Francis of Sales explains the different ways in which St. Peter and the rest of the Apostles were foundations. 'They were foundations of the Church equally with him [Peter] as to the conversion of souls and as to doctrine; but as to the authority of governing they were so unequally, as St. Peter was the ordinary head, not only of the rest of the whole Church, but of the Apostles also' (*The Catholic Controversy*, by St. Francis of Sales. Burns and Oates, 1886, p. 249).

² *De Unit. Eccl.* § 3.

³ Elsewhere he says that the remedy, 'when truth is in jeopardy, is to recur to the evangelical fountain, and the apostolical tradition, that the rule of our action may come thence whence both our order and origin have taken their rise.' And again, 'If we revert to the head or origin of the divine tradition, human error ceases' (*Ep. ad Pompeium*).

words to Peter which did not belong to *them*, as they suffered, or awaited their crown. And, again, the Novatianists, of course to a much greater extent and in connection, not with great truths, as was the case with the confessors, but with great iniquity, were overlooking the head, who in that case was the legitimate Bishop of Rome, who, as legitimately rooted in the past, was himself, and not Novatian, the head and root of the Church.¹

II. For St. Cyprian wrote his treatise on Unity to meet the necessities of the day, and the form which it took was determined by those present needs. It is, therefore, necessary to enter upon these somewhat at length, if we are to understand why St. Cyprian laid such stress on obedience to bishops.²

(a) The early part of his episcopate was occupied with the danger which had arisen to the discipline of the Church from an unintentional encroachment on the bishop's office on the part of the confessors and martyrs in the Decian persecution. The occasion of this encroachment was as follows. The Church taught that, owing to the solidarity of the Body of Christ, the suffering of one part availed to diminish the punishment of another. During the persecution many Christians had failed to confess the faith, and had incurred the ban of the Church. The question arose as to how and when they should be restored after their lapse. It was the custom to have recourse to the martyrs and confessors in their prisons, and to obtain from them a certificate to the effect that they desired for the applicants a release from the punishment due

¹ 'For this has been the very source whence heresies and schisms have taken their rise, that obedience is not paid to the Priest of God,' i.e. (as generally in St. Cyprian's writings) the bishop (*Ep.* lix. 6, B. lv.).

² 'For schisms and heresies have arisen, and do arise, from the bishop, who is one and presides over the Church, being despised by the proud presumption of some' (*Ep.* lxvi. 4, B. lxix.).

³ It is the consideration of these circumstances that gives the true answer to Mr. Puller's objection in his *Prim. SS. and the See of Rome*, p. 351. He says, 'You may read the whole treatise on unity from beginning to end, and you will not find one single word about Rome, or about the Pope, or about any Papal jurisdiction derived from St. Peter.' The treatise was written (so St. Cyprian tells us himself, *Ep.* liv. B. li.) to meet special needs, and, as will be seen, Papal authority did not come into question.

to their sin of apostasy. This, in the proper course of things, was presented to the bishop, who decided upon the extent to which the combined effect of the martyrs' prayers and the penitence of the lapsed should affect the latter. The applicability of the sufferings of the confessors to those who sought their intercession was admitted on all sides; and the right of the bishop to grant an indulgence, or remission of the temporal punishment due to the sin of apostasy, was unquestioned. But it lay with the bishop to decide in each particular case; for the temporal punishment could only properly be remitted to those who gave signs of contrition for the sin they had committed; and it also rested with the bishop to determine the extent to which the martyrs' certificates should be available to shorten or dispense with the natural term of penance. In a word, the present teaching of the Church on the subject of indulgences¹ was in full vogue; only the confessors had been led to give their certificates without due reference to the bishop.

Now St. Cyprian felt that the whole discipline of the Church was at stake, through the imprudence of these imprisoned confessors, in giving certificates irrespective of the applicants' penitence and without proper authorisation from the bishop. He accordingly wrote to certain persons on the subject, and sent all his letters to Rome for the inspection of the clergy there.

Rome was just then without a bishop. It had been part of the plan of the persecution under Decius to weaken the body by depriving it of its head. 'He . . . persecutes the rulers of the Church that, its pilot being removed, he may . . . make shipwreck of the Church.' Accordingly St. Cyprian had been compelled to flee into retirement, and the Bishop of Rome had been martyred, for there, St. Cyprian says, Decius would rather have seen a rival emperor than a bishop of God. Accordingly the election of a new bishop in the place of Fabian, which St. Cyprian calls 'the place of

¹ An indulgence is a discharge of the debt of temporal punishment due to forgiven sin, obtained by the application of the treasury of the Church, as Tertullian called the merits of the martyrs. Of course the merit of our Lord is the source of all other merits.

Peter,' was rendered impossible for nearly two years. But the local Church of Rome was still at the head of the Christian world. Although her clergy could not act with the authority of the Roman Bishop, they were still the object of special deference and respect. The aroma of infallibility lingered in the vacant see. The Roman clergy had already written to Cyprian in regard to his flight from persecution, in consequence of some unfavourable comments that had been made, probably by those who were preparing the way for a schism. St. Cyprian, in no way resenting this intervention of the Roman clergy, first wrote to know if the letter was really theirs, and then, on finding that it was, defended his conduct. 'I have thought it necessary to write this letter to you, wherein an account might be given you of my acts, discipline, and diligence What I have done my epistles will tell you, which I sent, as occasion required, to the number of thirteen, and which I have transmitted to you.'¹ No one, surely, will suppose that the Roman clergy ever dreamt of sending an account of *their* 'acts, discipline, and diligence' to Carthage.

St. Cyprian then proceeds to detail his proposed method of dealing with those who had lapsed under persecution. In this portion of his letter he shows still more strongly what deference he felt to be due to the chair of Peter in Rome, even when the administration of the Church there was in the hands of the inferior clergy. 'Nor in this' (*i.e.* his attitude towards the lapsed) 'did I lay down a law, or rashly make myself its author. But whereas it seemed right that both honour should be shown to the martyrs, and yet the violence of those who desired to throw everything into confusion be checked—and, moreover, *having read your letter lately sent to my clergy through Crementius, the archdeacon, to the effect that those should be helped who, having lapsed, were seized with sickness, and who, repenting, desired communion—I thought it right to abide by what was your opinion also, lest our conduct in the ministry, which ought to be united and to agree in all things, should in any respect differ.*' He then speaks of referring matters to a council at Carthage after the peace, that

¹ *Ep. xx. B. xiv.*

we 'may with the assistance of your counsel also set in order and restore everything.' He speaks elsewhere (*Ep. xxvii.*) of the letter of the Roman clergy having helped him much; whilst the Roman clergy, careful not to assume the prerogatives of their bishop, say that Cyprian 'wished us to be found not so much judges as pastors in counsels.' At the same time they speak of the inerrancy of the Church of Rome, its faith having been celebrated throughout the world—a fact which (they say) the Apostle would not have mentioned 'unless this vigorousness had derived its root of faith from that time *and thenceforwards.*' But they are the more compelled to wait before giving any definitive judgment as to the lapsed, 'because since the decease of Fabian, of most honoured memory, on account of the difficulties of circumstances and the times, we have no bishop yet appointed who should settle all these matters, and who might, with authority and counsel, take account of those who have lapsed.' He also mentions later on that this epistle of the Roman clergy 'was sent throughout the world, and made known to all the Churches and all the brethren.'¹

The Roman clergy then, whilst waiting for a bishop to be appointed, who could settle matters 'with authority' as well as 'counsel,' meanwhile applauded St. Cyprian's intention of refusing to devolve the work of the bishop in the restoration of the lapsed on the confessors and martyrs. Their certificates were to be allowed their due weight; their sufferings were to be admitted in lieu of the temporal punishment which those who obtained the certificate would have been bound to undergo; but the whole matter was to be submitted in each diocese to the 'head' of the Christian people therein.

¹ *Ep. lv. 3.* It is difficult to understand how any one could twist this incident, naturally suggestive of the authoritative position of Rome, into an instance of dissimilarity between the 'Cyprianic' and the 'modern Roman' theory of the Church's government. It has, however, been said (*Prim. SS. p. 60*) that on the latter theory 'there would probably be some reference to the fact that a pope would soon be elected who would be able to ratify what the archbishop had done.' This is exactly what the Roman clergy did say to Cyprian in regard to the archdeacon's action during the vacancy of the see. Mr. Puller most unjustifiably substitutes the 'judgment' of the archbishop for 'their conscience' in that note. No 'surprise' is expressed.

The danger that was threatening them was, according to St. Cyprian, that of disregarding the divinely appointed head. And he finds the divine institution of a head in our Lord's words to St. Peter. He writes to the lapsed (Ep. xxxiii.), saying that 'Our Lord, whose precepts and warnings we ought to observe, determining the honour of a bishop and the ordering¹ of his own Church, speaks in the Gospel and says to Peter, "I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock," &c. Thence the ordination of bishops and the ordering of the Church runs down along the course of time *and the line of succession*, so that the Church is settled upon her bishops, and every act of the Church is regulated by the same prelates. Since, then, this is founded on divine law, I marvel that some have had the bold sincerity to write to me as if they were addressing letters in the name of the Church, whereas the Church consisteth of the bishop and clergy and all who stand.'

St. Cyprian, therefore, distinctly understands the 'rock,' in St. Matthew xvi., to be St. Peter; and the bishops enter into their share of the keys through succession from Peter, who is thus, in a very true sense, the 'root' of the Catholic Church and the source of its unity. She is 'built on Peter, for an origin and for the ordering² of unity.' The rock which, according to St. Cyprian, is Peter, has expanded itself in 'a line of succession,' and the Church consists of those bishops who flow from Peter, together with the clergy and the faithful. Included amongst those bishops is, of course, according to St. Cyprian (however mistaken he may be in the judgment of Mr. Puller³) the occupant of the chair of Peter. The bishop is the head of the Church in each diocese, because he is part of the stream which has flowed from Peter; and this stream is, all along its course, invested with divine right because its source is of divine institution, coming from the creative words of the Heavenly Master, 'Thou art Peter,' &c.

So far St. Cyprian's teaching, though not couched in the terms of modern theology, is yet in substance identical with that of the Roman Catholic Church at this hour. In the

¹ *Ratio*. Oxford translation.

² *Ratione*. The same word in the letter just quoted.

³ *Prim. SS.* p. 54.

district of Westminster, for instance, the 'head' must be sought (*caput queritur*), and the 'head' is the bishop who comes down from Peter, and so is part of that *enduring* living foundation on which Christ built His Church, and on which it will remain until the end of the world. St. Peter is not, according to St. Cyprian, as some would make him, *only* a symbol, but he is the *origin* of the Church's unity, and communion with Peter is an essential feature of the Church's life. Consequently, the lapsed must know that their restoration to the Church is to be regulated by the bishop, not simply by certificates from the martyrs. And the Bishop of Carthage would not lay down a law on the rules to guide the bishop's action without consulting Rome.

(b) But another event in the life of St. Cyprian turned his thoughts towards the subject of unity, and led to a further explanation of its origin and nature. An Anti-Pope arose at Rome, and St. Cyprian flew to the aid of Cornelius, the legitimate Pope. In an important passage he insists upon the regularity of Cornelius's appointment, and the consequent sin of opposing him. There cannot be two bishops over the same see, and those who through their own fault are in communion with the wrong one are outside the supernatural sphere of the Church, and their very martyrdom would lose its merit. There was, says St. Cyprian, already a properly appointed bishop when Novatian was ordained, and consequently the Novatianists were in schism. It was not a question of what were the powers or rights of the See of Rome; St. Cyprian had no call to dwell on these. The question was as to the rightful occupant of that see. And St. Cyprian determines this question by insisting on the unity of the Church—its necessarily visible unity. Cornelius was the Bishop of Rome, received as such by the brotherhood of bishops. He was appointed, says St. Cyprian, 'when *the place of Peter* and the rank of the sacerdotal chair was vacant'—*i.e.* not merely the bishopric but the 'place of Peter' (Ep. lix. B. lv.); therefore no other could, by any possibility, be the bishop of that same city. The Church cannot be visibly two or three. It began with one, it was founded on one by the voice of the Lord, and it must continue one. It cannot be, like the kingdoms of

Israel and Judah and the garment of Ahijah, visibly dis-united. This, he says, 'has been the very source whence heresies and schisms have taken their rise, that obedience is not paid to the Priest of God [*i.e.* the bishop]; nor do they reflect that there is for the time one high priest in the Church and one judge for the time in Christ's stead, whom, if the whole brotherhood would obey according to the divine injunctions, no one would stir in anything against the College of Prelates: no one after the divine sanction had, after the suffrages of the people, after the consent of our fellow-bishop, would make himself a judge, not of his bishop, but of God; no one would by a rent of unity tear asunder the Church of God.'¹

It is not difficult from a passage like this to see what St. Cyprian would have thought of ordaining an archbishop to a see, whilst the bishops of the province were in prison, in protest against the authority (which they believed to have no 'divine sanction') under which the said archbishop was ordained, whilst the rest of the Church were not consulted or communicated with. In other words, the present Archbishop of Canterbury has no means of tracing himself to Peter, according to Cyprianic tests, and can therefore have no share in the keys of Peter. For St. Cyprian was led to lay stress on the obedience due to the bishop in each diocese, not because he viewed the bishop as standing alone and deriving his commission from our Lord in such a way that he could act independently of the rest of the Church, but as one of a compact brotherhood visibly united.² And whilst he had an office to fulfil, which he could devolve on no one else, and for which he was ultimately responsible to our Lord alone, his share in the keys of the kingdom came from his being one of the numerous heads who are visibly connected throughout the world, and who are therefore *in connection with* the blessed

¹ *Ep.* lix. B. lv.

² *Episcopatus unus, episcoporum concordie numerositate diffusus*—one episcopate diffused by a visibly united (*concordie*) multitude of bishops (*Ep. ad Antonian.* lv.). The Oxford edition translates this '*throughout an harmonious,*' &c., as though the abstract episcopate were one thing and the visible channel another.

Apostle Peter. 'Our Lord built the Church on Peter' is the refrain of the Cyprianic doctrine.

Thus far, then, the circumstances under which St. Cyprian wrote his treatise on Unity would not necessarily, nor even naturally, lead him to the subject of Papal jurisdiction. It was the rights of bishops over the laity, and the test of a lawful occupant of any see, Rome included, which occupied his attention; the relationship of bishops to their mother-Church, whether in Carthage or in Rome, would have been irrelevant to his theme.

III. At the same time he does in this part of his life incidentally touch on the See of Peter and its relation to the other sees of the Church, and in so doing he shows that he held strictly, in theory, to the supremacy of the See of Rome. Peter had, according to our saint, his official representative in the Bishop of Rome. 'The place of Fabian' (the Pope), was, according to St. Cyprian, 'the place of Peter,' an expression which, as a matter of fact, he uses of the See of Rome alone. But further, in writing of Novatus who had gone from Carthage to Rome to join the schism of his all but namesake Novatian, he describes the wickedness of the Novatians in 'setting up for themselves, without the Church and against the Church, a conventicle of their abandoned faction;' and then he proceeds to say, 'After all this, they yet in addition, having had a pseudo-bishop ordained for them by heretics, dare to set sail and to carry letters from schismatic and profane persons to the chair of Peter, and to the principal [or ruling] Church, whence episcopal unity has taken its rise.'¹

Now it is obvious from these words that St. Cyprian did not regard Carthage as being the See of Peter in the same sense that Rome was, for they went, he says, from Carthage to 'the chair of Peter.' Rome was, therefore, the chair of Peter in some way differing from Carthage, for it is described simply as 'the chair of Peter.' They were not going to every see—they were not about to make a tour of the globe, but going to Rome.

Again, this 'chair of Peter' is, according to St. Cyprian, the 'principal Church.' Now we have seen that this expression and its Greek equivalent occurring in St. Irenæus can-

¹ *Ep.* lix. 18, B. lv.

not mean the most ancient or the mother-Church. It means the ruling Church. Since Irenæus wrote those words about Rome, Tertullian had defined the word as meaning 'that which is over anything,'¹ as the soul presides over and rules the body. At one time of St. Cyprian's life hardly a day passed without some study of Tertullian; at spare moments he would say, 'Give me the master,' by which they understood that he wished to read Tertullian. We can, therefore, be fairly sure what he meant by the principal Church, viz. the sovereign ruling Church. When, therefore, these heretics went to Rome, they went, according to our saint, to 'the chair of Peter and the ruling Church.'

Again, it is the ruling Church 'whence sacerdotal [*i.e.* episcopal] unity took its rise; '*i.e.* not the College of Bishops, for that took its rise from all the Apostles, but the 'unity' of the College which took its rise from the chair of Peter, *i.e.* from Peter considered as the origin of a succession.'²

We have, then, here from St. Cyprian a distinct enunciation of the Catholic and Roman teaching concerning the office of the See of St. Peter. It was not directly the mother of the episcopate, regarded as a line of mechanical succession, but of its unity: that is, of the episcopate, regarded as bound together in visible communion and invested with divine authority.³

But St. Cyprian adds yet another point. The 'chair' suggests the teaching office, as 'the principedom' implies government. And St. Cyprian adds that the Romans are 'they

¹ *De Animâ*, c. 13.

² Mr. Puller (*Prim. SS.* p. 55) considers *sacerdotalis unitas* to be the same as *collegium sacerdotale*, which is quite inadmissible, and he thus prepares the way for his strange contention that St. Cyprian is speaking of the chair of Peter as the mother-Church of Africa only. But St. Cyprian gives not the slightest hint that he is speaking of Africa only. And the word he translates mother (*principalis*) had already another signification as applied to Rome. Mr. Puller quotes a passage from Tertullian, which Gieseler quoted *à propos* of the passage in St. Irenæus; but Dr. Döllinger replied to Gieseler that we must adhere to the ordinary meaning of the word as expressly defined by Tertullian (*Geschichte*, &c., *loc. cit.*). And St. Augustine's expression, 'in which the sovereignty was ever in force,' is a kind of echo or commentary of the same.

³ At present the See of Peter is the mother of all the successions, for all have had to be replenished from her.

to whom faithlessness can have no access.' Such is his ground of security when he contemplates these men sailing from Carthage to deceive the chair of Peter as to the correctness of his teaching. At this period of his life warm words of encomium invariably spring to his lips when he speaks of Rome; but his words, each one of them, contain serious teaching. Here the mention of Rome suggests the absurdity of these people supposing that the original source of episcopal unity will be untrue to its perpetual office on the momentous question which they wished to stir.

But, after all, it may be said that the sovereignty attributed to the chair of Peter did not amount to much, seeing that St. Cyprian goes on to deprecate these people having gone to Rome, instead of being content with having their cause tried at Carthage. But did St. Cyprian mean by his protest against their sailing to Rome to deprecate any appeal under any circumstances? It will be seen presently that this was not his meaning. He considered that, in this particular case, the number of the bishops who had tried these men was sufficient to settle the matter. So that the reference of matters to Rome depended, in his judgment, on the adequacy of the local episcopate in any given case to meet the needs of the occasion.¹

St. Cyprian, therefore, expresses his confidence that these men will gain nothing by scuffling off to Rome, since it is the very source of unity, and the Romans are they 'to whom perfidy can have no access.' Unity (he says in effect) took its rise from the chair of Peter, and as it arose thence it will remain secure there.

If now we compare the most recent exposition of this great passage in St. Cyprian with its Catholic interpretation, we have these results.

On the one hand, Mr. Puller passes over the expression of our saint, 'the chair of Peter,' as being, in his judgment, the result of a delusion wrought into the Western Church's mind within the second century by the Clementine Romance, a delusion which (he admits) was shared by the primitive saints for ever afterwards! He translates 'principal' as

¹ Cf. p. 69.

'original,' in defiance of Tertullian's definition and St. Augustine's explanation. He subordinates the primary idea in the term 'episcopal unity' to the secondary, by translating it 'the episcopal body considered as a unity,' instead of keeping 'the unity' as the substantive word; and lastly, he narrows the contents of the word 'principal,' as though it related only to Rome and the West, and especially Africa.

On the other hand, in the Catholic interpretation, the words are taken in their plain, naked simplicity. Rome is 'the chair of Peter and the sovereign Church, whence the unity of the episcopate took its rise.' Here St. Peter is seen to be not a mere symbol, but the very source and commencement of a stream of unity (which is St. Cyprian's own simile), and the Apostle is a real foundation, not detached and built, as it were, in the air—not a source separated from its stream—nor a type with no genetic relationship between him and the unity he represents, but the edifice is continuous with the foundation, growing up from it and on it, so that it is true, as St. Cyprian is so fond of saying, that Peter is he 'on whom the Lord built the Church.'

IV. We are now in a position to understand the full meaning of the famous passage in his treatise on Unity, written subsequently to the events described above, but in reference to them. After the opening paragraph, St. Cyprian at once proceeds to state, as he had done before in his letters, the cause of heresy and discord.

It proceeds from this, that men do not go 'to the origin of the truth' (possibly 'unity' is the true reading), nor is the head 'sought, and they do not pay attention to the heavenly Master's teaching.' He our Master, has taught us where to find the head: namely, in the successor of Peter. 'For He said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Upon one He builds His Church, and although He gives to all the Apostles after the resurrection equal power, yet'—What is the restriction introduced by the 'yet'? What is the modifying truth? It is that this gift to the rest of the Apostles does not exhaust the arrangement which Christ made for His

Church. This gift does not interfere with the fact that He built His Church on one, for although He gave the rest equal power (*e.g.* to consecrate the Eucharist, to absolve, to teach infallibly, to found Churches), 'nevertheless, in order to manifest unity, He, by His own authority, instituted the origin of the same unity, so that it should begin from one.'

