

bishops, judges, which should sit with him and determine what was just upon the whole cause.' It will be noticed that there is rather a lack of logic in these words of St. Augustine as given by Laud. The question, 'And what will you say, &c.?' suggests that St. Augustine did not think it a usurpation on the part of the Bishop of Rome, whilst the preceding words make the saint stigmatise it as such. But this, as I shall show, is owing to Laud's mistranslation. It will be best, however, to proceed with his deductions.

'In which passage' (says Laud) 'there are very many things observable; as, first, that the Roman prelate came not in till there was leave for them to go to "transmarine bishops."'

There is no evidence whatever that they asked or obtained leave from the African bishops. St. Augustine says that they simply appealed to the emperor, and he remitted the case to Rome.

'Secondly' (says Laud), 'that if the Pope had come in without this leave, it had been a "usurpation."'

Now this point rests on Laud's mistranslation. The words he quotes from St. Augustine are his, all except two little words at the beginning. Instead of the words 'And yet,' St. Augustine asks a question, and uses—no equivalent for the words 'and yet,' but—the particle which marks the beginning of a question.¹ He supposes the Donatists to make the objection; so that the words which Laud professes to transcribe from the pen of St. Augustine as his first view of the case are the words which St. Augustine puts into the mouth of the Donatists and at once proceeds to controvert! His question, 'And what will you say, if he did not usurp this power?' contains his answer, or the beginning of his answer, to the objection which he supposes the Donatists to raise against the judgment of Melchiades. The Donatist is supposed to call it a usurpation; St. Augustine combats the Donatist contention. Laud puts it the other way, and makes it plausible by his mistranslation.

But he proceeds: 'Thirdly, that when he [*i.e.* the Pope] did thus come in, not by his own proper authority,

¹ 'An forte,' &c.

but by leave, there were other bishops made "judges with him."'

Here, again, the 'leave' is harped upon, for which there is no evidence, and assessors are assumed as detracting from the supreme authority of the Pope. But to this hour Popes act with assistance from bishops or cardinals, and in greater matters from a council.

Again: 'Fourthly, that these other bishops were "appointed and sent by the emperor," and his power; that which the Pope will least of all endure.' Laud puts the words 'appointed and sent by the emperor' as though they were quotations from St. Augustine; but he has slipped in the word 'appointed.' St. Augustine only says 'sent'—we do not know with how much concerted action between the emperor and the Pope.

Laud continues with a complete misinterpretation of another passage: 'Lastly, lest the Pope and his adherents should say that this was a usurpation in the emperor, St. Augustine tells us a little before, in the same epistle still, "that this doth chiefly belong *ad curam ejus*, to the emperor's care and charge, and that he is to give an account to God for it.''

Now one would suppose that 'this' relates in St. Augustine to the same as Laud has been speaking of before, as he adduces it to show that the previous affair, as understood by him, was not in St. Augustine's eyes a usurpation on the part of the emperor. Will not any reader, who has not been able to study the passage in the original, be surprised to find that St. Augustine is referring to a wholly different stage of the proceedings, and to a matter which was, according to the teaching of Laud's adversary, well within the power of the emperor? St. Augustine, in this last passage, is dealing with another objection by the Donatists. After the synod at Rome had decided in favour of Cæcilianus' consecration and against the Donatists, the latter brought forward a new point about Felix of Aptunga. This was a matter of fact, which could be determined by a secular tribunal. The emperor ordered his proconsul to investigate it in Africa. The Donatists hypocritically objected in after years that a proconsul

was not the proper judge of bishops. St. Augustine reminds them of the way in which the proconsul was commissioned by the emperor, to whom the care of such a matter properly belonged. Besides, St. Augustine urges that they had themselves appealed to the emperor, and if they considered it wrong for a proconsul to investigate the question of Felix's antecedents in Africa, 'how much more blameworthy must they be who wished to make an earthly king the judge of their case!'¹ In a word, St. Augustine is urging the very opposite conclusion to that which Laud deduces from his words.

¹ *Ep.* 43, § 13.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COUNCIL OF NICEÆA.

§ I.—*The Reasons for its being convoked.*

I. THE history of the Church consists of the record of her perpetual proposal of divine mysteries to the human intelligence, and of the acceptance or repudiation of her authority by a nature wounded through the fall in Eden. One result of that fall is the reluctance that men feel to submit to a master. There is no man that is not called at some time of his life to sacrifice his natural love of independence in obedience to authority. But it is not every man that will bind his intelligence on the mount of sacrifice and merit to receive it back again from God in a new supernatural life. Hence the conflicts of heresy in the history of the Church. The very word heresy implies deliberate choice; and the deliberate choice which constitutes heresy is a determined rebellion against the authority that, bringing with it adequate credentials, proposes the subject matter of divine revelation.

The history of the Church is, therefore, the history of a series of conflicts between authority and the rebellious instincts of our fallen nature, which protest against rule, dominion, and lordship, even though submission be the portal of Paradise itself.

But these conflicts with heresy were not all so much loss to the Church. As the original rebellion in Paradise was the *felix culpa* which led to the greater gift of the Incarnation, so the lapse of heretics led to the Church bringing out her stores of wisdom and exhibiting the majesty of her divinely given authority. There is no better cordial for drooping courage than a study of the evolution of her grandeur as she

rode through the storms of the fourth and fifth centuries. The majesty of her Divine Head was assaulted and in danger of being undermined under every conceivable aspect. But without these assaults we might have been poorer in our knowledge of what the Church was and what she could do. It has been well said that 'it was not until after some conflict that the Church exercised her full authority as guardian of the ancient faith in all its integrity, whose duty it is to repress all error, and all principles that may lead to error, among Christians. By this conflict the Church was led of necessity to unfold, with ample fulness, the truth of her doctrine, which was at first more implicit, and although perfectly understood, not fully expressed; to define it more particularly and in distinct formulas against every error. This is a service which heresies have at all times conferred upon the Church.'¹

And there is no spectacle in all history more worthy of our admiration than the serene majesty with which the Holy See articulated the teaching of Jesus Christ through all the storms that raged against the Church in the days of persecution. But with the fourth century came the era of great councils, beginning with that held at Nicæa and ending with that held at Chalcedon. These stand apart, with features of their own, and have obtained a position which St. Gregory the Great likens to that of the four gospels. It will be my object in the following pages to exhibit the share which the Holy See took in the destruction of heresy and the orderly exhibition of the deposit of truth committed to the Church's care during this era of her conciliar action.