Mr. Puller does not venture to translate the word 'manifest' by 'symbolise,' but throughout he appears to understand them as equivalent. But it is one thing to symbolise and another to manifest; and our Lord secured the manifestation of unity by 'providing' (*disposuit*¹) an actual origin 'beginning from one' (*ab uno incipientem*). And then, that there may be no mistake, and that none may imagine that the difference between the rest of the Apostles and this 'origin of unity' which Peter was made, amounted to a difference in the power of the priesthood, he repeats that undoubtedly 'the other Apostles were what Peter was, invested with an equal share of honour and power, but the commencement [of the Church] starts from unity, that the Church of Christ may be shown to be one.' And this unity is a thing to be held, and 'he who holds it not, does he think that he holds the faith?'²

Thus St. Cyprian traces all heresies to a neglect in looking for, or to, the head. *Nec caput quaeritur*. The head is the bishop viewed as the heir of the promises made to Peter. He is in each place the link for the time being³ of the chain which reaches down from the original head—namely, the Apostle Peter. For St. Cyprian never speaks of the Church being founded on St. James, or on St. John. He knew that they were foundations, but not in the unique sense in which Peter was. According to St. Cyprian the See of Rome was the See of Peter, and the chair of Peter was the principle of cohesion to the Christian episcopate. He was the Primate of the Christian Church, and showed his humility in not pressing this point at Antioch;⁴ and his chair inherits the Primacy

¹ 'Unitatis ejusdem originem ab uno incipientem suâ auctoritate disposuit.' Cf. the use of *dispositio* in Roman law for an 'edict.' *Tr. on Unity*, § 3.

² *Tr. on Unity*, § 4.

³ Cf. Appendix I.

⁴ *Ep. lxxi. 2.* Cf. p. 83 for the explanation of that passage. Dr. Döllinger remarks: 'Der Sinn ist: Petrus hätte sich dem Rechte nach auf seinen Vorrang berufen können, aber in jenem Momente, als Paulus ihn mit gutem

bestowed on him, for it is the principal or governing Church. They only are lawful bishops who, having been duly elected (a matter which was subject to arrangement on the part of the Church) are built into the one foundation and form part of that visibly compacted body, which resembles, not (so he says) the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the garment of Ahijah, but the seamless robe of Christ. Such is the (strictly Papal) teaching of St. Cyprian.

V. This teaching of St. Cyprian has an important bearing on the relation between orders and jurisdiction. 'We have orders,' it is said; 'is not that sufficient?' According to St. Cyprian it is not sufficient. We might be living in the deadly sin of schism in spite of our orders. We might be in possession of sacraments, yet without the sanctifying effects of the sacraments, from lack of jurisdiction. The Church, in St. Cyprian's teaching, is a visible kingdom; it is a compact body, and the ceremony of episcopal ordination will not of necessity introduce a man into that network of holy organisation which alone traces itself up to Peter, 'on whom the Lord built the Church.' We must be in communion with the rest of the Church in this sense, that our episcopate is acknowledged as a part of the succession from Peter by the compact brotherhood of bishops which comes down from the blessed Apostle Peter. Ecclesiastical intercommunion may be temporarily suspended, but we must be an acknowledged portion of the one Church, having inherited the legitimate succession and not forfeited our place in that one stream which, flowing from Peter, is 'diffused throughout the world by a concordant multiplicity of bishops.' And as 'episcopal unity took its rise,' according to St. Cyprian, 'from the chair of Peter,' so from the chair of Peter it will always flow. To take a single instance, Nestorius and his followers forfeited their place in that compact unity, that 'concordant multiplicity.' Their descendants accordingly have no jurisdiction wherever they may be. Their episcopate is not part of the kingdom of Christ. It is not enough that they have orders, if they have; the flaw in their title is that they cannot trace to Peter 'on

Grund tadelte, wäre es Hochmuth und Arroganz gewesen' (*Geschichte*, Periode I. p. 360).

whom the Lord built the Church.' For in the year 431 they were extruded¹ from the unity of the episcopal brotherhood, just as afterwards the followers of Photius departed from the same unity. Wherever the Nestorians are, they are members of what St. Cyprian would call a 'conventicle of their own, beside the Church and against the Church.'

The same would be true, according to Cyprianic principles, of the legalised episcopate in this country if its orders were admitted to be true. It never established itself in the kingdom of Christ, according to those principles. There was no authority recognised by the Church that confirmed the election of Parker. Eleven days after his consecration he confirmed the others, who yet were supposed to have elected him to the see. What could be in more flagrant defiance of all Cyprianic teaching?

Again, according to Cyprianic principles, where there is already a bishop in communion with the rest of the Catholic Church, exercising his jurisdiction, it would be a most grievous sin to consecrate another and introduce him on to the same field of work. For instance, there was in Quebec a bishop, in communion with the Catholic Church, exercising legitimate jurisdiction. Some two hundred years afterwards one appeared with the title of bishop, with letters patent from England. It was, if this person was in other respects a bishop, the deadly sin of schism on Cyprianic principles. Eventually the whole ground occupied by the Catholic Church was mapped out into districts, to which bishops, at least in title, were ordained by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and sent out to labour in a sphere already assigned to a Catholic bishop. 'The Queen has been pleased by letters patent, under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, to reconstitute the bishopric of Quebec, and to direct that the same shall comprise,' &c. 'Her Majesty has also been pleased to constitute so much of the ancient diocese of Quebec as comprises the district of Montreal to be a bishop's see and diocese,' &c.² It is clear

¹ For the authority with which this was done, cf. pp. 334-336.

² I need hardly say that the laws of the Church of England, and not Her Gracious Majesty, are responsible. All Catholics must feel a special regard towards the present occupant of the throne.

from this, which is but one instance of a series of similar acts, that the Church of England at any rate does not proceed upon the lines of St. Cyprian's teaching. That saint must have denounced her line of action with all his fiery vehemence as destructive of his cherished principle, that there can be but one bishop and one altar. The only imaginable defence is that the Church of England is the entire Church of God on earth. The denunciation could then be left to St. Augustine, in his writings against the Donatists.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. CYPRIAN ON APPEALS TO ROME.

I. THE essential points, then, in the teaching of St. Cyprian on the Unity of the Church are these. Every Christian finds himself under the rule of one pastor, who has to give an account of his rule to the one Lord of all (Ep. lv. B. lii.). To this one pastor or bishop the faithful in that district owe obedience in matters of faith and discipline.

But this bishop is one of a compact body visibly united by intercommunion with all the rest; and he derives his authority from the words of our Lord to St. Peter in Matthew xvi. 18. He is part of a stream whose united volume flows through the ages from that apostolic source.¹ He must be an accepted member of the great brotherhood of the 'one episcopate.'² The episcopate is one body, and when one bishop has been regularly appointed to a district, no one can come in after him and claim the authority of Peter.³

These were the two points on which it was necessary to lay unequivocal and almost exclusive stress at the time when St. Cyprian wrote his treatise on Unity. The encroachments of some of the martyrs and confessors on the office of the head of the diocese in which those who applied to them lived, placed that office in jeopardy in the early part of his episcopate; in the second, the legitimate occupancy of the See of Rome was questioned by Novatus and Novatian. The question could not be determined by any reference to the

¹ 'De fonte uno rivi plurimi defluunt . . . unitas tamen servatur in origine' (*De Unit. Eccl.* c. v.).

² 'Episcopatus unus, episcoporum multorum concordie numerositate diffus' (*Ep.* lv. B. lii.).

³ 'Quisquis post unum qui solus esse debeat factus est, non jam secundus ille, sed nullus est' (*Ep.* lv. 6, B. lii. 8).

rights of the Bishop of Rome when once elected; it was the legitimacy of his election which was in dispute. This St. Cyprian decided by asking who was the acknowledged bishop already in possession, legitimately elected, and in communion with the whole brotherhood of the legitimate clergy throughout the world. The Church, he maintained, cannot be likened to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.¹ He expressly repudiated this state of things as a type of what could happen in the Church of Christ. The Church, he says, in effect, as he sets aside this discord under the Old Covenant, has an external visible unity of her bishops; *not because they themselves are visible, but because they are visibly united.* ('De Unit. Eccles.' § 6). He recurs to this contrast between the Old and New covenants in his letter to Magnus (Ep. lxi. B. lxxvi.), and maintains that, so far from the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah being in any typical and ecclesiastical sense like the Christian Church,² our Lord's words about the Samaritans show that the ten tribes were not members of one kingdom in the sense in which people must be one in the Christian Church. 'The Lord ratifieth us in His Gospel, that those same who had then severed themselves from the tribes of Judah and Jerusalem, and, having left Jerusalem, had withdrawn to Samaria, should be reckoned amongst profane and heathen' (*loc. cit.* § 5).

The further question, as to the instrument and guardian of episcopal unity, did not at this period of his life call for any detailed treatment on the part of our saint. This question,

¹ 'When the twelve tribes of Israel were torn asunder the prophet Ahijah rent his garment. But because Christ's people cannot be rent, His coat, woven and conjoined throughout, was not divided by those it fell to. Individual, conjoined, coentwined, it shows the coherent concord of our people who put on Christ. In the sacrament and sign of His garment He has declared the unity of His Church' (*De Unit. Eccles.* § 6).

² For the opposite contention cf. *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, p. 227, where the writer maintains a theory of unity expressly condemned by St. Cyprian. The same position was maintained by Dr. Pusey, as where he says (speaking of St. Cyprian's words, 'as the sun has many rays,' &c.): 'The oneness here spoken of is, according to Roman Catholics, fulfilled in the organisation of the *whole* Church; whereas, according to Anglo-Catholics, it is fulfilled in each bishopric, each bishop, viewed by himself, being a full representation and successor of St. Peter' (Cyprian's *Tr. on Unity*, § 4, note 6).

however, is plainly answered in his writings. For the whole authority of the episcopate is traced to Peter, not, indeed, to the exclusion of the other Apostles, but as to their head, their representative, and summary. And allusions to the See of Peter occur precisely on those occasions when it would be natural for the topic of the centre or source of unity to come into incidental notice. When the five schismatics sailed to Rome, to try and hoodwink the Pope as to their number and importance, St. Cyprian expresses his security that they will not succeed, for they are going to the very see which is the source of episcopal unity—'the chair of Peter and the Sovereign Church, whence episcopal unity took its rise.' And when he is persuading a brother-bishop that Cornelius is the legitimate occupant of that see, and he comes to the point where he has to insist on the fact that Cornelius superseded no one else, but that the see was vacant, he calls the see by its Christian name, 'the place of Peter.' It was at once a Christian see and a special see, 'the place of Fabian, that is, the place of Peter, and the rank of the sacerdotal chair was vacant.'¹ The See of Rome was thus in one respect the same as every other see, *i.e.*, in respect to the *Sacerdotium*; it was a 'sacerdotal chair,' but it was also, in its own way, 'the place of Peter.' And his whole attitude towards that see was up to this time one of peculiar respect, deference, and veneration, as the centre of the Church's visible unity.

I shall now examine his teaching on appeals to Rome.

II. A fact that must strike us at once is that St. Cyprian denounced in no measured terms a certain small body of schismatics who repaired to Rome in the hope of persuading St. Cornelius, the Pope, that they were true bishops. But whilst the fact that they repaired thither showed their knowledge of the value set on Rome's favourable judgment, their idea was not in the least that of an appeal in the regular sense of that term. The circumstances were as follows.

An heretical bishop, named Privatus, who had been condemned by ninety bishops, had come to Carthage and made one Fortunatus bishop over the Novatianists there. He had

¹ *Ep.* lv. 6, B. lii.

gathered round him four men whom St. Cyprian called¹ at the outset 'desperate and abandoned.' They were Felix, made bishop outside the Church, and Jovinus and Maximus, who had been condemned first by nine bishops, and then had been excommunicated a year since by a larger council—by 'very many of us.' These were joined by one named Repostus, who had lapsed into idolatry during persecution. These five men (says St. Cyprian), joined by 'a few who have either sacrificed or have evil consciences, chose Fortunatus to be their pseudo-bishop.'

It was thus a little body which had no standing in the Church and no right of appeal. Sailing to Rome was a piece of impudence which our saint justly denounced as such. These 'desperate and abandoned' fellows, as he calls them more than once, informed the Pope that twenty-five bishops were present at the ordination of Fortunatus. They had made the boast in Carthage itself that as many as twenty-five Catholic bishops were about to assist from Numidia. 'In which lie,' says St. Cyprian, 'when they were afterwards detected and put to shame (five only who had made shipwreck of the faith having met together, and these excommunicated by us), they then sailed to Rome with their merchandise of lies, as though the truth could not sail after them and convict their false tongues by proof of the real fact.'²

Such were the circumstances under which St. Cyprian very naturally, and with no prejudice to the general principle of appeals to Rome, invoked the decision of the African bishops that causes should be heard in Africa itself. These men were condemned criminals, condemned for moral delinquencies and heresy, and they did not repair to Rome to reopen the case of their own crimes, but to persuade Rome that they had at their back an imposing array of bishops, and that Cyprian was dealing unjustly with the lapsed.³ They said nothing about their past condemnation, of which St. Cyprian, therefore, had to inform the Pope. Their cause had been heard, and sentence had been passed against them. Fortunatus

¹ *Ep. lix. § 12, B. lv.*

² *Ep. lix. § 13.*

³ Cf. the latter part of the letter.

himself was only a *pseudo*-bishop; he was, in reality, a presbyter under Cyprian's jurisdiction. As such *he had no right of appeal straight* to Rome, if indeed at all, under the peculiar regulations of the African province.¹ Anyhow, if he wished this sentence reversed, his obvious duty was first to clear himself in Africa, and then at least to observe the proper form of appeal. Instead of this, 'having had a pseudo-bishop ordained for them by heretics, they dare to set sail and to carry letters from schismatic and profane persons to the chair of Peter and the principal Church, whence the unity of the priesthood has taken its rise, remembering not that they are the same Romans whose faith has been commended by the Apostle, to whom faithlessness can have no access.'

On one only plea, according to St. Cyprian, could such a transgression of the Church's laws be even imagined by any one to be justifiable—*i.e.* on the supposition (absurd enough) that the authority of the legitimate African bishops, who had tried and condemned them, was insufficient *in point of numbers* as compared with these 'desperate and abandoned' men. It was this on which they had laid stress. But it was false. They had been twice condemned, on the last occasion by a numerous assembly of legitimate bishops. These men themselves were neither legitimate bishops nor numerous. They were desperate and abandoned men, and few.² Those who judged them were sufficient in point of number and of weight. 'For,' as St. Cyprian continues,³ 'if the number of those who passed sentence on them last year⁴ is reckoned together with

¹ Cf. *Aug. Ep. xliii. (al. clxii.)*

² 'Nisi si paucis desperatis et perditis minor videtur esse auctoritas episcoporum in Africa constitutorum.' 'Unless the authority of the regular (*constitutorum*) bishops in Africa seems less than [that of] a few desperate and abandoned men.' Such an ellipse is common with Cyprian. If, however, 'paucis' be taken as the dative governed by 'videtur,' the context still forces us to understand 'minor' as expressing comparison in point of number—'less than theirs.' But the immediate context suggests the first translation as the true one.

³ *B. lv. § 15.* The Oxford edition is doubtless correct in including this sentence in § 14. It is probably from not reading on, that some writers have been led into the mistake of supposing that the saint is comparing the African bishops with the Pope.

⁴ The allusion is probably to the original smaller number, viz. nine.

the presbyters and deacons, *more were then present at the judgment and trial than these same men* who are now seen to be joined with Fortunatus.' St. Cyprian, in his reasoning here, in no way offends against the general principle of appeals to Rome as formulated in the Vatican decrees.¹ He is dealing with a particular case in which the appellants, if such they could be called, had no standing in the Church and no ground of appeal.

III. On the other hand, in dealing with the case of an heretical bishop in Gaul, St. Cyprian distinctly acted on the supposition that the Pope was the proper person to set in motion the excommunication of the leading bishop in that region.

It would seem that St. Stephen, who had succeeded to the throne of Peter after the martyrdom of Lucius, had been slow to use his authority to the extent required, as St. Cyprian thought, in a case that was now brought before him. Marcian, Bishop of Arles, had withdrawn from the communion of the Church and attached himself to Novatian. He boasted that he had not been excommunicated, but had himself withdrawn, and no new bishop had been appointed. Application had been made to the Pope by the bishops of the province, but, for reasons which we cannot tell, he had not as yet acted in the matter. Accordingly, Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, who belonged to the same province,² had on his own account communicated with St. Cyprian, whose fiery nature was calculated to hasten a matter over which St. Stephen was taking his time. We often think the physician can attend to us and heal us more quickly than is perhaps possible. St. Cyprian wrote to the Pope and reminded him that the management of such a matter belonged to the episcopate,³ and, as he implies, the requisite aid in this case could only come from St.

¹ The author of *The Primitive Saints*, &c. says: 'It is for Ultramontanes who profess to venerate St. Cyprian and the early Church to consider whether they are prepared to accept his teaching or not.' - Ultramontanes are prepared to accept St. Cyprian's teaching, but not Mr. Puller's translations.

² 'In eadem provincia' (*Ep.* lxxiii. B. lxxvii.) is to be referred to Faustinus. Lyons and Vienne at that time were included in the province of Narbonne (cf. Ammianus Marcell. lib. xv.).

³ 'Cui rei nostrum est consulere et subvenire.' For Mr. Puller's mistranslation of these words see *infra*, p. 76.

Stephen himself. St. Cyprian urged St. Stephen to effect this. He therefore urged the Pope to write 'letters of plenary authority [lit. most full letters¹] by means of which, Marcian being excommunicated, another may be substituted in his place.' He presses the Pope to immediate action on the ground that bishops have no 'greater or better office' to perform 'than by diligent solicitude and wholesome remedies to provide for cherishing and preserving the sheep.' He likens the flock at Arles to sailors who need another harbour, owing to the unsafety of their present one—and this new harbour he wishes St. Stephen to provide. They are like travellers whose inn is beset and occupied by robbers, and who seek other safer inns in their journey. These safer inns and this safer harbour ought, St. Cyprian contends, to be provided by St. Stephen by letters of excommunication—'letters by which, Marcian having been excommunicated, another may be substituted in his place.' It was not *advice* that the bishops of Gaul needed; St. Cyprian could give that. That, indeed, was all for which St. Cyprian himself was asked, and his reply was his urgent request to St. Stephen that he would, not advise, but direct letters of excommunication. The excommunication of a bishop was no new matter; but as the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons had called to the Pope to aid them, so now the bishops of Gaul had appealed to the Pope, and to their thinking had been left too long without the requisite aid. St. Cyprian, therefore, reminds St. Stephen that Marcian was trading on the lack of a formal excommunication, as though 'he had not been excommunicated by us.' It only needed, in Cyprian's judgment, formal letters of excommunication to be issued by Stephen, with a mandate to elect a bishop in his place. He therefore asks him to comply with his prayer, and to notify with whom they are henceforth to communicate.

St. Cyprian, indeed, not only by his request to the Pope concerning letters of excommunication and letters of communion, but by an incidental expression also, shows what

¹ Or, not merely a 'Papal brief,' but also a full exposition of principles. Cf. the contrast between 'per libellum aditio' and 'plenaria interpellatio' in the law of Honorius and Theodosius 'de Naviculariis per Africam,' adduced by Constant. *Ep. Rom. Pont.*

position St. Stephen occupied in his theory of Church government. Marcian was to be formally excommunicated because of his Novatian teaching. 'Let him not give, but receive sentence' (§ 4). Accordingly, St. Cyprian urges upon St. Stephen that his predecessors in the see ('our' predecessors, he calls them, so full is he of the perfect unity of the Church) had given judgment on Novatian's teaching. They, he says—*i.e.* Popes Cornelius and Lucius, whom he has just mentioned by name—'they, full of the Spirit of God and in the midst of¹ a glorious martyrdom, decided that communion (*pax*) should be granted to the lapsed, and by their own letters they sealed their decision that the fruit of communion and peace was not to be denied them when penance had been done; which we all everywhere altogether judged. For there could not be a difference of thought (*diversus sensus*) amongst us, seeing that there was one Spirit in us' (in quibus unus esset Spiritus). I do not see how one could better express the mutual relations between the Holy See and the rest of the Church, and the common *charisma* of infallibility possessed by the Pope and the Church, than in these golden words. What do they teach? They say that the Popes decided the question, full of the Holy Ghost; that the whole Church agreed, and that it could not be otherwise, considering they were under the influence of the same Spirit (cf. p. 330).

Accordingly, St. Cyprian says that St. Stephen is bound to honour the judgments of his predecessors by his own 'weight and authority.'² Marcian, therefore, will be deposed, and the name of his successor notified by the authority of the Pope. Marcian's name disappeared from the diptychs.³

IV. Once more, before the turn in his life, St. Cyprian showed his acceptance of the principle of Papal jurisdiction. I say the principle, for he objected to the particular exercise in this case. Two bishops had been deposed in Spain for

¹ 'Constituti.' I have for this word adopted the Oxford translation.

² He had given as his reason why Stephen should excommunicate Marcian: 'Servandus est . . . Cornelii et Lucii honor gloriosus; illi enim dandam esse lapsis pacem censuerunt' (*Ep.* lxi.), on which Döllinger remarks: 'The word *honor* frequently occurs in the writings of St. Cyprian with the meaning of *auctoritas* or *potestas*' (*Hist. of Ch.* Period I. cap. 3, § 4).

³ Cf. Mabillon, *Annal.* tom. iii. p. 452.

having taken out certificates of idolatry¹ during the late persecution. Their names were Basilides and Martial. More-over two bishops had been appointed in their place, Sabinus and Felix. Basilides, and probably Martial also, appealed to Rome. Obviously it was not the first time that such an appeal had been made. St. Stephen, as St. Clement before him, restored them, or ordered them to be restored to communion, whether by reason of the irregularity with which their case had been conducted, bishops having been appointed in their place without his cognisance (which St. Cyprian's words in Marcian's case [p. 71] show to be an irregular proceeding), or whether St. Stephen was simply taken in by Basilides' statement, we do not know, as the necessary evidence is not forthcoming. But several bishops of the region appear to have accepted the Pope's ruling, and communicated with Basilides and Martial; and accordingly Felix and Sabinus looked round about for help in the shape of counsel and advice as to what they were to do. This is expressly stated by Cyprian. To him they naturally went for such help, considering the prominent part he had taken in the matter of the lapsed during persecution. St. Cyprian held a council and advised their people to cling to them as their real bishops. The probability is, as Baronius thought, that these two were sent to Rome with the conciliar letter to help towards their acceptance by the Pope.

The important point, however, for us is the way in which our saint dealt with the authority of the Pope. He nowhere denies it as a matter of principle, but he sees some restriction in its claim to obedience. He considered that the Pope had been overreached, and says that although there was some fault in this in the way of negligence, the real sin lay at the door of the bishop who had deceived the Pope.² He is describing the aim of this bishop—it was 'to be replaced unjustly in his episcopate from which he had been rightly deposed.'

¹ *I.e.* certificates of having sacrificed, which saved them from civil punishment, whether they had actually sacrificed or not.

² 'Hoc eo pertinet ut Basilidis non tam abolita sint quam cumulata delicta, ut ad superiora peccata ejus etiam fallaciæ et circumventionis crimen accesserit' (*Ep.* lxxviii.).

Not a word has St. Cyprian to say against the possibility of a bishop being replaced in his bishopric by the Pope. Had our saint held the view that the Pope could not restore a bishop who had been deposed by his surrounding colleagues, it must have appeared. But no, the power of St. Stephen is not for a moment questioned. It is the certainty of Basilides' crimes that is put forward as the ground for considering the restoration null and void.¹ The injustice consisted in the certainty of his crimes. St. Cyprian writes with some emotion—indeed, to some extent, without the self-restraint which one would desire; but he does not even remotely hint at any lack of authority on the part of the Pope. He says that he is 'far away and unaware of the true state of the case' (§ 5), not that he is assuming a power which he does not possess. Instead of settling the matter by that obvious rejoinder, he holds a council and decides that St. Stephen has been deceived by false statements, and that Basilides, so far from deserving reinstatement in his bishopric, has only added to his crimes by the falsehoods he has told the Pope. For the position of Basilides is really one, says St. Cyprian, which had been provided for by Pope Cornelius and the rest of the bishops. So that our saint is avowedly acting under the shelter of a Papal decision with which the whole Church had agreed (§ 6).

It is unfortunate that we have no sufficient evidence on which to form a judgment as to the whole case. We have only Cyprian's side. And he does not exhibit a very judicial tone of mind, so far as the scanty record goes. There is no appearance of his having consulted St. Stephen on the matter at all, which, whatever the latter's position, would, to say the least, have been a matter of courtesy. We do not know on what grounds St. Stephen formed his judgment, nor what exactly his judgment was. St. Cyprian's own account is taken only from the aggrieved party. And if St. Stephen could be deceived, so could St. Cyprian. And if, as the latter says, St. Stephen was too far off, St. Cyprian was further off. The

¹ Compare the case of Bishop Grosseteste, who, whilst owning himself bound to filial obedience to the Holy Father, felt that His Holiness could not be aware of the candidate proposed by him.

intercourse between Rome and Spain was greater than that between Spain and Carthage; and Spain was more closely connected from a civil as well as ecclesiastical point of view, with Rome than with Carthage. And why did Felix and Sabinus go to Carthage instead of to Rome, where they might have disabused the Pope of his prejudice, if such it was, against their case? St. Stephen's character was, according to St. Vincent of Lerins, that of a 'holy and prudent' man. According to St. Dionysius, he assisted all parts of Arabia and Syria by his letters.¹ We have a right, therefore, to suspend our judgment as to his negligence, on the principle of 'audi alteram partem.' What we gather for certain from the letter of Cyprian is, that in spite of some vehemence, he did not dispute the principle that the Pope could, where just cause existed, restore a deposed bishop of Spain. The editors of Migne's magnificent collection of the whole literature on the subject endorse the supposition of Baronius, that Felix and Sabinus went with the letter of the Carthaginian synod to Rome, and that St. Cyprian's intent was to move St. Stephen to sanction the deposition of Basilides and Martial. But in point of fact our materials are insufficient for understanding the matter fully, and we do not know the sequel. It looks as if it would not be difficult for the Evil One to produce a rupture between these two saints, one of whom was full of holy vehemence, and the other of holy prudence. 'Coming events cast their shadow before.'

NOTE.—It is astonishing how anyone could fail to see in the affair of Marcan of Arles an emphatic testimony to the strictly Papal method of government as existing in the Church at that time, and taken for granted by St. Cyprian. Rigaltius, whose inaccuracy in regard to the text of this letter was pointed out by Baluze,² has, however, been greatly followed by anti-Papal writers. He is quoted at length in the Oxford edition of the Fathers,³ but the editor (Dr. Pusey) felt compelled to add in a note that Rigaltius 'seems anxious to understate the eminence conceded to Rome. A

¹ Euseb. lib. vii. c. 2, 4.

² *Epistolæ S. Stephani. S. Cypri. ad S. Stephanum* (Ep. i. p. 1027, note 10. Migne, 1865).

³ Vol. iii. pt. 2, p. 217 (1844).

deference does seem to be paid to him, not on account of his nearness only; he exercises an eminent authority, although only [*sic*] as the executive of the rules of the Universal Church.'

But the most recent anti-Papal writer¹ contends that it was only for the sake of obtaining St. Stephen's *advice* for these bewildered bishops of Gaul that St. Cyprian wrote. Our saint, however, says nothing about advice. He is, indeed, made to speak of advice by this writer's translation, according to whom the words, 'It is ours to advise and come in aid' are the equivalent of the Latin '*cui rei nostrum est consulere et subvenire*'!² It is easy after such a manipulation of the text to make out that 'St. Cyprian presses on Stephen the duty of writing a letter of counsel and help.' But, even if this writer's incorrect translation of the above words could be passed, the words could not be considered exhaustive of what St. Cyprian wished from the Pope. A letter of counsel and help is not exactly the equivalent of 'letters to the province,' whereby, Marcian being 'excommunicated, another may be substituted in his place.' Yet these are what St. Cyprian asks the Pope to send. And, again, letters to 'signify plainly to us who has been substituted at Arles in the room of Marcianus [*loc. cit.* § 5], that we may know to whom we should direct our brethren and to whom we should write,' are something more than mere counsel and advice. They imply an 'eminent authority.'

¹ Rev. F. W. Puller, *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 62-65.

² Cf. Facciolati on the word *consulo*. 'Cum dativo significat habere rationem et curam alicujus rei, tueri, providere, prospicere.' Forcellini's edition, by J. Bailey, F.R.S. (1828).

CHAPTER VII.

ST. CYPRIAN'S ERROR ON BAPTISM BY HERETICS.

WE now come to the events in St. Cyprian's life which have dimmed the splendour of his glory and led some to invoke him as the patron of their isolated position. If from his throne of glory he could shed a burning tear of sorrow, it would, I conceive, be over the false views of history that can select an incident in his otherwise holy life, which his glorious martyrdom threw into the shade, and indeed washed out, and which forms no proper basis of a theory of Church government. The Donatists perpetually quoted Cyprian to St. Augustine; he replied, not by denying his error, but by pointing out his determination not to break with Rome.¹ There are those in our days who are fond of quoting his quarrel with Rome (which St. Augustine calls a brotherly altercation) on a question which he considered one of variable discipline only, and treating of it as though he thought it a matter of faith and essential discipline. We will give a short summary of this unhappy episode in his career.

I. It was apparently his conflict with the Novatians which led St. Cyprian into his error concerning baptism by heretics. His fundamental tenet was the sin of breaking with the society founded on Peter. It was a sacred principle, but he drew a conclusion which conflicted with the Church's teaching. Heretics were separate from this one society, and therefore, he added, they could not baptise, for they could not give the Holy Ghost to others, being themselves bereft of His grace. He did not realise that heretics might nevertheless carry with them some *débris* of Catholic truth, and above all an indelible 'character' with some rights and privileges still remaining.² Their baptism was indeed 'vain and profit-

¹ Cf. *Ep.* 93, 40.

² Cf. Freppel's *Saint Cyprien*, 1890, p. 321.

less, having a semblance but nothing real *as an aid to holiness*,¹ as St. Athanasius said; but although it was shorn of its sanctifying effects, it was not therefore void of all value in the supernatural sphere. But St. Cyprian had already exhibited symptoms of pressing his thesis, that outside the Church there is no salvation, to an excess of rigour. He had said in his treatise on the Unity of the Church, speaking of schismatics, 'Their waters soil instead of purifying,' and 'their illegitimate birth gives children to the devil, not to God.' His very horror of heresy and schism became a stumbling-block to him. We cannot, moreover, but feel that the influence of his master Tertullian was not without its effect. Tertullian had himself broached the false opinion that it was impossible to receive baptism amongst heretics; and Agrippinus, one of St. Cyprian's predecessors in the see of Carthage, had begun to rebaptise those who had received baptism only at the hands of those in schism. Cyprian followed suit, but he met with opposition from some of the bishops of his own province. The position which St. Cyprian assumed was that those who had received baptism from heretics ought to be rebaptised, *but* that it was one of those matters of discipline about which they might disagree, without forfeiting each other's communion.

It was a question which had already agitated one part of the East. Two synods, one at Iconium and the other at Synnada, had issued decrees in favour of rebaptising, and Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, had taken a prominent part in promoting this discipline. He had even gone to the length of rebaptising some who had received baptism from a bishop who had fallen into the sin of idolatry under persecution. But as in Africa so in the East the practice was novel, and if we take the East as a whole, Firmilian had few followers. Still the matter was now assuming serious proportions, as the Novatians at Rome had begun to rebaptise Catholics when they induced them to apostatise, and the influence of Cyprian's name was a serious addition

¹ Mr. Puller, in quoting this passage (*Prim. Saints*, p. 73) seems to have misunderstood its meaning. St. Athanasius does not deny the validity of baptism by heretics, but its sanctifying effects.

to the confusion. He was consulted by eighteen bishops of Numidia as to the practice of rebaptising which his predecessor, Agrippinus, had introduced, and he decided in favour of the practice. This was the beginning of the disturbance in Africa. St. Cyprian alleged various reasons of minor consequence, such as the impossibility of the water being blessed by priests out of communion with the Church, or of the oil used in baptism being consecrated by those who being outside the Church had neither altar nor church; but his main reasons were derived from the oneness of the Church, the unworthiness of the minister, and the incapacity of the subject.¹

The whole of St. Cyprian's reasoning shows the truth of St. Augustine's remark, that the matter had not yet been thoroughly sifted and elucidated.

And St. Cyprian maintained his point with such logical acumen and eloquence that St. Augustine says he should probably have thought the same, seeing that the matter had not then been discussed in all its bearings in a plenary council. We may gather from what St. Augustine also says that, in spite of this, he would have submitted to the ruling of the Holy See, as he evidently considers St. Cyprian should have done, and indeed thinks that he possibly did.²

St. Cyprian's three points, on which he insisted, contained each of them a separate misunderstanding.³ In insisting that because there is but one Church no baptism outside the Church could be valid, he did not realise the doctrine first expounded in all its fulness by St. Augustine concerning the 'soul' of the Church. He limited the supernatural action of our Lord to the confines of the visible Church.⁴ Again, in denying that a heretic, being himself without the grace of God, could be the minister of that grace to others, he was

¹ Freppel's *Saint Cyprien*, p. 329.

² 'Fortasse factum est' (*De Bapt.* lib. ii. cap. 4).

³ Cf. Freppel, *loc. cit.* p. 329 *seq.*

⁴ As Bishop Freppel says: 'A precise distinction between the visible Church (or assemblage of the faithful under the government of legitimate pastors) and the invisible Church, formed of all whom divine grace has sanctified, would have sufficed to remove all difficulty.' St. Augustine answers: 'Ecclesia quippe omnes per baptismum parit, sive apud se, sive extra se' (*De Bapt. c. Don.* i. 14). And again: 'An extra unitatem Ecclesiæ non habet sua Christus?' (*Ibid.* iv. 9).

really establishing, what he repudiated in word, the dependence of the sacrament on the dispositions of its minister. He drew, indeed, a distinction between those within the Church who were living in sin and those without the Church who had no share at all in divine grace. But he was again seriously trenching upon the full teaching concerning the visible Church, and endangering the very idea of a sacrament.

And in laying stress on the impossibility of men who were in rebellion against God receiving a sacrament which conferred divine grace, he was ignoring the difference between the reception of a sacrament and its sanctifying effects. St. Augustine points out that St. Cyprian ignored the *character* conferred by the sacrament of baptism which did not, indeed, involve the recipient's sins being forgiven, but which made the reiteration of the sacrament impossible. Its effects slumbered till the baptised person made his submission to the Catholic Church. Infants baptised by heretics would, on St. Cyprian's teaching, forfeit heaven; but St. Cyprian could never be induced to enter on that part of the subject. In fact the whole subject was one which had not, in St. Cyprian's day, formed part of the ordinary teaching of the Church, and was new to many. There was, therefore, room for question and discussion. At Rome, whither heretics always found their way only to be extinguished by the Apostolic tradition, which it was the special province of Rome to guard, the matter had been dealt with, as St. Augustine says, in accordance with a traditional discipline received from the Apostles themselves. And this Apostolic tradition was destined to prevail, but not without a struggle.

There was at Rome a pontiff who was, to use the words of St. Vincent of Lerins, 'a man holy and prudent.' He had, perhaps, already shown some prudence in abstaining from precipitate action in the case of Marcian of Arles, and had evinced a repugnance to proceed to extreme measures in the case of the two Spanish bishops who appealed to Rome. But his zeal for the faith committed to his charge would not permit him to act with remissness in this case. St. Stephen felt himself bound to resist this innovation on the immemorial practice of the Church with the most determined energy. It

was resisted by the Episcopate of the Church as a whole, but, says St. Vincent of Lerins, 'Pope Stephen, of blessed memory, who at that time was prelate of the Apostolic See, resisted, in conjunction with his colleagues, yet more than they, thinking it fit, I suppose, that he should surpass all others in the devotedness of his faith as much as he excelled them by the authority of his station.'

This 'holy and prudent' Pope saw that the practice of the Church on this matter of rebaptising was closely connected with the faith, and he had already threatened to suspend communion with Firmilian and his sympathising bishops until such time as they brought their practice into accord with what he knew to be Apostolic discipline.¹ St. Cyprian, however, persisted in viewing the matter as one of pure discipline, and not involving a matter of faith, although worth maintaining at great cost. And further, as we have said, he considered all along that the practice pursued at Rome involved the admission that *forgiveness of sins* was conferred by the baptism of heretics in the same way as by baptism in the visible Church.

II. On being appealed to by the eighteen Numidian bishops for advice on the subject, some of their colleagues being opposed to the practice, St. Cyprian convoked a council of about thirty bishops, and they decided in favour of rebaptising. About the same time he was applied to by a Bishop of Mauritania, named Quintus, on the same subject, to whom he wrote an answer which has been preserved. He emphasises

¹ Their actual excommunication was averted through the representations and entreaties of St. Dionysius of Alexandria. Stephen had written, says Eusebius, 'as neither about to communicate with *them*.' Mr. Puller's translation, 'saying that he would not communicate with them' (*Prim. Saints*, p. 329), which he thinks represents St. Stephen as having already effected a separation, goes beyond the Greek, which is as I have written it—'he had written . . . as not about to communicate with them either.' The Greek is simply in the future. Not possessing the letters, we could not say whether Eusebius is speaking of a *sententia ferenda* or *lata*—an actual or conditional excommunication—were it not for the context, which shows that the excommunication was not actually carried into effect. St. Dionysius averted it by his prayers and entreaties. He gained his namesake at Rome and Philemon over to his way of thinking. They had previously thought with Stephen that the rebaptisers ought to be excommunicated.

two points—viz. that baptism is one, and therefore cannot be repeated, and that ancient customs are not always to be followed. On the first point he adduces a passage from Holy Scripture, which he misquotes, having, we may presume, an incorrect copy. He relies on a passage in Ecclesiasticus (xxxiv. 30), which he gives thus: 'He that is washed by one dead, what availeth his washing?' A heretic is dead, and therefore what is the use of the washing, or baptism, administered by him? But the passage really runs: 'He who washes himself after having touched a dead body, if he touches it again, of what use is his ablution?' In dealing with the question of custom he expressed himself with more conciseness than caution, so that his words have been (wrongly) interpreted as a depreciation of tradition. He says that we 'must not frame a prescription on custom, but prevail by reason'—words which, without proper explanation, may be said to contain the microbe of Rationalism. But elsewhere he says that 'custom without truth is only ancient error'—which is certain; only it is equally certain that such a custom would not prevail in the Church. The Bride of Christ is incapable of the stain of adultery, as he himself teaches elsewhere; yet she would be unchaste if she sanctioned a custom contrary to truth, to the extent that, as a matter of fact, she had taken home to herself this custom. She had, as a whole, upheld the validity of baptism conferred by heretics. One of the bishops at the third council held at Carthage on this subject said that 'Jesus Christ said "I am the truth," not "I am custom,"' which is true enough; but it is also true that He said to the Apostles in sending them out to teach, 'I am with you all days to the end of the world,' and consequently no custom on so important a matter could attain to prevail in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.¹ St. Cyprian did not really disagree with the rest of the Church as to the value of tradition, but as to the fact in this particular case. 'A sound critic,' says Bishop Freppel, 'should pronounce judgment in accordance with the entire trend of the discussion, not abuse a word which has escaped in the heat of argument.' Both

¹ Cf. Freppel's *Cyprien*, p. 337, 1890; and Rohrbacher, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, iii. pp. 306-7. Paris, 1892.

St. Cyprian and Firmilian maintained that the contrary tradition was a human one—one 'that had crept in amongst some.'¹ This was Firmilian's root mistake. He denied, or was unaware of, the antiquity and universality of the tradition against rebaptising; in other words, he failed to see that it had the two great marks of being a divine tradition—viz. antiquity and universality.²

Having insisted on the duty of upholding the unity of the Church, of yielding in nothing to the enemies of faith and truth, and of not laying down the law on the growth of custom, but seeking to triumph by reason, St. Cyprian appeals to the conduct of Peter at Antioch. He had begun his letter by mentioning that 'some of their colleagues' were in opposition—those, of course, who had led to the Numidian bishops consulting him on the question. And seeing that a second council was considered necessary, these African bishops who differed from their Primate, and probably thought that he was setting himself up as a sort of bishop of bishops, must have resisted the decree of the first council in the previous year. St. Cyprian, therefore, in a letter to a bishop named Quintus, deprecates the idea that he is forcing his own judgment in pressing concordant action on these African colleagues, and at the same time supplies them with a model of acquiescence in the suggestion of another. He adduces the example of the Primate of the Apostles. Peter himself did not, on the ground of his Primacy,³ refuse to accept a better mode of carrying out

¹ *Ep. ad Pompeium*, lxxiv.

² Freppel, *loc. cit.*

³ St. Cyprian did not 'point out that, if in consequence of this priority' (as the author of *Primitive Saints*, &c. translates *primatum*), 'St. Peter had expected St. Paul to obey him, he would have been guilty of insolence and arrogance' (*Prim. Saints*, p. 358). He assumed that St. Peter had a primacy which he might have pressed, but did not out of humility. St. Augustine (*De Bapt.* lib. ii. c. 1) quotes this passage of St. Cyprian, and speaks of 'the Apostle Peter, in whom the primacy over the Apostles is pre-eminent, with such surpassing grace,' being 'corrected by the later Apostle Paul.' And then, in comparing St. Cyprian with St. Peter (as having erred, but as not likely to resent St. Augustine's revision of his judgment on baptism by heretics), he expresses a fear lest he should be reviling Peter by the mere comparison. He says: 'For who is ignorant that *principality* over the Apostles is to be placed above any episcopate?' But if 'there is a distance between the grace of the chairs' (*i.e.* if the position of the Prince of the Apostles is beyond that of any bishop) 'their

their common faith, 'giving us thereby a pattern of concord and patience, that we should not pertinaciously love our own opinions, but should rather account as our own any true and rightful suggestions of our brethren and colleagues for the common health and weal.' He then quotes from i. Cor. xiv. 29, 30, as containing St. Paul's teaching 'that many things are revealed to individuals for the better; and that we ought not each to strive pertinaciously for what he has once imbibed and held, but if anything has appeared better and more useful, willingly to embrace it. For to have what is better offered to us is not to be instructed, but to be defeated.' He then reminds them, through Quintus, that he is himself only following the judgment of one of his predecessors, Agrippinus, who had acted after 'common counsel;' 'whose sentence, being both religious, and legitimate, and salutary, in accordance with the Catholic faith and Church, we also have followed.'

Thus, earnestly and in all humility, did our saint endeavour to bring the whole array of bishops in his own province into conformity on this practice, which, although not in his estimation a matter of necessity, yet called for harmonious action. But he treads on dangerous ground when he speaks of his discipline in the matter as a development or improvement on previous practice.

III. But in the following year St. Cyprian found it necessary to call a second council at Carthage, to consider particularly, amongst other matters, this same question. For the African bishops who had dissented from his ruling were not so easily brought into line.

This second and larger synod decided that 'those who have been washed without the Church and have, amongst heretics and schismatics, been *tainted by the defilement of profane water*, when they come to us and to the Church which is one, ought to be baptised;' and, moreover, they decided that all who had once left the Church, or had been ordained amongst the sects, could only be received back into lay communion.

glory as martyrs is one.' Neither St. Augustine's nor St. Cyprian's words can be satisfactorily explained except on the supposition that they understood St. Peter's relation to the Apostles to be one which could demand obedience. St. Augustine thus explains 'primacy' by 'principality.'

They ought not 'to retain those arms of ordination and honour wherewith they rebelled against us. It is enough that to such on their return pardon be granted.'

Closely following upon this council, St. Cyprian wrote a long letter¹ to a bishop named Jubaianus, in which he uses the arguments noticed above in answer to a letter forwarded by this bishop, and remits to him the letter of Quintus and the decree of the synod. In the course of this letter he repudiates the argument drawn from the fact that Novatian the schismatic Bishop at Rome, had taken to rebaptising. It is no concern of ours, says St. Cyprian, what he may do, who, like an ape, claims to himself the authority and truth of the Catholic Church. 'We who hold to the head and root of the one Church know . . . that he hath no hallowed office.' The 'head and root' was the Bishop of Rome, who traced to Peter (cf. p. 49), or perhaps, more strictly speaking, Peter himself, whom they reached *through Stephen and not through Novatian*.²

It was in this letter also that St. Cyprian, in defining what the Church is, where it is to be found, says in effect what St. Ambrose said, 'where Peter is, there is the Church.' He deals with the question as to where and by whom remission of sins can be given. And he at once says, that 'to Peter first, on whom He built the Church, and from whom He appointed and showed that unity should spring (§ 7, Oxf. transl.), was this power given.' And then he quotes the words spoken to Peter and the Apostles on Easter-night. So that, according to St. Cyprian, unity was to spring from Peter by our Lord's institution, and the power of remitting sins was

¹ *Ep.* lxxiii.