II. But why, it has been asked, a council at all, if the Pope is himself infallible? Might not the Church have been spared the trouble of meeting in council at all?² Indeed, it has been said that the fact of the Nicene Council having been held is the most perfect refutation of the assertion made in

¹ Döllinger's *Ch. Hist.* Period I. cap. ii. § 7.

² This was the argument constantly used by Dr. Pusey: e.g. 'Had Papal infallibility been then believed, Sylvester, or St. Damasus, or St. Celestine, or St. Leo might by themselves have set at rest the heresies of Arius,' &c. (*Sermon on the Rule of Faith*, 2nd ed. Preface, p. 18).

the Vatican decrees that the *ex cathedrâ* infallibility of the Pope was always known to the Church. It is asked, 'On the principle of the Vatican dogmas, why did not Pope Sylvester close the question by an *ex cathedrâ* judgment?'¹ and it is added that 'the negligence, on the part alike of the Church and the Pope, was simply treasonable'—i.e. on the supposition that Papal infallibility was a known truth.

All these objections are based on a misconception of 'the principle of the Vatican dogmas.' It is no part of the doctrine of infallibility that the Pope was able at any moment to 'close the question,' when he had to deal with such people as the Arians; just as it is no part of the Church's teaching that our Divine Lord could close the question about His heavenly origin in addressing the Jews in the synagogue at Capharnaum. And yet He was in a higher sense infallible.² It cannot be argued that our Lord was not Almighty God because the people said, 'If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,' and because He taught them in a way which did not convince them all. And so with His Vicar. It might need a longer management, or a different mode of expression from an *ex cathedrâ* judgment, to bring the Arians to their bearings and 'close the question.' The writers who have advanced this objection believe the Nicene Creed to be as authoritative an expression of revealed truth as can be had; but the Nicene Creed did not 'close the question.' The Pope is not more infallible than the whole Church, and yet the voice of what the objectors would consider the whole Church has not sufficed to close the question for some of their own teachers.

III. But the objection thus confidently urged against the truth that under certain circumstances the successor of Peter is secure of divine assistance against leading the Church astray (i.e. is under certain conditions infallible), ignores the circumstances under which the Council of Nicæa was assem-

¹ *The Roman Claims tested by Antiquity*, by W. Bright, D.D., Prof. of Eccles. Hist. in the Univ. of Oxford, 1877, p. 9—one of the books recommended in the list drawn up by the English Church Union. Cf. also Preface to *Lives of Three Fathers*, by the same author.

² Canon Liddon, in his last *Bampton Lecture*, was perfectly right in arguing that our Lord alone was infallible in the sense in which he uses the term; he was mistaken in his exaggerated idea of what is involved in Papal infallibility.

bled. It was not a new question that it had to discuss. It was not one on which anyone had the slightest doubt as to the judgment of the Pope. It has already been observed that the real forerunner of Arius was excommunicated, in the person of Theodotus, by Pope St. Victor. And the first open conflict on the subject of the term *Homousios* (or consubstantial) as applied to the Eternal Son, had been set at rest by another Pope, St. Dionysius. His namesake of Alexandria had used similes concerning the relation of the Son to the Father which were liable to misrepresentation, and had withdrawn them, and informed the Pope that he only did not use the word consubstantial because he did not find it in Holy Scripture, but that he believed and taught the doctrine therein contained.¹ St. Dionysius, the Pope, in his synod, had declared the doctrine signified by the term to be of faith, and set his seal to the use of the term itself (*Homousios*) without, however, making it a matter of absolute obligation on the whole Church. It was henceforth used at Rome and Alexandria as the fittest symbol of the relationship of the Son to the Father. So that Christians were not left in doubt as to the faith up to the hour of the Council of Nicæa. St. Athanasius (*loc. cit.*) says that the gist of the Arian heresy had been condemned on this occasion (c. 262) by the Pope St. Dionysius, 'and so was long ago (ἐκπαλαι) anathematised by all.'² For St. Dionysius and his synod had proclaimed that the Son was in no sense a creature, but was of one substance with the Father.

In the beginning of the fourth century the heresy reappeared in the teaching of a priest at Antioch, named

¹ Athanas. *De Sententia Dionysii*, n. 14.

² It has been said that the word *homousios* was condemned by the Council of Antioch in 269 (e.g. Salmon on *Infallibility*, p. 292). St. Athanasius, St. Basil, and St. Hilary seem to allow this. But St. Athanasius says that he had not seen the letter of the Council nor been able to learn its contents. St. Basil appears to be speaking of the Council of Ancyra, a semi-Arian council in 358, for he gives their known motives and assigns them to Antioch. St. Hilary makes the two councils say exactly the same thing. Dr. Döllinger has an exhaustive note on the subject (*Ch. Hist.* Period I. cap. ii. sec. 7), and concludes that its rejection by the Synod of Antioch, in its true meaning, is 'contrary to all historical evidence.' De Smedt argues forcibly that the term, though not the doctrine, was repudiated at Antioch (*Diss.* vi.).