² Mr. Puller (*Primitive Saints*, p. 345) has mistaken the meaning of this passage through imagining that St. Cyprian is arguing with the Novatians. He is arguing with Jubaianus, or rather his correspondent, about Novatian. 'We' (*i.e.* you and I and others) 'hold to "the head and root of the one Church"' (*i.e.* the legitimate Bishop of Rome), 'and consequently we know that "nothing is lawful" to Novatian, because he is out of that one Church, separate from the head and root of the one Church.' Mr. Puller also argues that St. Cyprian could not mean Stephen by 'the head and root of the one Church,' because 'St. Cyprian was opposing Stephen' (p. 346). But this is an anachronism. Stephen had not yet appeared on the scene. Moreover, even if he had, St. Cyprian would still have held that he was the head of the Church. He would have added, that although such, he was going beyond his powers in insisting on obedience in this matter. Cf. Appendix I.

possessed in that body which had originated with the Apostolic College, of which St. Peter was the head, and his chair the origin of its unity.

It seems that the letter which Jubaianus had forwarded laid down the proposition that 'All, wheresoever and *howsoever* baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, have obtained the grace of Christ.' Against this proposition St. Cyprian urges his strongest arguments, and with some reason.

He concludes this forcible and eloquent letter with a disclaimer which is the real key to all that followed. He refuses to consider his practice in any other light than as a matter of discipline, which he had no intention of erecting into a general rule. He refuses to judge others in this matter. Each bishop is to do what he thinks right, having the 'free exercise of his judgment.' (§ 22.) This was the burden of his teaching on this subject, that it was a matter in which each bishop was free to administer his own diocese as he thought fit. There seems little doubt but that St. Cyprian knew that a different practice prevailed at Rome. But he did not place this matter on a level with the treatment of the lapsed; there the dogmatic faith seemed to be more nearly concerned, and on that point it seemed to him necessary that the practice of all the Churches should be one (cf. p. 52). Accordingly he submitted his judgment on that question to the Roman clergy.

The weak point in St. Cyprian's attitude was that, whilst he again and again declared that every African bishop should be free to act as he thought best, he yet supported his own practice by considerations of great dogmatic importance. He says, 'We ought to keep firmly the truth and faith of the Catholic Church;' and yet he is for leaving each bishop free to do as he thinks best. If it was part of the Church's faith, how could he leave it open? If it was not part of the Church's faith, was he not too vehement and somewhat overbearing? But as St. Augustine says, in regard to the whole matter, on which he so profoundly disagreed with St. Cyprian, 'We are men.' There are inconsistencies from which saints are not wholly free.

IV. The matter having gone thus far, St. Cyprian turned to

Rome. He had done the same before. Even when the see was vacant he had written to the clergy who administered the affairs of the Church there in the following words;¹ 'I have thought it necessary to write this letter to you wherein an account might be given you of my acts, discipline, and diligence.' Again, 'Nor in this did I lay down a law,² or rashly make myself its author. But . . . I thought it right to abide by what was your opinion also, lest our conduct in the ministry, which ought to be united and to agree in all things, should in any respect differ.'

Accordingly he now sends his report of the two synods, together with his letters to Quintus and Jubaianus, to the Pope. The matter, he says, concerned their 'common honour,' *i.e.* the dignity of the priesthood and the privileges of the Christian name,³ and accordingly it was especially needful that they should 'confer' with St. Stephen's 'weight and wisdom' (*vel maxime tibi scribendum et cum tua gravitate et sapientia conferendum*). St. Cyprian and the bishops of the synod end with carefully defining their attitude towards their African colleagues, whose contrary practice had led to the question of the Numidian bishops and to the whole discussion. They say that they know that these 'certain bishops are unwilling to lay aside what they have once adopted (or imbibed), nor will they readily change their practice, but will to retain certain ways of their own which have once come into use among them, keeping the bond of peace and concord with their colleagues. *In which matter* we put no force on anyone, nor do we lay down the law⁴ (cf. Ep. xx.), since every prelate has the free use of his own will in the administration of his Church,' *i.e.* in this matter. We must emphasise the words 'in which matter,'⁵ to save St. Cyprian from the grossest inconsistency as compared with his conduct in other matters.

Such, then, was the state of things when St. Cyprian carried

¹ Ep. xx. B. xiv.

² 'Nec in hoc legem dedi.'

³ That this is the meaning of the expression 'pro communi honore' (§ 3) seems quite certain, from the use of the word 'honores' in § 2, and from the 'honoramus' in the sentence immediately preceding. It is translated 'by reason of mutual respect' in *Prim. Saints*, p. 74, in disregard of the context.

⁴ 'Nec legem damus.'

⁵ Ep. lxxii. § 3.

the matter to Rome, 'assured' (so he says to St. Stephen) 'that you, in virtue of the truth of your religion and faith [will] approve of things that are equally religious and true.'¹

The point, then, on which St. Cyprian considered that St. Stephen ought to be consulted (*conferendum*) was one on which the African bishops refused to judge others or to use any force save that of persuasion, to bring them into line. It was not a matter of faith, and therefore it was one on which each bishop could use his own judgment in the administration of his diocese. There were bishops in Africa who did use their own judgment, and who refused to conform to what they considered a novelty. St. Cyprian accordingly used every effort short of force to persuade them that they were going as close to betraying the faith as it was possible to do without actually forfeiting the communion of their colleagues. These refractory bishops, as he deemed them, pleaded ancient custom on their side; and St. Cyprian replied that his custom was not new—it was, in fact, about twenty years old in Africa—and that the discipline which he advocated corresponded to the 'better things revealed,' of which the Apostle Paul had spoken as possible in the Church. As for those who had lived and died in the past having been baptised by heretics, and not rebaptised on their reconciliation to the Church, they must be left to the mercy of God. As for the succession of the episcopate from the Apostles—lost according to this theory—St. Cyprian did not enter upon that question. In fact, as St. Augustine says more than once, the question was one which had not been thoroughly sifted and elucidated.

V. One more council, and that a still larger and more important one, was now held at Carthage. The exact occasion of this council is a question of great difficulty. It is often thought to have been occasioned by the reception of St.

¹ I have given these words in full because (quite unaccountably, as it seems to me) they have been adduced as a proof that St. Cyprian could not have believed 'the Pope to be the infallible monarch of the Church' (*Primitive Saints*, pp. 75, 76). Surely to say that if you believe a thing to be true you believe it will be sanctioned by authority is not saying that that authority is fallible. If anything, your words would show the contrary. As a matter of fact, as will be shown later on, the question of infallibility, as defined by the Vatican decrees, does not come under discussion in this whole matter.

Stephen's answer to the African bishops. But there is this (as it seems to me insuperable) difficulty in the way of considering it to be an answer to St. Stephen's letter, viz. that the letter is not once mentioned. No parallel, I suppose, can be adduced to this save the refusal of Dioscorus at the Robber Council of Ephesus to read the Tome of St. Leo. But who would institute a parallel between our saint and that miserable archbishop? Bishop Freppel thinks that it was a supreme act of homage to the Holy See that prevented St. Cyprian from discussing St. Stephen's letter in synod, when he disagreed with it. This seems to me highly improbable. St. Cyprian's holy passion for unity might arrest his vehement opposition to the decision of St. Stephen at any moment; and he might feel that he who had spoken of the See of Rome as 'the chair of Peter, and the principal Church, whence episcopal unity took its rise,' could not be the man to dissect and depreciate a decision of the successor of Peter in open synod, however he might tear it to pieces in writing to an individual like Pompeius.¹ But there are reasons why he could not have yet received that letter.

For the difficulty is that, not only is there *no mention* of the letter of St. Stephen—the letters of Jubaianus to Cyprian, and of Cyprian to Jubaianus alone are said to have been read, and the letter of St. Cyprian to St. Stephen²—but the answers of the bishops and the words of St. Cyprian are not in the least what we should have expected had they met under the 'irritation' which St. Augustine attributes to Cyprian on the receipt of St. Stephen's letter. They speak of some 'amongst us' upholding heretics and opposing Christians. And the whole record exactly fits in with the supposition that the opposition of some African bishops had become so serious as to call for a fresh council on their account alone.

Add to this, that St. Augustine nowhere supposes that these bishops in the third council are answering St. Stephen, and in places where many writers have seen an allusion to the Pope, he discerns none. He refutes every remark they make, and shows the fallacies in St. Cyprian's reasoning point

¹ Cf. *Ep. ad Pompeium*.

² Cf. speech of Bishop Crescens of Cirta, Mansi, t. i. p. 954; also St. Cyprian's speech, *infra*, p. 91, lines 26, 27, 28.

by point, but he nowhere understands that our saint's remarks are aimed at the Pope. What things St. Cyprian did 'pour out in irritation' against St. Stephen in his letter to Pompeius, he does not 'rehandle' (*retractare nolo*), both because they lay on the dangerous border-land of harmful dissension,¹ and because they were the same in substance as the points he had already discussed.² The effusions of Cyprian under irritation were evidently confined, according to St. Augustine, to his letter to Pompeius.³

Once more, had the council been dealing with St. Stephen's letter, the bishops must have met the salient point of that letter more directly and more frequently. The point of St. Stephen's ruling was, as we shall see, connected with traditional custom; but only two of the bishops in the council deal with this point at all, and they only repeat words which had been uttered by St. Cyprian in his answer to the writer mentioned by Jubaianus, and that answer was avowedly written before St. Stephen's letter reached Africa.

The only supposition on which it can be maintained that this council was held after the reception of the papal decision and by reason of it, would be that St. Cyprian read it and showed it to none of the bishops,⁴ and then called a council in which absolute silence was kept as to its existence; or that all these bishops had seen it, but all agreed not to mention it, but to deal instead with the anonymous correspondent whose letter Jubaianus had forwarded to Cyprian. They must have decided to ignore the main contention of St. Stephen's letter, and simply assert their determination to adhere to their own judgments, without saying one word as to the position in which they found themselves, of separation from 'the chair of Peter, the principal Church, whence episcopal unity took its rise,' and from those Romans 'to whom,' according to St. Cyprian, 'faithlessness could have no access.' But what council ever met to discuss a proposal or decision from another part of the Church, without dealing directly with the terms of the decision in question?

¹ 'Periculum perniciosæ dissensionis habuerunt' (*De Bapt.* v. 25).

² 'Eadem quippe ipsa dicuntur, quæ jam satis discussa sunt.'

³ Compare *De Bapt.* v. 25 with v. 23.

⁴ Pompeius asked for a copy of it; but he was absent from the council.

All, on the contrary, is perfectly clear on the supposition that the dissentient African bishops had shown their hands sufficiently to make it evident that they meant to adhere to the known custom of Rome, even without having received any definitive sentence in their favour, and that this was the cause of the synod. St. Cyprian, probably, in his enthusiasm, and the conviction that he was right, counted, as indeed he says,¹ on Rome taking the same ground as he and the greater part of his colleagues in Africa had assumed, viz. that all should be left to go on with their old customs; and thus he would be left free to bring the dissentients in Africa into harmony with his own practice. He may have thought that Rome would even adopt the 'better way' which had been revealed, as he deposed, to himself and others. But, anyhow, he must have counted upon the question being left sufficiently open to leave him free to do his best to produce uniformity in his own province. We cannot suppose that he was deliberately breaking the peace of the Church on a matter which he admitted to be amongst those on which a different line of action could be permitted. St. Augustine does, indeed, accuse him of unintentionally producing a rupture; but that is quite a different matter.²

The Council, then, opened with reading the correspondence between Jubaianus and Cyprian, and the letter which the latter had written to St. Stephen in the name of his colleagues. St. Cyprian then made the opening speech, saying that they had met to discuss the question raised in the correspondence between himself and Jubaianus, which, we must remember, included a letter written to the latter, arraigning the policy of Cyprian. He says further that each bishop is to say what he thinks, judging no one, nor removing anyone from the right of communion, if he holds a different opinion.³

It is difficult not to feel that St. Cyprian might very naturally be accused of unduly pressing the whole matter, and of using his great position for the purpose. His position in the Latin world was second only to that of the Bishop of Rome. But his was not an apostolic, much less the Apostolic See. He could appeal to no divine institution in regard to his

¹ *Ep.* lxxii. 3.

² *De Bapt.* v. 25.

³ Mansi, t. i. p. 953.

see. His relationship to his bishops was not that of the Bishop of Rome towards the episcopate. To assume such a relationship on the part of any one bishop to any other in those parts would be the assumption of a *self-constituted* relationship. They had no right to such a position. In issuing an edict, therefore, they wished to be careful not to act as Tertullian, St. Cyprian's master, had, in his fallen days, accused Zephyrinus, the Pope, of doing, viz. 'I hear that an edict has been issued, and a *peremptory* one indeed, to wit, the Chief Pontiff, that is the bishop of bishops, proclaims, "I remit to those who have done penance the crimes," &c.; this is read in the Church, and openly announced in the Church.' ('De Pudic.' c. i.)¹

They were not, says St. Cyprian, in Africa about to issue a general edict which would control the action of every other bishop. Although Cyprian was their Primate, he was not Pontifex Maximus of the Christian religion, and he did not mean to act as if he were. 'For no one of us constitutes himself bishop of bishops, or drives his own colleagues to the accepting of obedience by the terrorising of a tyrant, since it is open to every bishop to form his own judgment, in the free use of his liberty and power, and he can no more be judged by another than he can judge another. But let us one and all look for the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has the power by Himself both of setting us over (others) in the government of his Church, and of judging concerning our act.' St. Cyprian could not mean to say that a Marcian of Arles could not be judged by any bishop, nor a Privatus (cf. p. 67) be deposed from his see. He could not mean to put himself at variance with the whole practice of the Church in his own and after times. What he disavowed was obviously either the exercise of authority on a matter which he considered to be merely one of variable discipline, or the use of his primacy in a tyrannical way. His words contain no judgment as to whether anyone had been divinely constituted bishop of

¹ Whilst there is an obvious reference to Tertullian's words, there is no necessary reference to St. Stephen. We often say 'I will not act the Pope' without meaning to deny that there is someone who is entitled to act as Pope.

bishops. They merely remind the African bishops that no one of themselves held such a relationship.

'What,' says St. Augustine, 'can be more mild? What more humble?' And he elsewhere insists upon it that St. Cyprian meant what he said, and did not use these words of meekness merely to cajole¹ the bishops into speaking out their minds, with the view of afterwards bearing hardly upon them. No, the purpose of his speech was honestly to encourage them to say what they really thought, in spite of their Primate's presence. St. Augustine compares with these words what St. Cyprian said to Jubaianus and to Magnus, and says that it is apparent from these just quoted that smaller things were dealt with on which there had been no clear 'declaration,' but which 'being still unlocked were being sought for with great effort.' He considers himself to be in a different position from Cyprian, 'holding now the custom of the universal Church which is to be acknowledged on every side, and which has been confirmed by general councils.

The council decided that the custom of rebaptising those who had been baptised by heretics was the better way.²

¹ 'Securitate captaret' (*De Bapt.* vi. 7).

² The Bollandist Life of St. Cyprian (Fr. Suyskens, S. J.) takes the same view of St. Cyprian's use of the expression 'Bishop of bishops.'

CHAPTER VIII.

ROME'S DECISION AND CYPRIAN'S IRRITATION.

I. THERE are no means of deciding how long an interval elapsed between the dispatch of the letter to Stephen¹ and the papal decision in reply. Neither have we the reply itself. The actual decision was, it would seem, contained in one short sentence. That single sentence, however, is evidence sufficient, and more than sufficient, to justify the esteem in which St. Stephen was held by all antiquity, and in particular the epithet which St. Vincent of Lerins applies to that Pope in recording this passage of Church history. 'St. Stephen,' he says, was a man 'holy and prudent.'

Let us suppose for a moment that St. Stephen had been carried away by respect for St. Cyprian's great name in the Church. A false principle as to the sacrament of baptism, nay, as to the nature of more than one sacrament, would have spread like wildfire throughout the Church. It was a very natural deduction from the truth of the unity of the Church, and from a high esteem of the privileges and gifts of the Church, to suppose that these could not be conferred even in any germinant way, or dormant character, by those who were outside the visible fold. But it was a false inference, for it involved a wrong answer to the question as to whether the sacrament in its process of bestowal was wholly Christ's, or in fact, the gift of the instrument. So that the matter, although a question of discipline, really bordered upon the vitals of the faith. It had, however, not yet been elucidated in all its bearings. The Church, as she passed along the stream of time, was discovering more and more the meaning of her deposit of truth. But she entered into the full significance of her treasures through the gradual settlement of difficulties as

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 88.

they emerged, one by one, and called for patient discussion and then final settlement. The full meaning of the 'character' of the initial sacrament of the Christian covenant was now entering upon a further stage. But it could not be weighed under all circumstances; and perchance the present were unfavourable to its calm investigation. There was no possibility of a general gathering of the Church's rulers; at any rate a few months hence, even if the Pope had thought of a wider council, a new fiery persecution set in, during which he was destined to win the martyr's crown.

What, then, did St. Stephen do? He laid down the ancient custom, and he forbade innovation upon it. He took the side of the dissentient African bishops. He indicated the dangerous nature of the new departure, and so far from allowing the practice, which had set in, to be one on which difference could be permitted, he thought that those who persisted in it must forfeit that ecclesiastical intercourse with the rest of the Christian Church which was the sign and seal of their being true to the one faith. 'Abstinendos putat,' said St. Cyprian—'he [Stephen] thinks they ought to be excommunicated.' St. Stephen reminded St. Cyprian that he was the successor of that Peter, of whom he had written so well in his treatise on Unity, on whom our Lord built his Church; that he occupied that chair of Peter of which St. Cyprian had once spoken so warmly, and was the head of that 'ruling Church whence sacerdotal unity took its rise.' He therefore put St. Cyprian on his obedience. He decided that: 'If any shall come to you from any heresy whatsoever, let there be no innovation but (let that be observed) which has been handed down—viz. that hands be laid on such in sign of penitence.'¹

It will be noticed that in this decision the Pope avoided the language to which St. Cyprian demurs in his letter to Jubaianus. He does not say 'All, *howsoever* baptised'—for that might be taken to include an alteration of the form of baptism—but 'whatsoever heresy.' The point in dispute was as to whether those outside the unity of the Church could baptise. The adjudication of St. Stephen was that they

¹ Cf. Jungmann, *Diss. Hist.* iv. 76.

could, the use of the proper form being understood. So it was, as a matter of fact, always understood.

Thus St. Stephen refused to enter upon the dogmatic portion of the dispute, but simply laid down the line to be followed in practice. He issued no *ex cathedra* definition on the matter of faith, but directed the action of the Church. He decided that the new method of dealing with the baptism of heretics was closely allied to heretical notions concerning that sacrament, and therefore authoritatively forbade its continuance. He discountenanced St. Cyprian's programme of letting alone those who adopted a different method of discipline. It was a matter on which the Church ought to be at one. So much so that he was obliged to tell our saint that he should no longer be able to hold communion with him if he persisted in his present course.

As the successor of that Apostle on whom our Lord had built His Church, he felt compelled to insist on conformity in Africa to the custom followed in Rome, which, as St. Augustine more than once asserts, had come down from the Apostles themselves.

There was one point of view from which St. Cyprian's action was less dangerous than if the truth had lain the other way. He was rebaptising those who did not need it. Had he been omitting to baptise some who needed it, the case would have been one for insisting on immediate obedience; but as it was, he only did what involved no loss to others. This action, however, might lead to false views concerning the validity of the sacrament, and, indeed, was based on such false views; and, as a matter of fact, part of St. Augustine's life had to be spent in refuting St. Cyprian's arguments, and wresting his authority from the lips of the Donatists. St. Augustine, however, was able to insist upon St. Cyprian's example as of more account than his unfortunate arguments against the validity of baptism by heretics. He would not break away from the Church. This was, to St. Augustine, the virtue of virtues in St. Cyprian's life. There was a stain in that life which he knew his glorious martyrdom had washed away;¹ but there was one grand

¹ *Ep. xciii.*

grace exhibited, the grace of charity which held him within the unity of the Church when he might have headed a schism, and had indeed every temptation to inaugurate an independent national Church.

II. On receiving St. Stephen's decision, St. Cyprian seems to have immediately sent off legates to Rome with the hope of inducing the Pope to change his mind. But in vain. Nothing, indeed, could have been more inopportune than the appearance of these African bishops in the Eternal City just at that moment. The Pope was in the midst of trouble from the Novatians, and the Novatians had begun to rebaptise those whom they allured from the Catholic Church. These African bishops would find themselves at one with those pestilent heretics, and the great name of Cyprian would add to the confusion. St. Stephen determined that the Africans should not stay in Rome a single night. They were bidden to depart home at once. And judging from the number of events which crowd themselves into¹ these few months, they must have left Rome immediately. The matter was not one on which St. Stephen was prepared to receive a mission, and, if we may trust what Firmilian says on the subject, Catholics were forbidden to shelter the legates a single night. If, indeed, as is almost certain, St. Stephen knew of the third Council of Carthage, held, as that was, either with the knowledge of his decision or, as is more probable, in view of what they knew to be the practice at Rome, he was fully justified in taking decisive measures to prevent resistance spreading. Anyhow, he would not admit them to conference; there was, indeed, no necessity, seeing that they did not come by appointment.

III. These African legates, therefore, returned home, and a messenger was immediately dispatched to the East. St. Cyprian knew that he had sympathisers there, and would fain take counsel with those who had already entered upon a somewhat similar career. He wrote and told Firmilian, the great Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, that St. Stephen—to quote the words he used to another bishop (Pompeius)—

¹ Cf. Dom. Maran. *De Vita Cypriani*, and Tillemont's admission that everything must have been done with the utmost speed, *infra*, p. 100.

'thinks that priests of God, defending the truth of Christ and the unity of the Church, are to be excommunicated.' We may take it for granted that Firmilian had not been actually excommunicated, for it would have been contrary to all St. Cyprian's previous teaching to have sought help from him if he had. Let alone any deference to the See of Rome as the chair of Peter, she was on any view of the matter the mother-Church of Africa, so much so that St. Augustine expressed his conviction that it was impossible to find an instance in which Eastern bishops communicated with African bishops except through Rome. But Firmilian was now, or at any rate had been but recently, engaged in the same discussion, and accordingly St. Cyprian turned to him to see if together they could induce the Pope to reconsider his decision. Mere messages of sympathy would be out of the question with such earnest souls; the question was, what was to be done?