Lucian, among whose pupils was the priest of Alexandria, named Arius, of great parts and most attractive ways. This is not the place in which to give his teaching in detail. Suffice it to say that in his descriptions of the Son, or Logos, or Word, of God, whilst he exalted Him far above all other creatures, placing His origin even before time, he yet denied to Him strict eternity, or a real generation from the Essence of the Father. His teaching spread like wildfire in the East, even Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, the father of Church history, being carried away by it. It is an unutterable loss to history that Eusebius was thus out of sympathy with the real mind of the Nicene Fathers. Whilst, therefore, he indulges in a grand description of the council, he has omitted all that we most wish to know.

The teaching, then, which had been condemned by St. Dionysius was spreading over the East. What was the Pope to do? Hold another Council in the West and issue an *ex cathedra* judgment on the whole question? But the question had already been closed by St. Dionysius. Should he, then, excommunicate every bishop who was not teaching in perfect accord with Rome? But it needed the apparatus of a council to discover who were, and who were not, teaching the true faith.¹ The Arians were proverbially slippery.

IV. The step actually taken was due to the fact that in the Providence of God the Emperor Constantine now occupied himself with the Eastern portion of his empire. He had seen the unity of the Church in the West. He found the East torn with dissension. After attempting to introduce the idea that the contention was for nothing real, and discovering his mistake, he resolved that the bishops should meet together, and so be brought to some definite issue. He might, of course, have done as the three emperors did half a century later—

¹ 'Almighty God did not will that it should be by the voice of one man that heresies should be slain. He had an office for the Universal Church throughout the world. He had an office for the Church, as a whole, to bear witness to the truth' (Pusey's *Sermon on the Rule of Faith*, Pref. p. xxxiv.). This, which Dr. Pusey thought a conclusive argument against the Vatican Decrees, is, nevertheless, part of the teaching of those decrees. One of the most curious phenomena of contemporary history is the continued misunderstanding of those decrees by Dr. Pusey and others.

issue an edict that all who wished to retain their churches must teach the religion handed down by the Apostle Peter to the Romans—but Constantine was not yet baptised, and it is impossible to suppose that a Pío Nono would have advised such a remedy under the circumstances. The idea of a council on a larger scale than had yet been tried was suggested to the emperor by the episcopate. *It was convoked, says Rufinus, a contemporary, 'by the advice of the bishops, *ex sententiâ sacerdotum*.'¹ It was not likely to be the suggestion of Eusebius, nor the rest of the Arianising bishops. They had not yet gained the emperor's ear, and it was the last thing they would desire. Judging from a statement of the sixth Council, composed entirely of Eastern bishops, and held subsequently to the time when the extent of the claims of Rome were, by the confession of all writers, distinctly understood, the idea of the Nicene Council was not due to the emperor, but to the Pope himself. Rome and Alexandria were in close correspondence on the crisis, and it is in the highest degree probable that they had agreed that the best way of assisting the East was by a solemn consultation. This is looking at the matter from a purely historical point of view. Such notices as we have all suggest that the idea came from Rome and Alexandria.

V. And the reasons why St. Sylvester might reasonably and not 'treasonably' (as the above-mentioned writer insists²) prefer a conciliar judgment in the East to an *ex cathedrâ* judgment from Rome itself, were possibly such as these:

An *ex cathedrâ* judgment was usually given with a certain solemnity of circumstance, such as a council of the bishops who were in Rome, and those, besides, whom the Pope might be pleased to select. Such an authoritative utterance, making the term '*Homœousios*' a condition of Catholic communion (which was all that was needed, the doctrine having been already settled) might have been sent from the West to the

¹ Lib. i. cap. 1. Dr. Salmon flatly contradicts Rufinus. He says (*Infall.* p. 289), 'The bringing it together was entirely the emperor's idea.' But he gives no authority for his assertion, and appears to have forgotten the quotation given above.

² Bright's *Roman Claims*, &c. *loc. cit.*

East. This would have been the 'despotic' method of rule. But the 'politic' mode of action was clearly to have the council in the East, and to call upon the bishops there to exercise their judgment upon the matter. For it is part of the episcopal office, according to the Vatican decrees, to use its judgment, and the free use of the same in no way interferes with the truth of Papal infallibility, as defined by those decrees. To judge after the Pope is not to act as his superior, but as a subordinate judge. It is not proclaiming his judgment useless, but following it spontaneously as the norm. Whilst a discordant judgment would subject the bishop to anathema, a concordant judgment is of value. In a council information would be given, personal contact with the orthodox would do its proper work, an Athanasius (although but a deacon) would exert the influence due to his character, and the unity of the Church would be made plain.

Moreover, it cannot be too carefully borne in mind that Papal infallibility does not mean inspiration, but only Divine assistance. Such assistance requires the Pope to use human means to ascertain the truths to be proclaimed: *e.g.* discussion may be necessary to enable the Pope to decide as to whether this or that is in the deposit, whether it is the logical outcome of such and such a revealed doctrine. And among such means of arriving at the truth, one of peculiar efficacy is that of convoking a General Council and taking the witness of the Fathers. Thus, a General Council may be included in the action of infallibility, although the ultimate result in the shape of the final definition is only certain by reason of the *charisma* bestowed on the Holy Father. In the case of the first four councils, the decision of the Pope was already formed, and, therefore, they were not needed for that purpose, but they were conducive to the ends which the Holy Father had in view, and were, therefore, suggested or accepted by him as the case might be.²

The way, then, in which St. Sylvester elected to govern the Church was by a council in the East, which the emperor

¹ Readers of Aristotle will remember his distinction between the despotic and politic methods of government.

² It was in the council that they discovered that nothing short of the use of the term *Homœousios* would avail. Cf. Athan. *De Decr. Nic. Syn.* n. 20.

hailed for the fulfilment of his own desire for the unity of the Church as the safeguard of his empire. St. Sylvester knew well that Papal infallibility does not act like magic. The writers from whom I have quoted appear to imagine that he had only to raise his voice, and if the doctrine of infallibility had been held by the Church, 'the question would have been closed.'