But before we consider Firmilian's answer, it will be well to recollect the only indication of St. Cyprian's mind which we have from his own pen. He wrote about this time to a bishop, who was not present at the Council of Carthage, but who had asked to see St. Stephen's letter. St. Cyprian, judging from the ending of his reply, sent him the decision of the council, at which we know from the Acts this bishop had himself voted by proxy, and at the same time poured out in the bitterness of his soul what he thought of the Pope's letter. St. Augustine, whilst refuting one or two statements of this letter of Cyprian's, refuses to go further, on the ground that he had already dealt with similar statements, and that it would be better to pass by the rest, as it had in it 'the danger of pernicious dissent.' One would gladly do the same,¹ but as the letter has been dragged into the question of St. Cyprian's allegiance to Rome, one is forced to produce its statements in some fulness. It must be premised that we do not possess St. Stephen's letter itself, and that St. Augustine, with all his great love for St. Cyprian, speaks of this letter as bearing the marks of irritation.

¹ St. Vincent of Lerins compares the Donatists' action in bringing forward St. Cyprian so prominently in this matter to that of Ham towards his father.

St. Cyprian then, in this letter to Pompeius,¹ speaks of St. Stephen's error as that of 'upholding the cause of heretics against Christians and against the Church of God'—of things in the Pope's letter as 'arrogant, beside the purpose, or self-contradictory,' 'written without due instruction and caution.' He says that St. Stephen 'communicating with the baptism of all has heaped up the sins of all in one mass into his own bosom,' and that he, 'forgetful of unity, adopts the deceitful defilements of a profane immersion.' After using arguments which St. Augustine has shown to be fallacious, he pursues his declaration against the Pope thus: 'Does he give glory to God who communicates with the baptism of Marcion? Does he give glory to God who judges that remission of sins is given by those who blaspheme God? . . . Does he give glory to God who, the friend of heretics and enemy to Christians, thinks that priests of God, defending the truth of Christ and the unity of the Church, are to be excommunicated? . . . let us cast aside our arms, let us yield ourselves captives, let us deliver over to the devil the ordering of the Gospel, the appointments of Christ, the majesty of God: be the sacramental oaths of our divine warfare loosed, the ensigns of the heavenly camp abandoned; let the Church bow down and give way to heretics, light to darkness, faith to faithlessness, hope to despair, reason to error, immortality to death, charity to hatred, truth to falsehood, Christ to Antichrist.' All this, and a great deal more, which he proceeds to describe with his own fervid eloquence, was to happen if the baptism by heretics was not disallowed. All this would happen if the practice followed on all sides in this country at this day, by every considerable religious body in existence, is to be countenanced! We are all of us against Cyprian in this matter, and yet, according to Cyprian, 'if the fear of God abides with us, if regard to the faith prevail, if we keep the precepts of Christ, if we maintain the sanctity of His spouse incorrupt and inviolate, if the words of the Lord cleave to our thoughts and hearts,' &c., we shall reverse our practice, and the Roman

¹ *Ep.* lxxiv.

Catholic will rebaptise the Anglican;¹ and the Anglican will rebaptise the Roman, and each will rebaptise the Wesleyan, and we shall generally deny to one another the name of Christian.

IV. All this, however, is nothing compared with what Firmilian poured forth in answer to St. Cyprian. Dr. Döllinger thus describes the two letters:—‘We are acquainted with the sentence of the Pontiff only through fragments which have been preserved by St. Cyprian and Firmilian: by the first in his severe and harsh letter to Pompeius, and by the second in his bitter and passionate answer to St. Stephen, addressed to St. Cyprian. Both endeavour to place the opinions of the Pope in the most unfavourable light.’²

It has been argued, with much force, by the Benedictine editor of St. Cyprian (Migne's edition), that the legates must have been sent to Rome after the *second* council held at Carthage on the subject of baptism, because from this letter of Firmilian's we find that St. Cyprian's messengers were to return to Africa before the winter. If they left Africa after the third council, the legates would have had within a few months to journey to Rome, and thence back to St. Cyprian, and St. Cyprian's messenger (Rogatian) must have left Cappadocia at once and returned to Africa before the winter had set in. Tillemont admits the difficulties of this supposition, but maintains that it was, nevertheless, possible. The Bollandist writer of St. Cyprian's Life agrees with Tillemont, as also does Hefele. We have, indeed, only to suppose that the legates, *as soon as* they set foot in Rome, were told that their errand was a hopeless one, and induced to return *at once*, and that the deacon sent by Cyprian, on their return to Cappadocia, was detained by Firmilian the *shortest possible time* consistent with the bishop being able to put pen to paper and write off a reply. This will probably account for much of the peculiar character of that letter. Twice does Firmilian speak of being pressed for time. Rogatianus, the deacon, was waiting—‘Your messenger was in haste to return to you, and the

¹ As a matter of fact, where the right matter and form has been certainly used, this is never done.

² *Geschichte*, Periode I. § 29, p. 304: ‘mit Bitterkeit und Leidenschaft.’ Firmilian's letter is found amongst St. Cyprian's, *Ep.* lxxv.

winter season was close at hand.’ Firmilian must have read St. Cyprian's letter again and again with a certain feverish haste, and even (he says) ‘committed it to memory.’ He seems to have at length reached the boiling-point, and as the fire kindled, he poured forth a burning stream of indignant rhetoric against Stephen, which has hardly its equal in ecclesiastical literature for nervous eloquence, passionate indignation, and bitter invective.

He opens with expressing his joy at finding the blessing of concord with his correspondent, and says that for this experience of unity with the African Primate he has to thank Stephen, although, he adds, the Pope has not thereby done a good work any more than did Judas, who was an instrument of the blessings of the Passion. After a beautiful passage on unity, he excuses himself for repeating the same things as Cyprian has said, whilst he adds some things by way of accumulating proof, and he regrets that he has been unable to consult his annual synod.

He then attacks what St. Stephen is supposed to have said; he denies that the Apostles could have admitted those who had been baptised by heretics without rebaptising them, because there were no sufficiently execrable heretics to baptise—a version of history of which St. Cyprian could not have approved. He then says that Stephen, unlike his predecessors in such matters as the observance of Easter, has now made the first ‘departure from the peace and unity of the Catholic Church . . . breaking this peace with you . . . defaming the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, as if they had handed this down’—the tradition is therefore human. He then protests against following heretics (as if St. Stephen meant this, when he quoted their custom to show the ancient tradition of the Church), and deposes that ‘a heretic cannot lawfully’ (he means validly, or else he misrepresents St. Stephen) ‘ordain, or lay on hands, neither can he baptise or do any spiritual act.’

He then attacks St. Stephen for maintaining what he never did—viz. that remission of sins can follow from the baptism of heretics simply,¹ and scouts the idea that any

¹ The remission of sin followed upon conversion—the baptism then taking effect, and issuing in sanctification.

reasonable person would either maintain or believe 'that this mere invocation of the names would suffice for the remission of sins and the sanctification of baptism' (showing that he missed the point of the Church's doctrine in the matter), and then gives an instance in which it would be absurd to suppose this. He next emphasises the unity of the Spouse of Christ, and says that 'the synagogue of heretics is not one with us, because neither is the spouse an adulteress and a harlot. Wherefore neither can she bring forth the sons of God, unless, indeed, as Stephen seems to think, heresy brings them forth and exposes them, but the Church takes them up when exposed, and nourishes as her own whom she did not bring forth.' His misunderstanding of the teaching of St. Stephen is here again complete.

He then enters upon the subject of Apostolic Succession. 'Christ said to Peter alone, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," &c., and again in the Gospels, when Christ breathed on the Apostles only, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit," &c. The power then of remitting sins was given to the Apostles and to the Churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the bishops who succeeded them by vicarious ordination.' And then follows a passage of supreme importance as regards the Petrine prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome. 'Herein,' says Firmilian, 'I am justly indignant at such open and manifest folly in Stephen, that he who thus¹ boasts of the seat of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid, *introduces many other rocks*, and establishes new edifices of many Churches [*i.e.* admits the reality of many new Churches] whilst he defends, by his authority [the position] that baptism is there'—amongst them. 'For those who are baptised, without doubt, fill up the number of the Church.'

One cannot but pause here to notice two things. First, the piteous misunderstanding of the teaching of St. Stephen into which Firmilian had fallen, which, nevertheless, has its

¹ 'Thus' (*sic*), not 'so,' as in *Primitive Saints*, p. 84. 'So' introduces the idea of excessive, unjustifiable boasting, which is not necessarily contained in the adverb 'thus.'

bright side, for if¹ this had been the teaching of Rome, he would have been justified in opposing it. Secondly, the tremendous witness which Firmilian's words bear to the recognised position of the Bishop of Rome. Firmilian is not indignant that St. Stephen put forth with such prominence his position as the successor of Peter. He has no expressions of astonishment at this, as though it were a new claim. And yet it is inconceivable that he should not have exclaimed against the presumption of such a claim had it been unwarranted or new. No, Firmilian is only indignant that he, in the very moment and act in which he realises and places in prominence his relationship to Peter, should be making *other rocks*, by admitting the validity of heretical baptism. He goes on to argue that the successor of Peter himself 'in a manner effaces the truth of the Christian *rock*.' In fact he effaces himself. In this he is worse, says Firmilian, than the Jews. They had a 'zeal for God;' Stephen has none at the very moment when he (truly enough²) proclaims that he occupies by succession the chair of Peter, 'for he concedes to them the greatest of all graces.' He might just as well go on 'to join their assemblies and mingle his prayers with them and set up a common altar and sacrifice (§ 18).

He then deals with the argument from custom, and says that the Jews clung to their old custom when Christ came, 'disregarding the new way of truth.' Firmilian, like St. Cyprian, at one moment depreciates custom, at another claims it in his own behalf.

And now his passionate indignation altogether gets the better of him. His words, beginning with the mention of Stephen in the third person, suddenly burst into an apostrophe: 'When thou communicatest with the baptism of heretics, what else dost thou but drink of their mire and mud, and, after having been cleansed with the sanctification of the Church, becomest defiled with the contagion of others' filth?

¹ See p. 79 for the real state of the matter.

² I have inserted these words mainly as a balance against the unjustifiable assumption made by some that Firmilian is condemning St. Stephen's claim. He does not say this: his words by themselves pass by the question of the justice of the claim, but they presuppose it.

. . . . Yea, thou art worse than all heretics . . . thou abettest their errors . . . and increasest the darkness of the night of heresy. And whereas they confess that they are in sin and have no grace, and therefore come to the Church, thou withdrawest from them the remission of sins which is given in baptism, in that thou sayest that they have been already baptised and, outside the Church, have obtained the grace of the Church' (again the same misunderstanding as to the teaching of Rome), 'nor dost thou consider that their souls will be required at your hand when the Day of Judgment shall come, who deniedst to those atheists the drink of the Church; and to such as long to live thou wast the cause of death. And withal thou art indignant! See with what ignorance¹ thou dost dare to blame those who contend for the truth against falsehood; . . . it is plain that the ignorant are vehement and given to anger, whilst through poverty of counsel and argument they are easily moved to wrath, so that the Holy Scripture *says of no one more than thee*, "An excited man provokes² strifes, and an angry man heaps up sins" (Prov. xxix. 22). For what great strifes and dissensions hast thou provoked through the Churches of the whole world! What a great sin didst thou heap upon thyself when thou didst cut thyself off³ from so many flocks! For thou hast cut thyself off. Do not deceive thyself, since he is truly schismatic who has made himself an apostate from the communion of ecclesiastical unity: for whilst thou dost think that all may be excommunicated from thee, thou hast excommunicated thyself alone from all. . . . What can be more *lowly* and *meek* than to have disagreed with so many bishops throughout the world, breaking peace with them each by varying kinds of discord—now with the Easterns (which we feel confident you [in Africa] are aware of), now with yourselves, who are in the South; from whom he received episcopal legates with patience and meekness enough, so that he did not even admit them to a hearing⁴—nay, further, so that,

¹ 'Imperitia.'

² 'Parat.' Some editions have 'parit.'

³ By taking the line of condemning the new practice—'dum enim putas omnes a te abstinere posse, solum te ab omnibus abstinuisti.' It is 'posse.' It obviously refers, not to power in any, but in this, case.

⁴ 'Sermonem colloquii communis.'

mindful of love and charity, he instructed the whole brotherhood not any one of them to receive them into his house, so that on their coming there, not only peace and communion, but roof and hospitality should be denied them? This is to have kept the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to cut himself off from the unity of charity, and to make himself in all things strange to the brethren, and to rebel against the sacrament and the faith with the fury of contumacious discord. With such an one, can there be one body and one spirit, with whom, perchance, there is not one soul, so slippery is it, so shifting, so uncertain?'

Here at length Firmilian comes to anchor. He proposes to return to the 'greater question.' But he can only restrain himself for a few sentences. For he winds up with saying, 'And yet Stephen is not ashamed to give support to such against the Church, and for the sake of upholding heretics to divide the brotherhood; nor, further, to call Cyprian a false Christ, a false Apostle, a deceitful worker. He [*i.e.* Stephen], conscious that all these marks are in himself, was beforehand, so as lyingly to object to another what he was himself deserving to be called.'

This unique specimen of correspondence closes with using the plural, as though it were the opinion of several bishops.¹

V. The question occurs as to how far this extraordinary letter, with its misinterpretations and obvious exaggerations, can be held to prove that St. Stephen issued a formal sentence of excommunication against St. Cyprian.

It is necessary to repeat,² that excommunication is a wide term, including that suspension of ecclesiastical intercourse between various portions of the Church which did not mean that either of them considered the other to be in schism. If

¹ I have never been able to discover on what grounds the assertion is often made that St. Cyprian published this letter himself. The mere fact of its having been ultimately bound up in the collections of St. Cyprian's letters proves nothing, for those collections were subsequent to his time. Indeed, the supposition that he translated it himself into Latin (we do not possess the original) is mere conjecture. Fr. Suyskens (S. J.), the author of the Bollandist Life, does not believe that he did. The matter has not received its final settlement.

² P. 41.

at any time during the strife between Rome and Africa, the question had been asked at Rome, 'Which is the legitimate Bishop of Carthage, Cyprian or Fortunatus?' there can be no doubt that the answer would have been, 'There is only one Bishop of Carthage, and that is Cyprian.' It is necessary to mention this, because the Cyprianic struggle has been pressed into the service of a theory which regards communion with Rome as a matter of perfect indifference in determining the schismatic position of a religious body.¹ But it is one thing to be so separated from the chair of Peter as that another bishop could be placed by Rome in the same city as its true and legitimate bishop; it is another thing to be only so far out of communion as that ecclesiastical intercourse is suspended. In these days of quick intercourse, when we can confer together by the flash of wire, or at any rate by the rapidity of the rail, the same state of things could not arise as in the times of Cyprian. It is the part of the inspector, in determining the alleged identity of a stream with a certain source, to examine into the elements of which the two are composed, and to decide upon the existence or non-existence of the same essential ingredients in each. So with the question of the identity alleged to exist between the Rome of today and the recognition of her position on the one hand, and on the other hand the Rome of St. Cyprian's time, and her relationship to the rest of the Church under the very dissimilar circumstances of the third century. Could the Church, as we observe her in action in that century, have developed into a heap of *independent* National Churches with no sort of intercourse without parting with principles then deemed essential? The answer that has been given is, that 'if St. Cyprian and St. Firmilian were really excommunicated, and if they nevertheless refused to alter either the teaching or the practice condemned by Rome, then it is clear that neither of these saints nor their colleagues in Africa and Asia Minor could have considered that communion with the Pope was an essential matter.'² In other words there can be independent National Churches.

¹ Cf. *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, ch. ii.

² *Ibid.* p. 325.

It is natural, in answer to this position, to ask why both St. Cyprian and Firmilian were so disturbed, if their communion with Rome was not essential?

But the full answer is, first, that the evidence for the excommunication of St. Cyprian and Firmilian *in the fullest sense of the term* is not (to say the least) plain. Baronius and Mansi think that the excommunication was carried out, but it is not clear what measure of separation they understand by the term. They have not, however, been followed by Catholic writers in general. Pagius, Natalis Alexander, the Bollandists, Hefele, Döllinger, Freppel and Jungmann, to mention no others, do not consider that the evidence at our disposal is sufficient to justify us in saying that the excommunication was actually carried out. The only direct evidence is Firmilian's letter. But a letter so full of misrepresentations, and of bitter invective, is (to say the least) not above suspicion as evidence on such a point. Firmilian made out that all the world was against St. Stephen: St. Augustine, with greater truth, spoke of Firmilian and his sympathisers as a handful compared with the bishops who held with Stephen. It would be in perfect keeping with the rest of the letter of Firmilian if, on learning from St. Cyprian that the Pope contemplated excommunicating those who *persisted in* maintaining their custom, he proceeded to picture the excommunication as actual, and forthwith declared that this would be tantamount to cutting *himself* off, and leaving himself without any in the Church to symbolise with him; only in his rhetorical and passionate way of speaking he said, 'By doing this, you *have* cut yourself off and stand alone.' Of course it was ridiculously untrue to say that St. Stephen had been disagreeing with so many bishops '*throughout the whole world, breaking peace with them severally in various modes of discord;*' but the expression need not be pressed, occurring as it does in such a letter, any more than the assertion that the Pope wished to excommunicate 'all' should be pressed.

And St. Dionysius' words referring to St. Stephen's previous communication with Firmilian himself, viz. 'he wrote as not about to communicate with them either,' cannot fairly be pressed as necessarily meaning more than that he was not

going to communicate with them if they persisted in their own line. Certainly, Firmilian nowhere drops a hint that he and his colleagues were under actual excommunication. His wrath is reserved for the Pope's condemnation of St. Cyprian. He never says, 'We are in the same case: he has excommunicated us.' And yet it is inconceivable that he should not have said so, if it was the fact. Nor can it be successfully maintained that the case of Firmilian and his colleagues was on all fours with that of St. Cyprian and the African bishops, in the absence of all records on the subject. Although their case was the same in substance, it does not follow that it was the same in detail. The same sentence was passed on what they did; but not necessarily the same on those who did it.

On the other hand, St. Augustine's testimony is definite and emphatic, to the effect that the peace in all essentials was kept between St. Stephen and St. Cyprian.¹ This is the point of his argument against the Donatists, viz. that St. Cyprian was, indeed, wrong in his teaching, but that he kept in communion with the Pope. Again and again he lays stress on this. He enlarges upon it in some of the most beautiful passages of his many writings against the Donatists, who claimed St. Cyprian for their patron saint. Now it is not reasonable to suppose that St. Augustine was mistaken on this point. It was the tradition of the African Church on the subject. No Donatist replied that St. Augustine was mistaken in his facts, as some one must have done, since it is not in one work alone that St. Augustine elaborates his point. So that the whole African Church in the following century was unaware of any such rupture having taken place between St. Stephen and St. Cyprian as is implied in the stricter sense of the term excommunication. It would be in vain to reply that St. Augustine had not seen Firmilian's letter; for had complete excommunication taken place it must, *apart from that letter*, have left a sufficient impression on the African

¹ *Lib. De Bapt. c. Donat.* passim. In one passage St. Augustine notices the tremendous effect which a secession on the part of St. Cyprian would have had. 'If he had separated himself, how many would follow! What a name he would have made for himself amongst men! . . . but he was not a "son of perdition"' (*lib. i. c. 18*).

Church for St. Augustine to be unable to take it as certain that these two saints did not proceed to complete rupture.

It is, however, most probable that St. Augustine had seen Firmilian's letter. He had no call to refer to it directly, for he was engaged in dealing with Cyprian's authority alone; and it is not possible that such a savage production would commend itself to his sweet and gentle disposition. But some words addressed to the Donatist Cresconius seem to imply that he was at least aware of its existence;¹ and it is to the last degree improbable that, knowing its existence, he should not have been aware of its contents. This at least seems certain, viz. that the Donatists knew of its existence; and yet, to judge from a later work of St. Augustine's, in which he repeats his argument from St. Cyprian's remaining in peace with St. Stephen, the Donatists did not feel that anything in Firmilian's letter justified them in objecting to St. Augustine's assertion that the peace remained practically unbroken between the Pope and St. Cyprian. In his third book against Cresconius, he says, 'Whatever you have thought ought to be brought in from the letters of Cyprian and those of certain Easterns, that they decided against the sacrament of baptism given amongst heretics and schismatics, in no way hinders our cause, if we keep to that Church which Cyprian did not desert, although many of his colleagues would not consent to this judgment' (against the baptism of heretics).

St. Augustine shows himself, in the following sections, thoroughly conversant with what the Easterns had written on the subject.² It is, therefore, but reasonable to conclude that he was fully aware of the contents of Firmilian's letter, indeed of the whole history of the matter. He speaks, indeed, of

¹ Dr. Pusey, in his note to *Lib. of the Fathers, Cyprian's Epistles*, vol. ii., says that Firmilian's letter 'is probably alluded to by St. Augustine, *C. Cresc. iii. 1* (as the Benedictine Edd. also think), "whatever," &c., and *De Unit. Bapt. c. Petil. c. 14*. St. Augustine probably did not notice it further because the Donatists relied on the authority of St. Cyprian, not of an Eastern bishop' (p. 269).

² He speaks of 'letters,' not merely one letter, as is implied in *Prim. Saints*, p. 332, n. 6. The plural includes St. Cyprian's, but does not limit the Easterns to one.

some letters not having come into his possession, but that is not in reference to this particular branch of the subject.

St. Augustine's evidence, therefore, to the effect that the rupture between St. Stephen and St. Cyprian was anything but complete (that it certainly did not include any actual excommunication), includes the evidence of the Donatists, and indeed gives the tradition of the African Church generally; and his judgment seems to have been formed with a full knowledge of what took place between Firmilian and his colleagues on the same subject.

It may be asked whether Firmilian's statement about the episcopal legates is not to be taken as true, and whether, if it be true, it does not furnish a proof that St. Cyprian was excommunicated.