But the visible Church consists of wheat and tares; and the Arians would not have accepted the consubstantiality of the Son, though an angel from heaven proclaimed it. The decree of the head of the Church would have sufficed for some of these Easterns; but the decision of the head in conjunction with the rest, with the 'conjudication' of the associated teaching body, viz. the episcopate, which can never be reduced to a mere vicariate of the Pope, would be a stronger argument to those who were inclined to resist. It was more imposing, and required less faith. Rome and Alexandria had already consecrated the term *Homoousios* to express the faith. It was now to be seen in the face of day by an evident and imposing manifestation that there was no place in the Church for any who taught the contrary. The bishops, directed from Rome,¹ were in the exercise of their prerogative, by the grace of their consecration, to proclaim before the world their adhesion to what, as a matter of fact, had been the teaching of the Holy See, and of such bishops as Alexander of Alexandria. They did not, as I have said, come to decide an open question. The legates (cf. p. 164) came full charged with their master's judgment, and the rest of the bishops with the teaching which had been theirs all along—they came to proclaim that there was but one teaching in the East and West, in the body and the head, and that that teaching attributed proper Divinity to the invisible Head of the Church.

So that the palmary instance of history contradicting the statement of the Vatican decree² is derived from the fact that St. Sylvester considered that the circumstances of the case demanded the apparatus of a council rather than an *ex cathedra*.

¹ See p. 164.

² 'The Nicene Council is the best instance one could take—the best on all grounds' (Bright's *Roman Claims*, *loc. cit.*).

drâ judgment from himself. That is to say that, *given* Papal infallibility, it ought to have been exercised in the particular way laid down by these writers;¹ and since it was not so exercised, it could not have been known to the Church; 'the negligence on the part alike of the Church and of the Pope was simply treasonable.' In point of fact, St. Sylvester seems to have exhibited that genius for government which, it has been remarked by an unfriendly critic, is an inalienable inheritance of the occupants of the See of Rome. To bring the East into line with the West, he used the instrument of a council composed of bishops, mostly Eastern, together with his own legates, instead of issuing a fresh decree straight from Rome. We do not know what the action of his legates was in the council, as the record has perished. We can only judge, if we can judge at all, by that of the Papal legates at the Council of Ephesus, when we first have a full record of conciliar action. And in that council their position was one of undisputed superiority.

§ II.—*The Council itself.*

I. The council, when it met, consisted almost entirely of Eastern bishops. Not more than five Western bishops attended. There was no need of the presence of more, and the assembly would have been indefinitely delayed had the presence of others been required. Arianism, as Mr. Allies remarks, was an Eastern malady. And it was enough for the West that the legates of the Holy See were on the spot, bringing with them, as is expressly stated by Eusebius, the authority of St. Sylvester.

The Pope presided by his legates, consisting of Hosius, the Bishop of Cordova, in Spain (who had been acting at Alexandria² in the affair of Arius, and was the trusted friend of the emperor), and two priests named Vito and Vincentius. These three signed first, Hosius obviously not in virtue of his

¹ I have quoted only from Dr. Pusey and Dr. Bright; but the instances in which I have noticed the same assumption in Anglican writers are practically innumerable.

² The action of Hosius, a Western bishop, at Alexandria, suggests some other than a purely imperial commission. He was probably Papal legate throughout the whole affair.

see, but as legate. The two priests signed next, and then Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Some writers have endeavoured to evade the force of this fact, by suggesting that Hosius was made president, as the emperor's favourite, and from general respect for his character. One can hardly suppose that the suggestion could be due to anything but the exigencies of a theory which is opposed to the idea that Rome presided. Could anything be more entirely opposed to all that we know of the relationship between the greater and lesser sees of Christendom than the supposition that the emperor's will placed an inferior Western see over the Sees of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch? It is admitted on all hands, that long before the Council of Nice the See of Rome was considered to be the See of Peter, and we have already seen that there is irrefragable proof that Alexandria acted as at least in some sense subordinate to Rome. It is freely admitted on all sides that Rome had a primacy of honour by those who deny her primacy of jurisdiction. Yet, according to this strange theory, her primacy of honour did not involve even the presidency at the first Œcumenical Council. What *did* that primacy of honour involve? Further, the sees are, even on this theory, placed in their usual order *after* the president's signature, viz. first the papal legates, then Alexandria, and then Antioch. But we are asked on this theory to believe that above these greater sees thus placed in their order, a lesser see of the West signed, not as representing the first see in Christendom, but as president—Cordova, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem!

I have said that this supposed arrangement could only have been by the emperor's desire, for it is impossible to suppose that Papal legates suggested such an order, or that Alexandria and Antioch would otherwise have suffered a suffragan of the West to take precedence, when a question as to their own jurisdiction over their suffragans was coming on for discussion.

Mr. Puller¹ quotes the case of Marinus, Bishop of Arles, at the Council of Arles, who is supposed by some to have presided.

¹ *Prim. SS.* p. 143, note 3.

But it is not certain that he did;¹ and he was the bishop of the place, and the council was in no sense Œcumenical, but was convened under peculiar circumstances (cf. p. 145). Hosius was not Bishop of Nice, but of a see in Spain. And is it conceivable that, if Hosius had acted as president, a lesser Western see over all the great Eastern sees, in the East, the precedent would never have been quoted? Could the Council of Chalcedon have blamed Dioscorus for sitting as president in the presence of papal legates, by the express order of the emperor, at the Robber Council of Ephesus, and no one have pressed the point that at Nice even a lesser Western bishop had sat above even Rome, not to speak of Alexandria and Antioch? The idea is so unsupported by any historical evidence, that it would have been natural to pass it by, had not several recent writers made a chivalrous attempt at foisting it into the history of the council.

It is, then, on the list of signatures alone that such writers rely; it is from the same list that we may derive a sound argument for the presidency of the Pope at this council. It is not only from the account of Gelasius of Cyzicus that the proof is derived, but from the inherent improbability (I had almost said impossibility) of the opposite theory, granting the accuracy of the list of signatures, which is not denied. These lists, referred to by Gelasius, supported by the strongest internal probability, and the analogy of the mode of procedure at subsequent councils, constitute an amount of evidence which is opposed merely by the fact that Hosius' name occurs first, and the assumption that he signed in his own right.

And it is necessary also to protest against the idea that in this instance Gelasius of Cyzicus may be discarded as of no value.² Photius of Constantinople, before his fall, bracketed Hosius and the two Roman priests as forming the Papal legation, quoting Gelasius. And Photius must have been relying not only on his own judgment, but also on an Eastern tradition to the same effect. But Gelasius of Cyzicus could hardly

¹ Cf. *Dict. of Chr. Biog.* art. 'Marinus.'

² Mr. Gore (*R. C. Claims*, p. 100, 3rd ed.) altogether fails to appreciate the argument derived from the lists of Gelasius. Nearly every assertion which he makes in the note, in which he speaks of this subject, may be fairly questioned.

have created an Eastern tradition. Besides, Gelasius is not giving his own authority, which would be of comparatively little worth, but professes to be copying from older lists. What is the exact authority of those lists no one can say; but Gelasius evidently had some other lists besides the one from which Eusebius copies, and they agreed on this point. The Eastern tradition in favour of the presidency of Rome at the council must have been strong for it to be adopted as it has been into the Græco-Russian liturgy. In the office of St. Sylvester the following address to him in reference to the council occurs:—‘Thou hast shown thyself the supreme one of the Sacred Council, O initiator into the sacred mysteries, and hast illustrated the Throne of the Supreme One of the Disciples.’ Here is the presidency of the Council of Nicæa attributed to St. Sylvester, as the successor of St. Peter, ‘the supreme one of the Apostles.’

That the legates exercised a real influence is involved in the statement, made in the same century by St. Damasus and a synod of ninety bishops, that the 318 bishops at Nicæa were ‘directed from the city of the most holy Bishop of Rome’ in the work of the council, whilst the Council of Rome in A.D. 485 states that the 318 bishops there assembled ‘referred the confirmation of things and the authority to the holy Roman Church.’

II. The official records have perished, probably destroyed by the Arians when in possession of the Eastern sees. Hence it is not open to argue anything from the silence of the bishops on this or that subject. It would be arguing, not from the silence of the council, but from the absence of records. When Mr. Puller says that ‘*undoubtedly*,¹ if the idea’ (i.e. of a primacy of jurisdiction as possessed by the Bishop of Rome) ‘had been presented to the synod, and if *any* claim on behalf of the Pope had been urged as of divine right, there *can be no question* that a repudiation of such claim *would* have been made in *unmistakable* terms,’ he is arguing not from history but from preconceived ideas. But when he goes on to say, ‘But as a matter of fact the claim was not made, and therefore the whole conception that underlies the Vatican decrees was

¹ The italics in this sentence are mine.

ignored,’¹ he first manufactures his history and then makes an unsound deduction from his fabrication. How can we say that ‘as a matter of fact the claim was not made,’ when we do not possess a single record beyond the creed and canons?—when, moreover, the learned are not even agreed as to the number of canons? Who has interrogated the Nicene Fathers to know what was said, seeing that all documentary evidence has perished? But supposing that the claim was not made, how does this prove that ‘the whole conception underlying the Vatican decrees’ was ‘ignored’? It proves nothing either way, unless it can be shown that there was occasion for making the claim. But how can we suppose that such a claim would come in *à propos* of the business of the synod? Surely these strong assertions, ‘undoubtedly,’ ‘there can be no question,’ need some other ground on which to rest. The fact that the original documents were at some time or other, in the case of each of the greater Eastern sees, in the hands of the Arians, and the tendency that we know the Arians exhibited to forge and mutilate documents, must make us very careful how we use even those we do possess. Where great institutions rest upon them, where traces of them are found in other writings, and when there is corroborative evidence in the West, we may trust them. But as to arguing from their silence, and calling it ‘significant,’ one is compelled to say that those who build such tremendous issues on such a sandy foundation are having recourse to a most dangerous expedient. St. Boniface, addressing the bishops of Thessaly, reminds them that the Nicene Fathers did not venture to lay down anything regarding the See of St. Peter, because they knew that ‘that was bestowed by the word of the Lord.’ As an hypothesis this is equally rational with that of the supreme jurisdiction of the Pope having been ignored; as a matter supported by evidence, it has more in its favour than the latter hypothesis. The history of matters immediately subsequent to the council will show that this must have been the case; for it is not reasonable to suppose that St. Julius, St. Liberius, and St. Damasus could have acted as they did, if the primacy of jurisdiction had been ‘ignored’ at the Council of Nicæa. We

¹ *Prim. SS.* p. 147.

must not take history piece by piece, but trace the continuous development of an institution, if we would understand its real meaning.

§ III.—*The Sixth Canon.*

I. There is, however, one canon which gives us a glimpse of the nature of the Church's government. It ran thus:— 'The Roman Church has the primacy' (or, 'Let the Roman Church have the primacy,' or, as the true version probably runs, 'It is the ancient custom that the Roman Church should hold the primacy'). 'Let the ancient customs be maintained, which are in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis, according to which the Bishop of Alexandria has authority over all those places, since this is also customary' (or 'there is a like custom') 'to the Bishop of Rome. In like manner in Antioch and in the other provinces these privileges are to be preserved.'

As it is disputed by some whether the first clause about the Roman Church formed part of the canon, I will leave that for the moment as though it did not exist. And I will also suppose that the canon ends here, although I think there is good reason to suppose that there was at one time more in the canon.