To which it must be answered, first, that there would be nothing surprising if there were some exaggeration in Firmilian's description of the legates' reception, considering the character of the letter as a whole. But, secondly, the reception accorded to the legates, supposing that Firmilian's words are to be taken *au pied de la lettre*, would not prove excommunication. On another occasion legates were sent away from Rome (by Hormisdas the Pope), not, as was afterwards thought and stated, because they, or those from whom they came, were considered excommunicate, but because their presence there was certain to lead to trouble. What has happened once may happen twice, and we have seen good reason for supposing that the presence in Rome of legates on so hopeless an errand as that of these African prelates was particularly inopportune at that moment. So that all we can argue from their being sent back is that St. Stephen was not prepared to argue the question, but decided to deal with this Legatine mission most peremptorily. It would show St. Cyprian that he really meant what he said. St. Augustine's testimony to the preservation of peace in essential matters between Stephen and Cyprian, in spite of what he calls the 'brotherly altercation,' in which Cyprian was unduly excited (*commotius*), is of greater weight than the incident described by Firmilian.¹

¹ The student of history needs to be warned against Tillemont's article on

On the whole, then, there is, to say the least, not sufficient ground for asserting that things ever proceeded beyond a threat of excommunication. It is not necessary to accuse Firmilian of deliberate falsehood. There is a great difference between telling a falsehood and indulging in exaggeration. This latter Firmilian certainly did when he spoke of Stephen standing alone, and of the strife extending to the Churches of the 'whole world;' and the statement of a writer who can call the Pope 'worse than all heretics,' when, as a matter of fact, that Pope was guarding an Apostolical tradition, is not a safe foundation on which to build a theory of Church government.¹

VI. But, after all, the second clause of the sentence quoted above² is the more important, viz. 'if they [*i.e.* St. Cyprian and Firmilian] refused to alter either the teaching or the practice condemned at Rome.'

This writer assumes that they did refuse. The historical record, so far as it goes, is all against him. St. Augustine expressly says that the Easterns altered their teaching. He blames the Donatists for separating themselves from them in consequence.³ He says of the Easterns that 'they rescinded their judgment, by which they had decided that it was right to agree with Cyprian and that African council.' He then insists upon using the word 'corrected' in opposition to the Donatists: these Easterns (he says) 'corrected' their judgment, although we know from the Council of Arles that some persisted in their erroneous custom. And St. Jerome tells us

St. Cyprian. He is by no means trustworthy. He says that St. Augustine would have changed his opinion if he had read Eusebius. Now, we know from St. Augustine himself that he had read Rufinus' paraphrase of Eusebius. And that translation or paraphrase is stronger on this point than Eusebius himself. Eusebius says only that Stephen 'bore it very ill,' or was very much displeased with Cyprian's resistance. Rufinus says that Stephen thought that 'neither were they to be communicated with who rebaptise.' St. Augustine did not consider that Rufinus' heightened translation justified him in concluding an actual 'excommunicatio major.' Therefore Eusebius's milder term would not have led him to such a conclusion (*Cf. Bolland. Series*, Aug. 2, § 4).

¹ Mr. Fuller's accusation (*Prim. SS.* p. 327) against the writer of these pages is based on a misrepresentation. Nothing is said about the African legates in *Authority*—the passage quoted refers to Stephen's standing alone.

² P. 106.

³ *C. Cresc. lib. iii. cap. 3.*

that the African bishops themselves 'issued a new decree.' They too corrected their judgments. What St. Cyprian himself did, whether he led the way (as is probable) in the direction of submission, the records do not say.¹ And it is in reference to this and not to the former incidents that St. Augustine speaks of some documents having perished. He thinks it 'suitable' (*i.e.* reasonable) to suppose that St. Cyprian himself corrected his error; but supposes that the records of this may have been destroyed by the Donatists. If he did not correct his error, then, says St. Augustine, there was his martyrdom, endured within the unity of the Church, which he had the grace not to leave; and his suffering would have washed away whatever was faulty in his conduct in this matter. St. Augustine, with the most tender humility, says that he deemed it better to pass over those things which Cyprian poured out in irritation against Stephen ('*ea præterire melius*').²

The whole matter is admirably summed up by a saint who has a special right to speak on such a subject.

St. Vincent of Lerins,³ the author of the golden rule that when there has been no authoritative decision on a subject of debate the faithful should see what has been held 'by all, everywhere, and always,' writing in the next century, thus describes the part played by the Pope in this whole matter.

¹ St. Augustine distinctly says that St. Cyprian not only tolerated others, but 'was himself tolerated' (*et ipse toleratus est*) (*De Bapt.* iv. 9). This must refer to a time subsequent to the third council. He also says that St. Cyprian 'remained in unity with him'—*i.e.* Stephen—which implies that there was reconciliation. St. Augustine thinks that St. Cyprian might easily have yielded even to 'one uttering the truth' (*i.e.* Stephen), 'which perhaps took place' (*De Bapt.* ii. 5).

² St. Augustine considers only three solutions possible: (1) that Cyprian did not say all that he is quoted as having said, since the Donatists were fond of forging documents; or (2) St. Cyprian 'afterwards corrected this in unison with the rule of truth;' or (3) his great perseverance (*perseverantissime tenuit*) in clinging to the unity of the Church covered this blot. Besides, he says 'there is this, that, as a most fruitful bough, the Father purged away whatever there was in him to be blotted out by the sickle of his passion'—*i.e.* his 'martyrdom' (*Ep.* xciii. *ad Vincent.*).

³ There is something very surprising that a book which is entitled *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome* should not contain one solitary reference to St. Vincent of Lerins, who has yet generally been considered (though wrongly) the patron saint of the Anglican theory of universal consent.

'When therefore they all from every side cried out against the novelty of the thing' (*i.e.* rebaptising those who had received their baptism from heretics) 'and all the bishops all round began to resist it each according to his own zeal, then Pope Stephen, Prelate of the Apostolic See, together with his colleagues, but beyond the rest, withstood [the novelty], thinking, as I presume, that it would be proper if he excelled all the rest in devotion of faith as much as he surpassed them in authority of place.' And 'what then was the upshot of the whole business? What but the usual and customary issue? Antiquity was retained, novelty exploded.'¹

This happy conclusion seems to have been reached under the successors of St. Stephen.² The contest was abruptly terminated by the storm of persecution which soon broke over the Church. In a few months' time St. Stephen won his martyr's crown. He has been reckoned a saint both by the East and West.³ He is described as a 'holy and prudent man' by St. Vincent of Lerins; and St. Augustine was able to challenge the Donatists to find a flaw in his episcopate.⁴ Almighty God set His seal on his sanctity by permitting miraculous effects to follow from his remains, which now lie in the church of San Silvestro in Capite in the Eternal City, a church which has been granted for the special use of our Catholic fellow-countrymen. Of what passed during the first few months of the year in which St. Stephen attained to his reward we have no record.⁵ But we know that St. Cyprian

¹ Vinc. Ler. *Commonit.* c. 9.

² Mansi, however, who is appealed to as a kind of oracle in *Prim. Saints*, p. 328, considers it possible that this took place in St. Stephen's lifetime. He considers Natalis Alexander more cogent in this matter than would appear from the passage quoted by Mr. Puller.

³ In the Greek Church he was invoked as a martyr on the same day as in the West, but also on the following day, or on Aug. 30 or Sept. 7. In a very ancient Constantinopolitan codex he is spoken of as 'the holy, sacred martyr Stephen, Pope of Rome.' His name occurs in the Menology of the Emperor Basil (*cf. Boll. Ser.* Aug. 2). It is to be regretted that the author of *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome* should have deprived of his crown one who wears it with such good credentials.

⁴ 'Episcopatum illibatam.'

⁵ Some writers consider that St. Dionysius' efforts for peace were then made and were successful. They must have been made under great difficulties, for the Bishop of Rome seems to have been under persecution for some months.

was in full ecclesiastical intercourse with his successor; and since both Eastern and African bishops dropped their novel custom and their resistance to the decision of Rome, we may assume that St. Cyprian did the same.

VII. But why did not St. Stephen issue an *ex cathedra* decision on the matter of faith, and so end the contest? It will be better to discuss this question more at large when we come to consider the Council of Nicæa. Meanwhile it may be enough to reply that possibly St. Stephen did not feel that he had at his disposal those means to which the promise of divine 'assistance' has been made according to the Vatican decree. Infallibility is not the power of stepping forward at any moment and settling a question; it is only the security of divine 'assistance' when the successor of St. Peter is led to define. He does not bear definitions within his head at all times, ready to flash out at a moment's notice; their possibility and their materials lie in the circumstances of the Church. St. Stephen felt that his duty lay in securing the prevalence of the right practice; in upholding the merciful view which he did; in risking for this purpose the attachment of a great bishop, the Primate of Africa, to the unity of the Church. He probably knew that the attachment of a Cyprian to the Catholic Church would stand the strain, as it did; and he could leave it for others to elucidate the difficult questions which had arisen, and which were solved by the general life of the Church. The great Archbishop of Alexandria, St. Dionysius, wrote to St. Stephen's successor for guidance on this very subject, alleging as his reason for writing his wish *not to go wrong*.¹ He thus testified to the confidence which was felt in the guidance of the Holy See, which, indeed, had now piloted the Church through a storm more terrible than that of persecution. It secured a mode of discipline which nearly affected the very idea of a sacrament, and it left the full elucidation of the matter to the thought of the episcopate in general. Papal infallibility has its purposes in God's gracious mercy; but it is not a *deus ex machinâ* under all circumstances. The present Archbishop of Canterbury has noticed, and I fear I must say a little exaggerated, the odds against

¹ Eus. H. E. vii. 9.

which St. Stephen had to contend, and, whilst considering that Cyprian was not actually excommunicated, attributes the victory of Stephen to the justice of his cause.¹ But we may see more than that. His action must have unconsciously impressed upon the Church the trust that she could place in her God-given pilot. Not that she could have stated the infallibility of the Pope in the terms of the Vatican decree, but that her belief in it was there, amidst the mass of her convictions, mixed up with her general sense of the authority of the successor of Peter. It was not yet separated off and made to live before her consciousness in distinct and clear outline, for the Church does not live by theological definitions, however much she needs them in view of emergent error. St. Cyprian fought against a particular exercise of authority, not the authority in principle; but for aught we know he ended by recognising the security of its shelter even in this matter. His can hardly be a test case, because history deserts us at the critical point. But we may believe that ere he won his crown he may have entered more fully into the meaning of our Lord's words, 'I am with you all days,' as he contemplated the faith of the Romans, and the power of 'the chair of Peter and the sovereign Church, whence episcopal unity took its rise,' to bind together the Church in unity of faith, even though it involved at times the severity of a father's love.

Bishop Freppel thus sums the matter up from a controversial point of view. A discussion arises in Asia Minor and Africa on a point of discipline, in regard to which both of the parties equally appeal to ancient custom. The question is new, and touches, on the one hand, the notion of the Church; on the other, the general theory of the sacraments. Two great bishops resolve it in an erroneous sense; around them people adhere to their opinion; they possess the prestige of knowledge and sanctity. Further, it must be said, their solution of the question has something in it to dazzle men's minds: at first sight it seems to safeguard Catholic unity, because it traces a deeper line of demarcation between heresies and the Church. Well, it needs only a few lines from the pen

¹ *Dict. of Chr. Biogr.* (Smith and Wace), art. 'Cyprian.'

of the Pope to overthrow all that scaffolding of texts and syllogisms. The partisans of innovation may resist as they please, write letter after letter, assemble councils; five lines from the sovereign Pontiff will become the rule of conduct for the universal Church. Eastern and African bishops, all those who at first had rallied round the contrary opinion, will retrace their steps, and the whole Catholic world will follow the decision of the Bishop of Rome. If there is in this an argument against the supremacy of the Pope, we can desire nothing better than that our opponents should discover many similar ones in their historical studies.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THREE SEES OF PETER.

I. THERE is another incident in the life of the third century which gives us an important glimpse into the relationship that existed between Rome and the rest of the Church. It occurred at a time when the Bishop of Rome and the Bishop of Alexandria were of the same name—namely, Dionysius. They were both saints, and we are indebted to a third saint for an account of the correspondence that took place between them—namely, Saint Athanasius.

But to understand the full bearing of the incident to which I allude, it will be necessary to bear in mind what we know of the relationship between Rome and Alexandria from other sources.

Now, no one supposes that the Holy See could have often intervened directly, at such a period as the third century, in the affairs of the various provinces throughout the world. We know, indeed, from St. Jerome that in the next century its action was felt over the whole Christian Church in various ways. But considering the nature of intercommunication in those times this could only be occasional. What actually happened was as follows.

The 'keys' were originally given to St. Peter, but the College of Apostles was presently associated with him—each one of them with immediate universal jurisdiction from our Lord, and each secure of divine assistance in promulgating the faith delivered to the Apostolic College, which consisted of Peter (their head) 'and the rest.'¹ Their infallibility was necessary for the function they had to perform, that of being the first founders of Christian Churches. It was not needed

¹ Acts ii. 37.

after this, and never claimed by their successors, with one exception—viz. the successor of St. Peter. They went out into the wide world and founded sees, without occupying them themselves. Being each of them confirmed in grace and infallible, the position of subordination which they occupied in regard to St. Peter was never emphasised as is the case where there is opposition or rebellion. They left to the Churches which they founded the deposit of truth which they bore with them from Jerusalem. They had no successors in their apostolate, in its fulness. The apostolate—which is of the essence of the government of the Church—lapsed at length in each case into the hands of one see, which remained for all time 'the Apostolic See.' The rest of the Apostles were succeeded by bishops, and their sees, although apostolic in origin, were no longer apostolic in the full sense of the term, having no longer that immediate universal jurisdiction, and that infallibility in delivering the deposit, which was the peculiarity of the apostolate. They could thus be called apostolic, but in a subordinate sense, and they very soon ceased to be so called at all. The whole Christian world understood what was meant by 'the Apostolic See.' St. Vincent of Lerins, in a passage quoted above, does not think it necessary to do more, when speaking of Rome, than to call it 'the Apostolic See.'

Whilst the Apostles, as a rule, left no successors of their universal jurisdiction and of their infallibility, there was one exception. It was not St. James,¹ whose see occupied at the Council of Nice a subordinate position. It was St. Peter, whose see was assumed at that council to possess the Primacy.²

That primacy was, *in principle*, as has already appeared, and as will appear still more plainly when we come to the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, all that it is now in the hands of Leo XIII.

II. But in point of fact the bishops who immediately succeeded the Apostles, scattered as they were throughout the

¹ Hegesippus says of the first Bishops of Jerusalem: *προηγούνται πάσης ἐκκλησίας ὡς μάρτυρες καὶ ἀπὸ γένους τοῦ κυρίου* (Eus. *H.E.* iii. 32). He is speaking of Palestine, not of the Church everywhere.

² Cf. ch. xi. p. 168.

world, enjoyed a certain measure of autonomy as a matter of necessity. It was owing to physical circumstances that they were in any measure externally separated, and not from any idea of the value of 'episcopal independence.' When Africa, in the next century, pleaded for a court of first instance of a more satisfactory nature, which would diminish their attendance at Rome, it was not with a view of cutting themselves off from Rome but of dealing with the witnesses themselves in the first instance, at first hand and on the spot. As a matter of fact the letter in which this matter is (if it is genuine) most urgently pleaded, was signed by a bishop who had at that very time lodged an appeal at Rome against his superior bishop; so that he could not have been supporting episcopal independence of Rome.

Such an idea is, indeed, foreign to the very idea of a kingdom, such as in those days they held the Church to be. And throughout the world, however autonomous, from the stress of circumstances, distant provinces might remain, intercommunication was kept up by *epistola formata*, or letters of communion, between all parts of the Body of Christ. To be outside the circle of Christian life embraced by these *literæ formatae* was equivalent to being no longer within the Christian Church. There was no idea of an underlying unity when there was external separation of a formal and final character. St. Cyprian expressly repudiates the idea. They knew of one Church, one only Church, numerically one—not many, separated one from the other, and never communicating at each other's altars.¹

But when, through the withdrawal of the *χάρισμα* of infallibility which the Apostles each enjoyed, any doubt arose in the Churches as to whether a bishop was handing on with accurate fidelity the deposit of truth communicated by the apostolic founder of a Church (or cluster of Churches), then St. Irenæus' rule came into force. The natural thing would be to compare the teaching with that of the nearest Apostolic Church, and finally, if need arose (or at once, if opportunity

¹ Communion might be temporarily suspended, as it was for thirty-five years during the Acacian schism, but in such cases it is clear that it was suspension, and not a perfected breach.

occurred, or the occasion called for it) with the Church of Rome, with which it was necessary to agree, said St. Irenæus, *ob potentiorē principalitatem*, because of her more powerful principality. And as the lapse of time separated men from the days of the Apostles, they looked more and more to the permanent Apostle of the Christian Church, the one predestined seat of infallibility and universal jurisdiction. It required the fortunes of time to bring out the powers of her 'Apostle.' But such the occupant of the See of Rome was from the first—not as confirmed in grace, nor possessing inspiration, but as secured from error by special divine assistance under certain circumstances of his teaching.

The amount, therefore, of intervention on the part of the Holy See in the affairs of the Church might be expected to increase with the growth of the means of intercommunication. Nothing in the history of the Church up to this hour has gone beyond the principle involved in St. Clement's letter to the Church at Corinth. But the principle has expressed itself more vividly and widely with the expansion of the Church. And the measure of autonomy forced upon the scattered communities of the early Church during the days of persecution would naturally give way to increasing centralisation, as the possibilities of exhibiting her law of unity multiplied.

III. Meanwhile that external unity which is a note of the Church was being matured in the circles of Christian communities which were nearest to the centre of unity. The Bishop of Rome and his council of bishops formed the first and central knot. But from the first there was a wider circle, embracing a large portion of the East, distinctly gathered round this centre. Three great sees appear in the early Church, each of them counting St. Peter as the head of their catalogue of bishops. Each of them was a See of Peter, for at one (Antioch) St. Peter himself resided temporarily, and to the other (Alexandria) he had sent his disciple St. Mark, whilst he lived for a longer period, and died, at Rome. These two sees, therefore, occupied quite a unique position in Christian history. In the language of St. Gregory they were, with the See of Rome, the three measures of meal which the woman took and leavened the whole. They appeared at

Nice with prerogatives which were left untouched, as being 'ancient.' Each of these sees occupied from a secular point of view a great central position, but each of them traced its real glory in the Christian covenant to its connection with the Prince of the Apostles.

The Church, then, was not as many seem to imagine, all but invertebrate in that third century, but was already highly organised. There was no such thing as episcopal independence. The two commanding sees of Antioch and Alexandria, with their immense provinces of subordinate sees, as soon as they come into the full light of history, appear in a relationship of subordination to Rome. For instance, in the latter half of the third century Alexandria conducted herself on a most important occasion as in such a relationship, under the following circumstances.

IV. The Sabellian heresy had sprung up in the region of Pentapolis, which, as we know from the 6th Nicene Canon, belonged to the 'Greater Metropolitanate' (or, as it was afterwards called, 'the Patriarchate') of Alexandria.

The Patriarch St. Dionysius had on a previous occasion written to Pope Xystus II. on the subject of rebaptism, giving as his reason for writing, 'that I may not err' (Euseb. 'Hist. Eccl.' vii. 9). He now wrote to Xystus' successor, named also Dionysius, to inform him of the fact that the Sabellian heresy had emerged under his rule. And at the same time he wrote to two of the Egyptian bishops. In his letters to these bishops he laid great stress on the reality of our Lord's humanity. This caused certain persons in the Province—not merely (as Canon Bright expresses it¹) 'some Africans,' but 'brethren,' probably bishops² of the diocese³ of Alexandria—to suspect him of leaning towards the Arian heresy. And in consequence the Arians afterwards quoted him as on their side. St. Athanasius, in a graphic account of the whole matter, indignantly repudiates the accusation

¹ 'The appeal or application to a Bishop of Rome on the part of some Africans,' &c. (Bright's *Roman Claims tested by Antiquity*, p. 9).

² It is possible, but unlikely, that pure presbyters would thus appeal straight to Rome; ἀδελφός is the word frequently used of bishops in the Athanasian literature.

³ In the early sense of that word.

thus levelled against his saintly predecessor. He tells them in a magnificent letter exactly what happened. The offended 'brethren' (or bishops) in their zeal for orthodoxy reported their archbishop to the Bishop of Rome, who at once wrote a letter on the subject of Sabellianism and Arianism, adjusting the balance of truth which these opposite heresies variously disturbed. He also wrote to the Archbishop of Alexandria for him to explain¹ what exactly it was for which he was accused, on the ground that as the complainants not having explained it, he was in the dark. St. Dionysius, in no way resenting, but rather welcoming, the 'interference' of the Pope, at once sent a letter to His Holiness, saying that another was to follow, that the Pope might not think him dilatory in clearing himself from the accusation, however vague. His reply was sufficient. And St. Athanasius tells the Arians that they have only succeeded in forging a weapon against themselves in quoting St. Dionysius of Alexandria in their favour. 'For they have brought two things into prominence: first, that Dionysius of Alexandria having cleared himself, they have him against them; and secondly, the fact of Dionysius [the Pope] having written as he did against those who say that the Son of God is a creature, shows that not now [*i.e.* in the days of St. Athanasius] for the first time, but long ago (*ἐκπαλαι*) their heresy had been *anathematised by all*.'²

Here, then, is the principle of appeal at work concerning an Archbishop of Alexandria to the Bishop of Rome; here is another instance of the unvarying orthodoxy of the occupants of the Holy See; and here, again, is an instance of how the Church was governed on the subject of the Homousion long years before the Council of Nice. St. Dionysius the Pope, as supreme guardian of the faith, had ruled Arianism out of court long before that council had met. The Arian doctrine had, says St. Athanasius, been 'anathematised by all.'

V. In the same century the relationship of Rome to the third Petrine See (that of Antioch) was emphasised through

¹ *δηλώσαι*. Bishop Pearson's suggestion (*δηλώσας*) does not square with the course of events as narrated in the same paragraph. And there seems no motive for the suggestion except that it gets rid of an awkward fact.

² St. Ath. in *Sententia Dionysii*.

the obstinate resistance of its bishop to the ruling of no less than three synods. Paul of Samosata (so called from his birthplace) had denied the Divinity of our Lord and the personality of the Logos. The Logos, according to this bishop's heretical teaching, was only the Divine wisdom infused into the man Jesus of Nazareth, who was therefore called the Son of God. His position as Bishop of Antioch and his great ability were sufficient to alarm and disturb the whole Eastern Church. The Bishops of Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor assembled in synod in the year 264 and condemned his teaching. Paul promised amendment in some respects, in others he denied the charges. A second synod, however, had to meet in consequence of his continued heterodoxy, and then a third, and he was ultimately deposed and excommunicated. But he refused to give up the episcopal palace to Domnus his successor, and the bishops appealed to the emperor to enforce their decision. Aurelian, who was the emperor, decided that whoever received letters from the Bishops of Italy¹ and the Bishop of Rome must have the episcopal residence. Rome gave its letters to Domnus, and Paul was extruded.