One thing that must strike the most casual observer at once is the fact that the Church comes before us after her three centuries of persecution with her hierarchy of bishops already in order. Three sees come before us with titles to jurisdiction already possessed. The council did not originate their jurisdiction, and settled not to meddle with it. Their words do not even imply that they *could*. The force of ancient custom is too much for them. Whence the ancient custom was derived, on what authority it was based, they do not say; we can settle that from other sources. The Sixth Canon gives no hint as to whether these customs, all or any of them, relied on divine institution or on ecclesiastical agreement. The three sees that come before us in this important canon are the sees of Peter, and their relationships were, according to the Fathers of Nicæa, of ancient origin. Within the jurisdiction of one of these Petrine sees a quarrel had

arisen. Meletius, an Egyptian bishop, had risen against his patriarch (so to call him by anticipation) and formed a schism. The council had already dealt with metropolitans; it now proceeded to deal with greater metropolitans,¹ those bishops who had metropolitans under them. They decide that there is nothing to be done but to adhere to the jurisdictional extent of the See of Alexandria as it had been mapped out in the past.

II. But the Fathers in this canon give a reason for not interfering with the jurisdiction of Alexandria. They say that the ancient customary jurisdiction of that see should remain what it is, 'since [or because, *ἐπειδὴ*] the same is customary with the Bishop of Rome.' Thus the most marked distinction is drawn between the position of Rome on the one hand and the great sees of Alexandria and Antioch on the other. Rome's cognisance, or Rome's example, whichever be the true interpretation, is quoted by the Nicene Fathers as determining the question of Alexandria's rights of jurisdiction.²

If the expression used in this canon—viz. 'since this is customary also with the Bishop of Rome'—means that such exercise over other bishops was the custom also with the Bishop of Rome, then Rome's patriarchal sway is held up as the norm and sufficient justification of a similar authority on the part of the Bishop of Alexandria. The council does not touch upon the origin or ground of Rome's organisation of her jurisdiction. That did not come within its purview. It spoke of her patriarchal sway as settled *and as settling their own decision* (*ἐπειδὴ*). It has been said that the absence of any reference in this canon to the unique and sovereign position of the Bishop of Rome 'is a proof, if proof were wanted,

¹ Cf. *Valesii Observ. in Soc. et Soz.* 3. viii. So Jerome, John Scholasticus, Patr. of Constantinople, and Petrus de Marca.

² Mr. Puller describes the canon as going on 'to cite the case of the Roman See as parallel to the case of the Alexandrian See' (*Prim. SS.* p. 145). But the canon goes on to cite the parallel case of the Roman See as the ground for continuing her rights to Alexandria. This Mr. Puller omits to notice. Mr. Gore's summary of the canon is equally misleading: 'The Fathers in the Sixth Canon recognised in Rome a quasi-patriarchal power in her own region like that which they acknowledged equally in Alexandria and Antioch. They recognised nothing more' (*R. C. Claims*, 3rd edit. p. 96). Surely they suggested a great deal more when they gave this as *the reason* for their own action.

that the First Œcumenical Council knew nothing of the doctrine of Papal supremacy.' And the Bishop of Lincoln has recently called special attention to this proof, quoting these words and saying, 'We need to bring our minds to the consideration of such words.'¹ The same writer (Dr. Bright) urges in the previous sentence that since they were touching on jurisdiction they were bound to go on and speak of Papal jurisdiction if they believed in it. The best answer would be to ask, Why? If that jurisdiction were under dispute, one could understand why they ought to have gone on to speak of it. If not, there is no conceivable reason why they *must* enter upon such a subject. The proof to the consideration of which we are asked 'to bring our minds' is of the nature of a *petitio principii*. We may with much greater justice ask why the Fathers quoted Rome's relationship to the sees of her patriarchate as an adequate reason (*ἐπεὶ*) for so all-important a decision as that the jurisdiction of Alexandria was not to be interfered with. Mere antiquity would not be sufficient. The Nicene Fathers were not a body of antiquaries concerned to preserve the shape of an edifice from mere love of the antique. The custom must have been based on sufficient authority, and this authority they give—'since' (that is, because) 'this is customary to Rome.' The reason given suggests that Rome is something more than Alexandria and Antioch—nay, than the whole Council of Nice, for Rome's action is assumed as the true norm of ecclesiastical government. The council did not confirm anything in this matter as a superior court, it only followed custom. It gave nothing, except its adhesion to the customary jurisdiction already settled. It dealt with Alexandria and Antioch, but only to declare the type which Rome had supplied by her action in her own neighbourhood to be a sufficient authority.² On this ground they considered the protesting bishops bound to obey their Metropolitan at Alexandria.

¹ Cf. his Preface to *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, by Rev. F. W. Puller, p. xvi.

² This seems to be the view of it taken by the Eighth Gen. Council, *actio* x. cap. 17, but not quite certainly. It is the interpretation given by Nicolas I. in his letter to the Emperor Michael.

III. I have given this interpretation first because of the great authority it can claim. But I cannot conceal from myself that, as compared with a second, adopted by Baronius and Bellarmine, it labours under certain disadvantages. In the first place it gives, indeed, a reason for the general principle of patriarchal jurisdiction, but not for the particular instance; and it was the particular instance which was the point in hand. That is to say, it is not clear how the reason given on this interpretation would account for the decision that those Egyptian bishops in particular should remain under Alexandria. And, secondly, the canon does not, in some of the oldest versions, speak of a *similar* exercise of jurisdiction as customary with the Bishop of Rome, but it says, 'since *this* is customary to the Bishop of Rome.' What is 'this'?

Taking the words simply as they stand, the canon may be said to assert that the subjection of the Egyptian bishops to Alexandria was customary with the Bishop of Rome. That is to say, the jurisdiction of Alexandria over these bishops had been the arrangement with respect to them recognised and acted upon by the Bishop of Rome himself, and that consequently things must remain as they were. They could not interfere with the ancient custom which had been thus recognised by Rome. The arrangement had been made with the cognisance of Rome. We can hardly doubt that the Papal legates had been instructed on this question. And they may have given the information that the bishops of Rome had long ago originated, or arranged, or consented to this jurisdiction of Alexandria. In this case the Nicene Fathers' judgment, when they said 'Let the ancient customs hold good, &c.,' would be equivalent to saying, 'Let these bishops remain under the See of Alexandria, since this arrangement is of long standing, it being customary with the bishops of Rome to act upon it'—as had actually happened in the previous century in the case of the bishops of Upper Nubia and St. Dionysius of Rome and his namesake of Alexandria.

On the supposition that the supremacy of the Church of Rome was a universally recognised truth, this would be a most natural way of speaking. It is here advanced, however,

not as a positive proof of that doctrine, but as a reply to the various conjectures on which the writers above quoted rely, arguing from the supposed silence of the fragmentary records which we possess, and particularly of this canon. The argument advanced by Dr. Bright and emphasised by the Bishop of Lincoln, to the effect that if the Church had believed in the supremacy of the Church of Rome, it must have said so in this canon, may thus be met in two ways: first, by insisting on the precarious nature of the argument from silence, in the absence of the Acts of the Council; and secondly, by showing that it cannot be fairly deemed beyond dispute that this canon was not meant to give the authority of Rome as an all-sufficient reason for these Fathers not venturing to innovate on the customary relationship of Alexandria to her suffragan sees. There is, moreover, this indisputable fact, on which Pope Nicolas I. laid stress in his celebrated letter to the Emperor Michael, that whilst the council described the jurisdiction, more or less, of Alexandria and Antioch, it did not do the same in regard to Rome. Rufinus, indeed, supplies us with some information in regard to the patriarchal jurisdiction of Rome, speaking of the suburbicarian churches, but as his interpretation is not generally accepted as part of the canon, we cannot say under what form mention was made of those churches.

IV. This whole contention will be greatly strengthened if we consider the probability that this canon had for its heading, or rather, for its first sentence, the words read by the Roman legates at the Council of Chalcedon, viz. 'The Church of Rome always held [or, Let the Church of Rome always hold] the primacy.'¹ Aetius, the Archdeacon of Constantinople, is supposed to have read out a copy of the canon without this heading. But there is no suggestion in the Acts, as we have them, that this was by way of contrast to the legates' version, which came from Lilybæum. It is hardly

¹ The full reading is very likely 'Let the ancient custom remain that the Church of Rome should,' &c. (cf. Vincenzi, *De Sacra Monarchia Hebr. et Christianorum*). Canon Bright is hardly fair in saying 'the *Prisca Versio* tries to blend the original with the Roman gloss.' The *Prisca Versio* is a real authority, and from an old Greek version.

conceivable that he should have read this canon at all; for each side was asked to read the canons on which they relied. The Papal legates relied on that portion of the Sixth Canon which places Alexandria and Antioch, and not Constantinople, next to Rome; the Easterns relied on the Third Canon of Constantinople. Aetius probably read this alone, and not the Sixth Canon, 'which carried on the face of it his condemnation—in fact, the bishops' resolution had departed from the canon which Aetius did read, being, as Dr. Bright euphemistically phrases it, 'more astute than candid,'¹ or, as we might put it, somewhat dishonest. The imperial commissioners, in summing up, decided that from all that had gone before it was clear that Rome held the primacy, but as that was not the point in question, they proceeded to the subject of Constantinople's place in the order of sees.

The occurrence of this Sixth Canon in what the Archdeacon of Constantinople is supposed to have read, is probably due to the copyists, one of whom put the Sixth Canon in the margin, and another eventually introduced it into the text, a most frequent mode of corrupting the text, as all textual critics are aware.

So that, so far from the legates' version of the Sixth Canon read at Chalcedon being a forgery,² it is probably the insertion of the other version which is, I will not say a forgery, but an error in the transcriber.³

Thus the Council of Nicæa, as a whole, suggests the unique position of the Bishop of Rome as something more than that of the Duke of Norfolk to the rest of the English peerage.⁴ It does not discuss Papal jurisdiction; for, on the hypothesis of its truth, it would be beyond the province of a council to enter upon such a question, which neither was, nor could be, submitted to its consideration. It did not speak of Papal infallibility; it had met together to show that the teaching of the West was also the teaching of the East, to express the

¹ *Canons of the First Four General Councils*, 1892, p. 223.

² As the Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Bright, and Mr. Fuller assert (cf. *Prim. SS.* Preface, p. xxi.).

³ For a further treatment of this subject, cf. *infra*, on the 28th Canon.

⁴ The simile selected in *Prim. SS.*

unity of the teaching Church, and to settle a question of the first importance in regard to jurisdiction in the East, in the settlement of which it alleged the practice, or the cognisance, of the Bishop of Rome as its sufficient warrant for adhering to the long-established relationship between Alexandria and its suffragan bishops. It cannot be too often repeated, in view of the argument from silence, that the Acts of the Council are not forthcoming, having been, it may be, destroyed by the Arians when in possession of the Eastern sees. And besides the work of destruction, these heretics were busy in the work of forgery. Consequently, we have to be careful about arguing from what we do possess, and still more careful about arguing from what we do not possess. It is not until we come to the Council of Ephesus that we are able to see the Church in conciliar action in the comparative daylight of anything like adequate records.¹

¹ I do not forget St. Athanasius' work on the Decrees of the Nicene Synod; but that does not validate the argument from silence.

CHAPTER XII.

THE POPES THE GUARDIANS OF THE NICENE CANONS.