Now it may be said that it was very natural for the Emperor of Rome to exalt the Bishop of Rome, and if it were not for the historical context in which this method of solving a dispute between bishops occurred, one might easily, with Gibbon, set it down to a natural desire on the part of a heathen emperor to draw all matters, Christian as well as civil, to one centre. But not even a heathen emperor would try to appease a quarrel amongst Oriental bishops by a mode of action alien to their ideas of propriety, such as this would have been on any but the Papal theory. But the imperial settlement occurred in that same second century of the Church's life,² in which St. Victor had acted as one who had the right to determine the conditions of inherence in the common unity; in which St. Irenæus said that all Churches must resort to, or agree with, the Church of Rome because of her more powerful principalship; in which an emperor had expressed his fear of a bishop at Rome as of a rival to his own position of authority; in which the Bishop of Rome

¹ = the *Papal Consistory*; cf. p. 124. ² Counting from Pentecost.

had temporarily settled the question of the rebaptisation of heretics, pending a general council, relying avowedly on his succession to Peter; the century in which another Bishop of Rome had received an appeal against the Bishop of Alexandria, and the latter had proceeded at once to clear himself from the charge of heresy—all these witnessing to a general conviction on the part of bishops and Popes that the 'chair of Peter' was the normal centre of the Christian Church, and making it natural for an emperor who wished to see peace restored, to refer the matter to the Pope and his council as the recognised arbiter of Christian disputes.

The emperor was just then at Antioch, after his victory over Zenobia, and seventy bishops had decided against the Patriarch Paul. It would therefore have been natural for the emperor to settle the matter at once in favour of Domnus, had he not seen that it could be settled by a higher ecclesiastical authority in accordance with the rules of the Christian community. It is reasonable to suppose that either the bishops at Antioch themselves suggested the reference to Rome as the final court, as Ballerini suggests, or, as the Gallican Fleury supposes, that 'it was sufficiently notorious even to the heathen that the true religion of the Christian body lay in communion with the Roman Church.'¹ The judgments of Rome were invariably passed in synod—in a synod not of all the Italian bishops, but of a select number, varying according to circumstance. They were the normal organ of Papal decisions. To this synod the emperor had the matter referred,² for, says Bossuet, he had noticed that the Christian body was contained within the communion of the Roman Bishop.³ Accordingly Eusebius praises the action of the emperor as 'most religious.'⁴

Thus in those primitive days no idea of the independence of national Churches seems to have entered the mind of the Christian community. The whole Church was one vast

¹ *Hist.* tom. ii. lib. 8, c. 8.

² Throughout the whole history of the Church up to this day the Popes have been accustomed to act in concert with some kind of consistory.

³ *Discours sur l'Hist. univ.*

⁴ *Eus. H. E.* vii. 30: αἰσιώτατα περὶ τοῦ πρακτέου διείληψε.

brotherhood, with its relations of interdependence between the various centres or sees. And all tended upwards to one common centre, which appeared as such, as the need of a central authority made itself felt, and the possibilities of its exerting its influence increased. Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch gradually emerge as three distinct and greater centres; whilst between themselves an order is observed which places each of these Eastern sees in a relation of subordination to the West, that is the See of the one Eternal City, destined to be such by virtue of her relationship to the Prince of the Apostles.

VI. And if we ask why Alexandria took precedence of Antioch, the answer is to be found, not merely in its civil position, but in the law originally laid down by our Lord in sending His Apostles through the world. They were to go first to the Jews. Accordingly they went first to those cities in which the greater number of Jews resided, making them the centre of their operations. Thus the extension of the Church followed the framework of the Jewish organisation, rather than, as some appear to imagine,¹ merely the civil order. As the Jewish Sanhedrim in Palestine received their jurisdiction from the central bureau at Jerusalem, so the Christian communities, composed of Jewish converts, so long as they continued to be so composed, owned Jerusalem as their metropolis; but when, as Dr. Döllinger has pointed out in his admirable summary of the growth of the metropolitical system, these Churches were destroyed under Adrian, and a new Church, composed mainly of converts from paganism, was formed at Ælia, the metropolitical jurisdiction in Palestine was transferred to Cæsarea, whose Church took precedence of Ælia owing to its apostolical foundation. It had been founded by St. Peter in the conversion of Cornelius, the first Pagan who embraced Christianity.²

The same principle explains the order of Alexandria in the gradation of sees. St. Peter sent his disciple St. Mark

¹ *E.g.* Mr. Fuller, in his *Primitive Saints*, &c. p. 18 seq., and the Bishop of Lincoln in his preface, p. xv.

² Döllinger's *Hist. of the Church*, Period I. ch. iii. § 3. See the whole section.

thither, and was thus held to have been its real founder. It was the largest centre of Jews outside Judæa; its ethnarch took precedence of all other heads of the Jewish people in their dispersion, and consequently it took precedence even of Antioch, also a Petrine see.¹ And its metropolitan jurisdiction, confirmed by the Nicene fathers as having existed from the beginning, covered, not the political, but the Jewish division. The Bishop of Alexandria held sway over the Pentapolis and Libya, which politically belonged to the African, not to the Egyptian province. The area of his jurisdiction was thus conterminous with that of the Jewish ethnarch, not of the imperial prefect or proconsul.² Rome was the centre of Jewish life in the West, and in Rome St. Peter abode, with intervals of absence, for twenty-five years, and thither came also the great Apostle of the Gentiles, whose name was to be for ever linked with that of St. Peter in the prayers and thoughts of the Christian world, in regard to the Eternal City. As a matter of fact the centres of Jewish life were also the centres of political grandeur; and it was, we may say, in the providence of God that on the division of the Roman Empire the constitution of the Church rarely crossed or overlapped the articulation of the civil order. But in principle it might on any occasion, as it actually did in the case of Basilinopolis at the Council of Chalcedon. Ordinarily, however, the political centre would naturally form the ecclesiastical metropolis, as there could be no fresh Apostolical foundation. Eventually no Apostolical see presented a permanent and uninterrupted succession, save only the See of St. Peter. Alexandria and Antioch were destined to be submerged in the troubles of the Church, and to-day Rome alone of all sees in the world can trace her line of descent straight up to an Apostle.

¹ So St. Ambrose, when insisting on the truth that it is the Holy Spirit who cleanses the soul, the Church being His instrument, runs through the sees in order, 'It was not Damasus' (Bishop of Rome) 'that cleansed, it was not Peter' (Bishop of Alexandria), 'it was not Ambrose' (Bishop of Milan), 'it was not Gregory' (Bishop of Constantinople). He omits Antioch because of its trouble about its bishops (*De Spir. Sancto*, lib. i. n. 18).

² Mr. Puller (*Prim. SS.* p. 14 seq.) does not seem to have realised this: hence the undue stress which he has laid on the civil position of these sees. One does not see on what grounds, according to his theory, Canterbury takes precedence of London.

THE WITNESS OF THE POPES CONCERNING THEIR OFFICE.

But before going further it will be well to consider an argument which has been much insisted on of late. It has been said on behalf of the Anglican position: 'Our contention is that the idea of a divinely appointed supremacy over the whole Church, as a prerogative of the Roman See, arose very largely out of the exorbitant claims made by the Popes. It follows that exaggerated claims in favour of the Papacy, when they occur in the writings of the Popes or of other persons living, so to speak, in a Papal atmosphere, and when they stand in marked contrast with the general teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, cannot be quoted, at any rate controversially, on the Papal side. We regard them as the proofs of Papal ambition. In connection with this subject it is surely permissible to refer in all reverence to our Lord's own words, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true" (St. John v. 31).'² And again, 'No candid person will press statements about St. Peter written by Roman Popes or by Antiochene Fathers.'³

It will be well, before proceeding to consider the witness of the fourth century, to examine the value of the above statement. And I shall begin with the passage quoted from Holy Scripture.

Our Blessed Lord had been bearing witness concerning Himself. He had called Himself the Son of God; He had said that He was about to raise the dead, and to judge the whole of the human race. Those who saw in the tone of authority with which He spake an evidence of the truth which He delivered were amongst the very elect of God. But, although what He said was strictly true, He vouchsafed to add another testimony to His own, and so to make His witness to Himself complete and formally true, according to the received notions of legal testimony. He accordingly

¹ Mr. Puller explains what he means by exaggerated claims in the opening of his Preface (p. xxvi), viz. 'the claim to a supremacy or primacy of jurisdiction as of divine right.'

² *Primitive Saints*, &c. p. 97, note 3.

³ *Ibid.* p. 123.

referred them to the witness of the Baptist, who, as an acknowledged prophet, was to them an accredited witness, summing up the testimony of the Jewish teaching Church. The Baptist had borne the same witness by the river Jordan as our Lord had now borne concerning Himself.

Our Lord, therefore, rested His claim to their acceptance on two grounds, His own witness and that of the Baptist, the two together satisfying the formal requirements of their Law. To His own it was enough that He 'spake with authority' in a way that none had ever done, touching chords of their hearts which no power had been able thus to sweep with the hand of a master, proclaiming Himself the real author of their inmost being. St. Peter, when our Lord appealed to the twelve as to whether they would leave Him, replied at once, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'¹ There was a richness, a fulness, in His teaching that met the imperious needs of their souls as no other teaching ever had. To them it was a felt truth that, as our Lord afterwards said, 'Although I give testimony of myself, my testimony is true.'²

Now the Church is the extension of the Incarnation, and as our Lord was in the world, so is she. The same feature that strikes us in the teaching of our Lord meets us in the teaching of His Church. She speaks with the tone of authority; she bears witness of herself. And as there is no logical alternative between considering that either our Lord (may He forgive the words) uttered blasphemy when He bore the witness that He did to Himself, or that He was what He said He was, literally and fully Almighty God, so is it with His Church, and so is it with those who represent His Church from age to age. As the late Dr. Liddon, in one of the most remarkable sermons that this century has produced,³ drew out the proposition that our Lord could not be a sincere man—could not be considered a good man—if He was not Almighty God, seeing what He said of Himself, so is it true to say that no Pope who gave himself out as supreme ruler of the

¹ St. John vi. 69.

² St. John viii. 14.

³ *Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, Lect. iv.

Catholic Church, or acted as such, could be a good man unless the claim was just, since he must have taken the name of God in vain with his eyes open, of set purpose, in the supreme acts of his sacerdotal life. On the other hand, if St. Peter was appointed by our Lord to be head of the Apostles, and if each Pope in succession felt himself to be the successor of that Apostle, then it became a mere duty to bear witness to his office, and no sin could be greater than for such a one to make acts of humility at the expense of divine truth. If he should hide the truth, if he failed, when occasion demanded it, to 'magnify his office,'¹ he must hear the condemnation of the Divine Head of the Church, 'O thou wicked and slothful servant.'²

Much, therefore, will depend on the circumstances under which the Popes bore witness to their office. The position maintained in this book is that the witness they bore was of such a character, and under such circumstances, as to render it of great value. And it seems to me altogether unphilosophical, and that is the same as saying that it is in violation of the laws of historical investigation, simply to set aside their witness as nothing worth. They are quoted in this work for what they are worth. Their witness is not valueless because borne by themselves, neither is it conclusive unless supported by other testimony.

Now consider the character of the witness borne in this third century. It is unvarying. And it has after it an unvarying testimony of sixteen hundred years. It is not, therefore, the witness of one man, but of many, and of men placed in a post, according to their own judgment, of the highest responsibility. How is it that Pope after Pope no sooner sits on the throne than he is filled with the same consciousness of world-wide responsibilities? What was there in that one See that spread the infection to each successive occupant, so that he articulated with such perfect simplicity the same teaching concerning his relationship to the rest of the Church? Is there any sign of ambition, except in the mere fact that each Pope acted as Ruler of the Universal Church, to plead which against him in controversy would be to beg the ques-

¹ 2 Cor. x. xi. xii.

² St. Matt. xxv. 26.

tion? Why is it, in the judgment of such writers as I have quoted, always ambition on the one side, and not rather rebellion on the other?

Let us look at the circumstances under which the claim comes to view. It was in the ages of persecution. In the second century the violation of the laws proscribing Christian worship and the Christian society* was often connived at officially, but the laws existed in all their tremendous severity, ready at any moment to be put in execution. Wherever the Christian society existed, it lived under the vigilant observance of a sleepless foe, and, of all things, the imperial power dreaded its centralisation.¹ St. Peter had suppressed the name of Rome in his Epistle, calling it Babylon; St. Clement suppressed his own in writing to Corinth. Each of them wrote under violent persecution.² But they wrote. And the Bishops of Rome not merely wrote, but they acted as the rulers of the Church under circumstances which rendered any exhibition of a centralising power a matter of almost certain death. During this time the Church of Rome acquired a name throughout the Church for practical goodness, and for steadfastness of faith; so that the clergy of Rome in writing to St. Cyprian could assume that the Apostle's commendation of their Church was understood to apply to all time.³ And St. Cyprian does not hesitate to speak of the Romans as those 'to whom faithlessness could have no access.'⁴ Are we to suppose that their bishops, chosen as men whom they could trust to lead them, were in each case tainted with the diabolical sin of ambition? They were mostly martyrs, and they all had of necessity the martyr's end before their eyes. In that stormy third century, which passed in alternations of extreme tolerance and passionate persecution, no Pope sat on the throne with any fair prospect of dying the common death of ordinary men. St. Zephyrinus reigned during the persecution under Severus; St. Callistus was imprisoned, half starved, severely beaten day after day, finally thrown into a well, and

¹ See this beautifully developed in Mr. Allies' *Throne of the Fisherman*, c. vi.

² St. Clement in a short breathing-time between two persecutions.

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 53. ⁴ *Supra*, p. 59.

so won his crown; St. Urban fell a victim to the sensual monster Heliogabalus; St. Pontian was exiled; St. Anterus died in the persecution of Maximin; St. Fabian suffered under Decius, and the Christians were unable to elect his successor for two years, so fierce was the persecution. At length Cornelius, of a noble Roman family, occupied the see for little more than a year, and died in exile. St. Lucius, who succeeded him, was presently banished, and received the well-known letter from St. Cyprian congratulating him on possessing the twofold honour of the bishopric and of suffering for the faith. After a short reign St. Stephen held the post for four years, and ended with a violent death, whilst his successor St. Sixtus was seized as he offered the Holy Sacrifice in the catacomb, and beheaded in his episcopal chair. Truly in that first half of the third century the See of Peter was baptised in blood. One bishop now died in peace—St. Dionysius, but the roll of confessors recommenced in St. Felix, who died in prison, and in St. Caius; and the white-robed army of martyrs received another recruit in St. Marcellinus, with whom this blood-red century closed. For three years the see was vacant owing to the violence of the persecution.

Now, five times in this century, amongst the scanty records, the Pope comes out to view as ruler of more than the local Church of Rome. In each case his action is drawn from him by dangers threatening the faith of the Church. The Holy Feast of Easter, the Queen of Festivals, was in danger of being associated with false teaching. St. Victor attempted to produce a uniformity of practice in its observance, in which he was thwarted by one portion of the Church, though supported by the greater whole. St. Irenæus prevailed upon him not to use his authority further. During the fierce persecution under Severus many Christians lapsed, and some would have closed the door of repentance to such for ever. St. Zephyrinus came forth and opened the gate of mercy, as the High Priest of the Christian religion. So Tertullian described him. Under St. Stephen the African Primate had started on a dangerous career, and might have carried all before him in a practice which must have ended in depraving the doctrine of the Sacraments. Whole provinces were exposed to the

danger of being carried away with the novelty, when the Pope stepped forth and put a stop to the danger, acting avowedly on his position as successor of Peter. The vigilance of St. Dionysius the Pope, so praised by St. Athanasius, was exercised towards the saintly Dionysius of Alexandria, in view of possible dangers to the cardinal point of the faith, whilst St. Felix achieved the peace of the Church by deposing the Bishop of Antioch.

There is no room for the accusation of ambition in all this. In each case it was care for the faith.

The only answer usually given to the various evidences of a supremacy having been accorded to the See of Rome in this century, is that in the most marked instances there was resistance, and that the authority recognised in the Bishop of Rome was only a tribute to the imperial position of the city.

But as regards the latter, it is at any rate not this that comes to the front in the record. The central position of the See of Rome is, according to St. Irenæus, due to her principalship as compared with other Churches, which we have seen cannot mean her secular position. Her priceless prerogative is, according to Tertullian, that she possesses 'all doctrine;' her peculiarity, according to St. Cyprian, is that she is in a unique sense 'the chair of Peter' and the original source of episcopal unity. St. Clement claims to be heard not by reason of the natural position of his city, but on supernatural grounds; whilst St. Stephen speaks of himself as the successor of Peter, which neither St. Firmilian nor St. Cyprian deny.

And as regards the resistance offered to these early Popes, to what does it amount? In each case the Pope proved to be in the right; his judgment was always followed in the event by the whole Church. St. Victor's ruling as to the Easter Festival became the ruling of the whole Church; St. Stephen's likewise; so with that of St. Zephyrinus or St. Callistus. St. Dionysius' judgment is quoted by St. Athanasius as the condemnation of Arianism, and St. Clement's brief was at once obeyed. Never once, no, not in any one single line in the record we possess, is the one word found, which was needed on the theory of those who defend separation from Rome—'You have no such authority in matters of faith.' St.

Cyprian contended that the matter of rebaptisation did not come under that head; St. Victor did not pretend that the Asiatics were directly opposing the faith.¹ Thus the resistance, such as it was, on the other hand, will not bear the weight of argument placed upon it.

And yet the exhibition of authority is at once wide in its range and consecutive in its action. The truth as to the Christian ministry is defended by St. Clement; Gnosticism is condemned in two of its chief leaders (Cerdon and Valentine) by St. Hyginus; the heresies of Valentine and Marcion by St. Pius. Valentinianism, asserting itself under St. Eleutherus, found in that Pope its active opponent. It was his successor, St. Victor, who was the first, according to Eusebius, to excommunicate the forerunner of Arius, viz. Theodotus, 'the leader and father of this God-denying apostasy, the first one that asserted that Christ was a mere man.'² The dangers that beset the faith in regard to the Festival of the Resurrection were, as we have seen, met by the same Pope, and those that assailed the Sacrament of Penance and the mercies of its provisions, by his successor, St. Zephyrinus. The restriction which an unchristian severity placed on the restoration of those who lapsed under persecution were discountenanced by St. Cornelius, and the denial of the validity of the heretics' baptism was condemned by St. Stephen. St. Dionysius, as I have said, anticipated the Council of Nice in the condemnation of what afterwards went by the name of Arianism, and the letter of St. Felix to the Bishop of Alexandria concerning Paul of Samosata, the heretical Bishop of Antioch, is extant to prove him worthy to take his place in this illustrious line of guardians of the Church's faith.

Thus far, then, the See of Rome is prominent, but not in the way of ambition. No see could show such a line of martyrs; no see could produce such a record of active guardianship of the divine deposit which had been committed to the Church's care. At the same time the way in which she assisted others in their distress by her munificent and unflinching

¹ *ὡς οὐκ ὁρθοδοξούντας* (Eus. *H. E.* v. 24) does not amount to more than that they were wrong on the particular point, which was not a matter of faith.

² Eus. *H. E.* v. 28.

almsgiving was such as to lead some, like the late Dr. Lightfoot, to assign her great position in the Church universal, what he calls her 'leadership,' to her 'practical goodness.' But in truth, her practical goodness was both the result of a supernatural gift and the witness afforded by the Father to the representative of His Son on the earth. St. Ignatius, of Antioch, speaks of the Church of the Romans as presiding in their region, and also as presiding over the brotherhood of divine love. He does not mention the Bishop of Rome himself; it was the last thing he would do. He was himself being hauled by the imperial decree, in deference to the bitter natural prejudice, to be devoured by the lions at Rome. To point out one as the head of the community in the city of Rome itself would have been like procuring the instant death of the Pope. If St. Peter would not mention Rome, except under the pseudonym of Babylon, neither would St. Ignatius draw attention to the fact that at Rome there was a head to the illegal organisation of the Christian community. He calls it the Church of the Romans, and says that it presides over 'the love,'¹ over a 'communion founded on love and preserved by love.' Its presidency was justified by its practical and supreme exhibition of the spirit of love; but it was derived from a divine appointment.

Therefore in these first two centuries after Pentecost, the Popes had produced an accessory evidence of their divine appointment to be the guardians of the faith. Their 'works' testified. In the fourth century their witness to themselves begins. But it does not stand alone. It does not offend against the canon of Jewish law concerning testimony, which our Lord claimed to satisfy. The most astonishing fact about the witness of the Popes concerning their office is that it never

¹ Dr. Döllinger's original rendering is obviously the correct one. 'He [Ignatius] first says: *ἡ τις προκαθήμεναι ἐν τόπῳ χωρίῳ Ῥωμαίων*, in which words he does not confine the authority, but only describes the situation, of the Church of Rome. He afterwards names this Church *προκαθήμενῃ τῆς ἀγάπης*. These words do not signify *presidens in caritate*, as the old Latin translation rendered them, for then St. Ignatius would have said *ἐν ἀγάπῃ*. 'Αγάπη signifies, in the same manner as *Ἐκκλησία*, sometimes a smaller assembly of the faithful at the sacred love-feasts, sometimes the entire body of the faithful of all the Church—a communion founded on love and preserved by love.' For the original of this translation, see p. 33.

varied. There is not a solitary exception. Wherever their witness is recorded, it is of the same nature. It is as though the speech of 260 men of different nationality, temperament, and circumstances, stretching over eighteen centuries and a half, were the speech of one person, as indeed it was, for these several witnesses were the vicars of one Lord, Who spoke through them to successive generations. Already in these first two centuries Greece, Athens, and Africa, as well as Rome, had contributed their occupants to the throne of the fisherman. But all alike contributed the same witness, as they exhibited that same feature, of rulers conscious of worldwide responsibilities, and fulfilling them with prison or death before their eyes. When, then, a Pope speaks in these early ages concerning his office, it is reasonable even for a controversialist to listen, considering the subsidiary testimony with which that office comes before us; considering also the responsibility attaching to that office, according to the Pope's own conception of it. The permanent is a shadow of the eternal; and this permanent consciousness of holding a position fraught with such tremendous responsibilities suggests a more than human origin.

Our Lord did not admit, as Mr. Puller appears to imagine, that His witness to Himself was worthless even from a formal point of view, for it was part of the testimony. The Baptist's witness, and His own works of mercy, formed the rest. So with the witness of His vicars concerning (not, indeed, themselves, but) their office, it must be taken into account; and it would be no sign of 'candour' to omit it, but would indicate an inadequate appreciation of the nature of testimony.

In the following pages, therefore, the Popes' witness concerning their office will be emphasised, though not to the exclusion of other witness, but as being in harmony with it, each being the counter-signature of the other. The reception of that witness on the part of the Church at large will be considered as forming its necessary complement, and by this I understand the reception by the Church *on the whole*, not taking an occasional murmur, or the resistance of a single province, for the settled conviction of the whole Church. A boy's grumble is not the same as a permanent rebellion,

neither is every resistance to a particular instance of authority, or to a particular method of procedure, tantamount to a repudiation of the authority itself. St. Peter was resisted by the Judaizing Christians; but they came round to his judgment. All Apostle that he was, he yet had to explain to those of the circumcision, which in charity he did, the rationale of his action, and they acquiesced (*ἡσυχασαν*).¹ In Africa, for a little moment, some bishops resisted the mode of procedure adopted by Rome, but they never questioned her authority as supreme: their successors incorporated the very mode of procedure into their code.²

¹ Acts xi. 18.

² Cf. Period III. ch. x.

PERIOD II

A.D. 300—384

CHAPTER X.

THE DONATISTS AND THE COUNCIL OF ARLES.

THE fourth century opened with two schisms, one of which led to some of the most important literature which the Church possesses. The first in point of date was the Meletian schism in Egypt, which led to the boundaries of the Alexandrian diocese being specially mentioned in the 6th Canon of the Council of Nicæa. The second occurred in Africa, and was the occasion of some of St. Augustine's most important writings on the subject of the Church, in the end of this century and the beginning of the fifth. He threw his fiery genius into the question of how far scandals affect the note of sanctity which the Nicene Creed attributes to the Catholic Church.

I. The centre of the schism was Carthage. Some discontented presbyters had expressed themselves dissatisfied with their bishop and had accused him of having delivered up the sacred volumes to the heathen during persecution, and of having failed in charity towards those who refused to do the same,¹ and had to suffer in consequence. At his death Cæcilian was elected for his successor, and was consecrated by Felix of Aptunga. Seventy bishops of Numidia were on their way to the consecration, which, however, was performed before their arrival. Finding themselves disappointed of their claim² to have a hand in the consecration of a primate of the only city

¹ Those who gave up copies of the Holy Scriptures were called *Traditores*.

² In the other parts of Africa the presiding bishop might be of almost any see, as the office was attached to seniority, not to the see.

of Africa which was metropolitical,¹ and discovering also a party in Carthage ready for schismatic action, one of these Numidian bishops, named Donatus, consecrated a bishop in opposition to Cæcilian. The latter was accused of having been a *traditor*, and the new schism was supported by the immense wealth of a lady named Lucilla, who had been hurt by the disciplinary action of Mensurius, the predecessor of Cæcilian. The new-elected bishop of the schism was one of her household, named Majorinus.

II. The schism soon assumed formidable proportions in the North of Africa, so that the schismatics made the endeavour to gain the imperial condemnation of their opponents. They appealed to the emperor himself,² for which in after times St. Augustine perpetually reproached them.³ The emperor, however, not yet Arianised and Erastianised by contact with Eusebius of Nicomedia, referred them to Rome.⁴ They had asked for a judgment from the Gallic bishops, as being in their estimation specially free from the taint of 'tradition,' or the delivery of the sacred volumes to the heathen.⁵ There is no evidence that they had any idea of the case not being submitted to Rome; but as Rome invariably decided matters with the assistance of a council, they had asked, and it was agreed to, that the assessors in this case should be several of them Gallic bishops and the rest Italian. There is nothing in the records we possess to sanction the assumption which Archbishop Laud makes, viz. that these bishops were forced upon the Bishop of Rome. St. Augustine says that Constantine 'sent' the bishops to Rome; but that only applies to his ordering them to go, and supplying them with facilities for the journey. It is in the last degree improbable that there was no concerted action between the emperor and the Bishop of Rome, who was himself an African, named Melchiades. The question to be decided was not one that

¹ St. Augustine says that their claim had no foundation, the Bishop of Carthage being properly consecrated by a neighbouring bishop, as the Bishop of Rome by the Bishop of Ostia (*Brevic. Collat. c. Donat.* 3ii diei, c. xvi. 29).

² Optat. Milev. c. *Parmen.* lib. i. ³ Aug. c. *lit. Petil.* lib. ii. cap. 92.

⁴ Aug. *Ep.* 166; Euseb. *H. E.* x. 5.

⁵ Probably they also thought that the Gallic bishops would be more under the sway of the emperor, whom they hoped to influence.

concerned the faith, but as to a matter of fact; but as it had to do with bishops the emperor relegated the matter to Melchiades and his assessors. This, according to St. Augustine, was in accordance with the rules of the Church. The emperor all through expressly and strongly deprecated the idea of his sitting in judgment on bishops on such a matter.¹

III. Cæcilian was acquitted by the bishops at Rome. St. Augustine almost always calls the decision 'the judgment of Melchiades,' as though its force was due to his position amongst the bishops.² Optatus gives the judgment actually delivered by him. Melchiades said with respect to Cæcilian, 'I decide that he should deservedly be kept in his ecclesiastical communion, his *status* being unimpaired.'³ And so St. Augustine, in his account of the conference with the Donatists in the following century, calls it 'the judgment of the Roman bishop Melchiades, by which Cæcilianus was purged and absolved.'⁴ And yet it is also 'the decision of the bishops who sat at Rome,' on which Constantine declined to pass judgment himself,⁵ whilst the imperial official at the tribunal in Africa asked if 'they had anything to say against the council and the judgment of Melchiades, by which Cæcilian was purged and absolved,' i.e. from the charge.⁶ Elsewhere St. Augustine calls the said decision 'the judgment of the Churches beyond the seas founded by apostolical toil,' alluding to St. Peter and St. Paul.⁷ Again and again St. Augustine insists that the judgment of Melchiades ought to have been final, and further, that in repudiating that judgment the Donatists were putting themselves out of communion with the whole world, and putting the whole world into the position of *traditores*, because the whole world 'believed the judges who absolved [Cæcilian] rather than the accusers who incriminated him.' But in his letter on the Donatists in

¹ Mansi, t. ii. p. 748.

² E.g. throughout the conference with the Donatists in 411.

³ Optat. c. *Parmen.* lib. i.

⁴ *Ad Donatistas post Collationem liber unus*, cap. xiii.

⁵ *Loc. cit.* cap. xlv. 29.

⁶ *Brevic. Collat. c. Donat.* 3ii diei, cap. xviii. 33.

⁷ *C. Crescon.* lib. iii. cap. lxvii.

398, St. Augustine has a passage of the very first importance as throwing light on his ideas of Church government. He is contrasting the sentence of Melchiades with that of the seventy Numidian bishops who favoured the Donatists' candidate. He says, 'And yet of what character was that final sentence issued by the blessed Melchiades?—how innocent, how complete, how prudent and peace-making! By that judgment he both did not venture to remove from their ecclesiastical position¹ colleagues against whom nothing had been proved, and whilst chiefly blaming Donatus alone, whom he had discovered to be at the head of the whole matter, he gave the rest the free option of recovering their position, being prepared as he was to send letters of communion even to those who it was shown had been ordained by Majorinus: so that in whatever places there were two bishops, owing to the dissension, he [*i.e.* Melchiades] would confirm the one who had been first ordained, whilst another flock should be provided for the other to rule. O best of men, O Son of Christian peace, and Father of the Christian people!' ('Ep.' 43, al. 162.)

IV. From the passages just quoted, we gather that the ecclesiastical status of the bishops in Africa rested with Melchiades, whose judgment in the matter was to a Catholic final. 'Because Constantine' (St. Augustine says elsewhere) 'did not dare to judge the case of a bishop, he delegated it to be discussed and terminated by bishops, which also was done in the city of Rome under the presidency of Melchiades, the Bishop of that Church, with many of his colleagues.'² But the sentence was the sentence of Melchiades, according to St. Augustine. It rested with him to 'send letters of communion' to the bishops in Africa, whose case was under consideration, and it was for him to 'confirm' them in their ecclesiastical status. He did in synod confirm Cæcilian in his position at Carthage; and accordingly St. Augustine says that Cæcilian 'was able not to care for the multitude of enemies that conspired against him when he saw himself in communion with

¹ 'De collegio'—*i.e.* from amongst his own colleagues, from his own partnership—but that the above is the meaning is clear from the actual words of the sentence given by Optatus, which I have quoted on p. 141.

² *Ep. ad Donat.* 105, 8.

the Roman Church, in which the principalship of the Apostolic chair has ever been in force, and with the other lands, where the Gospel came to Africa itself, where [*i.e.* in the West] he was prepared to plead his cause if his adversaries attempted to alienate those Churches from him.' ('Ep.' 43, 7.)

Nothing, it seems to me, can be clearer, if one takes into account the whole of St. Augustine's writings concerning the Donatists, and they are considerable and full of details and of summaries that by their repetition and precision enable us to form a fair estimate of his idea of Church government—nothing, I say, seems to me clearer than that St. Augustine considered that the canonical justification of the position assigned to Melchiades in this matter was the fact that the See of Rome was the See of the Apostle Peter, and not that it was the imperial centre. The latter never once appears in the whole of St. Augustine's voluminous writings on the subject of the Donatist schism; the apostolical character and consequent jurisdictional primacy of the See of Rome is written in characters so large that I am unable to understand how anyone could deny it to be the teaching of our saint. If there be any one passage in which this conception of the See of Rome seems to be contradicted, I make bold to say that the evidence on the other side is so overwhelming that such a passage must be interpreted by the great mass of statements *vice versâ*. I do not know of any such passage, after reading through this long correspondence on the schism; but if there be such, it must be capable of the interpretation I have suggested. It is clear from the passages quoted above, that St. Augustine had no idea of causes of bishops being terminated in Africa. If proof positive were needed in addition, we have it in the last sentence of the chapter in that same letter, in which he speaks of the principalship of the Roman Church in connection with the judgment at Rome of African bishops. He there blames the Donatist bishop, Secundus, for having condemned bishops in their absence, forgetting that such bishops could not only appeal to the judgment of other colleagues, but especially to that 'of the Apostolical Churches,'—to that they could 'reserve their whole case.' There was no Apostolical Church in Africa; the only one to which they could

appeal was at Rome. There he sat who was not only what the occupants of other Apostolical Sees were, but 'the Father of the Christian people.' (Cf. p. 142, line 19.)

V. 'But the Donatists appealed from the judgment of the Pope, Melchiades.' They did. And this was one of the counts in the heavy indictment which St. Augustine brought against them. He tells us how the emperor himself deprecated such an enormity, on the ground that bishops were the proper judges of bishops.¹

Why, then, did not the emperor simply enforce their obedience, instead of waiting to issue the decrees which he afterwards did, depriving them of their churches? What the emperor did was to assign them a fresh tribunal, composed for the most part of Gallic bishops. It is here that a number of writers have jumped to a conclusion which is not warranted by the facts. It was not an appeal from Rome to a larger council. Mr. Haddan, in his article on 'Arles' (Smith and Cheetham's 'Dictionary of Christian Antiquities'), falls into a mistake which Mr. Ffoulkes, in Smith and Wace's 'Dictionary of Christian Biography,' stigmatises as 'either as gross a misconception or as wilful a misstatement as ever proceeded from a learned man.'² Mr. Haddan says that St. Augustine calls the Council of Arles, to which the case was now remitted, a 'universal council!' It is extraordinary how widespread the error is, that St. Augustine called the Council of Arles 'a plenary council of the universal Church.' As a matter of fact, he only says that if the Donatists were not satisfied with their judges at Rome, 'there remained a plenary Council of the universal Church,' but that they had not availed themselves of this.⁴ The Donatists, after the sentence of Melchiades, pre-

¹ Ep. 43, 7.

² Ep. 162. S. Optatus, c. *Parmen.* lib. i. says that the emperor spoke of them 'just as infidels' for appealing to him.

³ Mr. Ffoulkes is speaking of Bishop Hefele, who commits the same mistake.

⁴ St. Augustine does not suggest this alternative as though the rest of the episcopate could review a Papal decision on a matter of faith, but on such a question as this it was open to the Pope to use as his organ of judgment a fuller council. A plenary council, such as St. Augustine suggested, would include the Pope, through his legates or by his confirmation.

tended that some facts had not been brought forward concerning Cæcilianus' consecrator, Felix of Aptunga. Nay, more, they declared that Melchiades had himself been a *traditor*, and consequently was not qualified to act as Bishop of Rome. These were all matters of fact, and Constantine decided upon having them cleared up in order to leave the Donatists, who were disturbing the civil order in Africa, no room for further complaint. Accordingly, the emperor had the matter sifted by his proconsul in Africa, and 'gave these Donatist bishops another council, at Arles.' The question was not a matter of faith; but still Constantine refused to do anything but appoint fresh judges. It was not a higher court. For though the Pope was not there himself, his legates were, and they presided over the inquiry. Mr. Haddan makes an assertion in the 'Dictionary of Christian Antiquities'¹ which is both incorrect and misleading. He says that the emperor 'summoned other bishops from Sicily, Italy (not the Bishop of Rome, he having been one of the former judges), etc.' But the Pope was represented by four legates, Claudius, Vitus, Eugenius, and Cyriacus,² which shows that the council was not an appeal to a higher court, but merely the assignment of fresh assessors, 'other bishops,' *alios episcopos*, as St. Augustine says, sitting with the representatives of Pope Sylvester, who had now succeeded to Melchiades.³ It was granted, says St. Augustine, in spite of the great authority of the council at Rome ('*tantæ auctoritatis episcopos*'), whose numbers were not commensurate with its authority; and it was granted 'not because it was now' (*i.e.* after the council at Rome) 'necessary, but as a concession to their perversities, and out of a desire to restrain such great shamelessness in every way ('*omnimodo cupiens tantam impudentiam cohibere*').⁴ It was, indeed, a concession on the part of Rome also; for it is reasonable to suppose that Constantine was acting in concert with St. Sylvester. The emperor was himself in Gaul; and the impudent Donatists, as St. Augustine calls them, had a special leaning to the

¹ Article on 'Arles.'

² Mansi, t. ii. p. 470.

³ Cf. Döllinger's *Ch. Hist.* Period II. cap. v. sec. 2. 'Almost immediately after his accession this pontiff [Sylvester] sent his legates to the Synod of Arles.'

⁴ Ep. 43, 20.

Gallic bishops. He therefore arranged for the council to meet at Arles in 314. It was not, then, a plenary council reviewing the decision of Melchiades, but arose from a determination on the part of the emperor to give these Donatists no excuse for not submitting. He flatly refused to hear them himself, but instead handed their case again to the episcopate, consisting this time of Papal legates and other bishops, whose number is variously estimated—according to a false reading of St. Augustine, two hundred, but according to the list of signatures we possess not more than thirty-two. The emperor was himself present, although only a catechumen, but as the business of the council did not relate to matters of faith, his position was not as abnormal as it would otherwise have been.¹ He had submitted the matter to investigation in Africa by his proconsul; for the Donatists had raised the question of the canonicity of Felix's consecration, which had not been explicitly dealt with at Rome. He had hoped that Ingentius, who had confessed to having forged a letter in the name of Cæcilian, might make his confession before him, but he had eventually preferred that the matter should be dealt with by a synod of bishops. The synod decided against the Donatists. In other words, the synod decided that there was nothing in the supposed fresh matter to induce the new Pope to reverse the judgment of Melchiades.²

VI. The Synod of Arles has a special interest for us, as two British bishops—one of them the Bishop of London—attended it. And a matter was decided there which throws light on the contention of the British bishops that their rule for observing Easter was the right one. 'The British bishops' (say Haddan and Stubbs) 'must have consented to the following canons amongst others.' Amongst them they give the

¹ It is not certain who presided. Mr. Ffoulkes is certain that Marinus of Arles did not (*Dict. of Chr. Biog.*, art. 'Marinus'). Ballerini thinks it is possible that he did. It is not a matter of controversial importance, considering the purpose and nature of the council. Chrestus, Bishop of Syracuse, signed first. But we cannot argue safely from the list of signatures. Probably the legates were, after all, the presidents.

² A reversal which, had it taken place, would not have trenchanted upon the infallibility of Melchiades, since it was not a matter which came within the scope of Papal infallibility.

following:—'In the first place, concerning the celebration of Easter, it shall be kept at one time and on the same day throughout the world by us and *as thou shalt by letters, according to custom, direct.*'¹ This canon occurs in the letter addressed by the synod to the Bishop of Rome 'as thou shalt by letters, according to custom, direct,' referring to him. It is clear from this that St. Victor's efforts to procure uniformity in regard to the Paschal Feast had not been without effect, for in 314 it was a 'custom' for the Bishop of Rome to 'direct' the Churches as to the day of its observance. The British bishops in their controversy with Augustine merely clung to what they had received from Rome, in ignorance that it had been changed.

VII. The council sent a letter to the Pope, expressing their conviction that their sentence against the Donatists was even more lenient than it might have been, if the Pope had been present in person—*te pariter nobiscum judicante.*² But as he could not leave those parts 'in which the Apostles daily sit'—i.e. St. Peter and St. Paul—they have drawn up the decrees, which they send, hoping that he will communicate them to the rest of the world—of course, supposing that he approved them. The letter speaks of St. Sylvester as not only sitting where the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul sit—i.e. as occupying the see founded and guided by them—but also as holding 'the greater dioceses,' and it decided that persons who had been baptised by heretics with the proper form should not be rebaptised, but should be received by imposition of hands—passages from which we can form some idea of the religious teaching in this land in the fourth century.

The Donatists' next step after this decision at Arles was condemned by the emperor and all Catholics. They again appealed to His Imperial Majesty from the judgment of the episcopate. It is unfortunate that we have no record of the motives which induced the emperor to rehear the case. We

¹ *Ecclesiastical Councils* (Haddan and Stubbs), vol. i. p. 7, note.

² Mansi, t. ii. p. 469. Some writers (e.g. Dr. Wordsworth, *Theophilus Anglicanus*) consider that the word *pariter* involves an assertion of equality in judgment. But it must be admitted that the word does not necessarily mean anything more than our English 'together with,' which would admit of any amount of inequality between the parties thus acting together.

know that he disapproved of their step, and very reluctantly yielded.¹ He allowed them to come to Milan, but only to reiterate the original sentence against them, and eventually to deprive them of their churches.

VIII. The Council of Arles, however, has another interest for us, besides the fact that our fellow-countrymen were present. In the movement out of the Calvinism which had flooded the land since its change of religion, the party of decency and order, as we may fairly call the followers of Laud, stood between two fires; on the one side from the Puritans, who brought their king and archbishop to the scaffold, and on the other side from the Catholics, who urged the return of the High Church party to the bosom of the Catholic Church. The grounds on which they defended themselves have more than an antiquarian interest for us in England, for indeed many of the arguments used then for the purpose of preventing the chivalrous champions of ecclesiastical order from submitting to Rome are repeated in the controversial books of the present day. Amongst them is to be found an argument supposed to be derived from the Council of Arles. We have already seen that Mr. Haddan, in Smith's 'Dictionary of Christian Antiquities,' made a point of Rome not being summoned to it, ignoring the fact that Papal legates attended, and that he appeared to view it as an appeal to a plenary council of the universal Church from the judgment of the Pope. Mr. Ffoulkes, we have seen, considers it 'as gross a misconception or as wilful a misstatement as ever proceeded from a learned man' ('Dict. of Chr. Biogr.' art. 'Marinus') to say (as Mr. Haddan does) that St. Augustine called the council universal. It is not surprising that some who lean much on history should say, as nowadays many do, 'Whom *are* we to believe?' History, as the Catholic Church gives it to us, placing its key in our hands, is one thing; history without that key may easily become a labyrinth in which a lifetime may be spent in futile attempts to find the centre. But Archbishop Laud succeeded in impressing on his generation a view of history which contented a great many, and which it is, therefore, a

¹ He asked pardon of the bishops, St. Augustine says (*Brevic. Collat. pars 3*).

matter of interest to examine. I shall take the argument by which he repels the evidence adduced by his adversary, the Jesuit, from St. Augustine's words, quoted above, about the 'principalship,' or sovereignty of the Roman chair.

First, he gives an account of the origin of that principalship, or sovereignty, or primacy, which certainly was not St. Augustine's. He says: 'The Roman patriarch by ecclesiastical constitution might, perhaps [*sic*], have a primacy of order; but for principality of power the patriarchs were as even, as equal, as the Apostles were before them. . . . The truth is, this "more powerful principality" the Roman bishops got under the emperors when they became Christian.'¹ Now St. Augustine, writing about the first Christian emperor, and he not yet baptised, says that this principality 'has *always* been in force' ('semper viguit,' Ep. 43, 7).

But Laud proceeds: 'And to prove that St. Augustine did not intend by *principatus* here to give the Roman Bishop any power out of his own limits (which God knows were far short of the whole Church), I shall make it most manifest out of the very same epistle. "For afterwards," saith St. Augustine, "when the pertinacity of the Donatists could not be restrained by the African bishops only, they gave them leave to be heard by foreign bishops." It will be seen by comparison with St. Augustine's words, as quoted above, how thoroughly inaccurate this is to begin with. There was no leave given² in Africa. But in the next sentence Laud mistranslates the Latin, and applies the saint's words in his own favour instead of exactly the other way. He quotes, or professes to quote, St. Augustine's own words: 'And yet peradventure Melchiades, the Bishop of the Roman Church, with his colleagues, the transmarine bishops (*non debuit*) ought not to usurp to himself this judgment, which was determined by seventy African bishops, Tigrisitanus sitting primate. And what will you say if he did not usurp this power? For the emperor, being desired, sent

¹ *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology* (Oxford), Laud's Works, vol. i. § xxv. 10, p. 186. All the quotations that follow are taken from this volume.

² The Emperor expressly says that the removal of the case to Rome was his own doing, in his letter to Melchiades (Eus. x. 5). But it is obvious from its terms, and from St. Augustine's account (Ep. 43, 14), that he was referring them to a tribunal recognised as supreme by the orthodox in Africa.