AFTER the Council of Nicæa it seemed as if the Church had entered upon an era of triumph. But one catastrophe changed the whole face of things. A bishop with Arian sympathies gained the ear of Constantine, and henceforth the whole weight of imperial influence was brought to bear upon the establishment of heresy. St. Athanasius seizing, as he once did, the bridle of the emperor's horse, and insisting upon his abating his opposition to the Catholic Faith, but in vain, was a symbol of what was going on. Constantine was persuaded that he was enforcing the Nicene Faith; and Eusebius was victorious all along the line, in both mounting himself, from throne to throne, in the teeth of Nicene regulations, and in deposing the orthodox bishops. And the weapon that he victoriously opposed to the Council of Nice was a synod convoked by the emperor.¹ It was a line of action to be repeated in the history of the Church—viz. a synod of bishops, under the influence of the Crown, deciding as to the government of the Christian Church. And it entered upon the platform of Church history under the patronage of the deadliest foe that the Church has ever known. It was the darling project of an Arianising emperor under the influence of an Arian bishop. In this case, however, the bishop was the foe, the emperor the instrument. It was not yet the theory of the independence of National Churches, but it was akin to it, and its natural parent. The supremacy of the Crown was ousting the supremacy of the Holy See. Imprisoned or exiled bishops in communion with the See of St. Peter (reminding us of

¹ For an interesting expansion of this, see *The Throne of the Fisherman*, by T. W. Allies, ch. vi.

events in the sixteenth century) were the immediate result of the alliance between Church and State which sprang up through the wily machinations of Eusebius, Bishop first of Berytus, then of Nicomedia (when the Court was there), and lastly (on the Court's removal), Bishop of Constantinople. In concert with the emperor, the whole constitution of the Church was soon further assailed by the attempt of Eusebius' successors to base the jurisdiction of patriarchs, not on their connection with Apostolic origin, but on the secular position of their city. It was the world against the Apostle; the crown against the crozier; Cæsar usurping the prerogatives of Peter. Constantinople, but a few years ago, was a spot all but unknown, whose bishop was suffragan to the Bishop of Heraclea. Now it was New Rome, and its bishop aspired to be a second Pope. The Pope was the successor of St. Peter, and therein his strength lay; but that Apostle had selected the centre of the world for the base of his operations, and as the centre had shifted, why might not the new imperial city be also the centre of a new patriarchal jurisdiction? The answer was, that Peter, not Cæsar, is the governor of the Christian Church.

And under the difficulties which now emerged, in some sense the greatest that the Church had as yet had to meet, the government of Peter became the salvation of the Faith of Nicæa. As the Church entered upon her new course of alliance with the State, the Eastern bishops more and more discovered a fatal weakness incident upon their proximity to the new centre of secular power on the shores of the Bosphorus. On the other hand, the genius for government and the inherent strength and majesty of the Holy See became more and more pronounced, under circumstances of unparalleled difficulties. It is evident that the full meaning of the Nicene canons *could* only gradually make itself felt; and the same is true of the guardian of those canons, viz. the Apostolic See. The history of this eventful period is orientated by a remark made by St. Gregory the Great in reference to a later Bishop of Constantinople: 'As to what he says, that he is subject to the Apostolic See, I know not what bishop is not subject to it, if any fault be found in bishops.' When 'fault is found in bishops' then

the primacy develops its stores of wisdom and authority to correct the fault. This is precisely what happened in the post-Nicene period. Until then, as Mr. Allies points out in his 'Throne of the Fisherman,'¹ bishops had not learnt to struggle with one another for place and power, and the need of a head was not so keenly felt. But when ambition came to curse the East, then came out to view the controlling power of the Sovereign Pontiff.

This, then, is the salient feature of the next fifty years after Nicæa, viz. the Holy See 'confirming the brethren'² in the East. The Court bishop in the East was the new factor in the Church's life and the source of unceasing trouble. Court and bishop together did their best to deprave the Church's faith. They must have succeeded but for the unbending firmness of the Holy See, for a council could not guard its own canons. So far the Apostolic tradition had been guarded by the See of Rome; and now the position at once occupied by that see, when the Fathers of Nicæa had dispersed to their various homes, was precisely that of guardian of the Nicene interpretation of the Apostolic tradition against refractory and Erastian bishops. The government of the Church was, in fact, not merely episcopal but apostolical; episcopacy was unequal to the strain that ensued, but the Holy Apostolic See gave strength to the episcopal brotherhood.

It was in the course of the struggle that now ensued between Catholic and Erastian bishops that St. Julius, the reigning Pope (who, after the short reign of St. Mark, had succeeded St. Sylvester, the president of the Council of Nicæa), wrote a letter of even exceptional importance, which has been fortunately preserved to us by the care of St. Athanasius. This letter has an important bearing on the Nicene canons; it is quoted at length by St. Athanasius, and it affords irrefragable witness to the existence, in the Nicene period, of the entire claim on the part of Rome to a divinely instituted authority over East and West alike. It has, moreover, in view of modern discussions, the advantage of having been protested against by those who were opposed to the Nicene Faith. And yet its

¹ Ch. vi.² St. Luke xxii. 32.

author, St. Julius, was canonised by the Church, and his name figures in St. Athanasius' life and writings as the great defender of the faith.¹

His letter, which St. Athanasius gives with obvious approval, deals with a canon drawn up by a synod of Eastern bishops, which was meant to silence St. Athanasius himself. The Emperor Constantius, listening to the falsehoods by means of which the Eusebian heretics succeeded in deposing Athanasius, Eustathius, and Paul, the orthodox bishops respectively of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, had assembled a council of bishops at Antioch, who passed the following canon:—'A bishop who has been deposed by a council may not resume his office, nor be restored by any subsequent council, if, after his deposition, he has dared to execute ecclesiastical functions.' The canon was specially aimed at St. Athanasius, who had been 'deposed' by the Council of Tyre, and after his return from banishment had zealously resumed his work as bishop. This Council of Tyre was an assemblage of bishops presided over by the Arian emperor, determined to oust St. Athanasius from the See of Alexandria, and the Council of Antioch had thus stamped this synod with the character of finality. 'But,' says Socrates, 'Julius, Bishop of Old Rome, was not there, nor did he send a representative, although the ecclesiastical canon expressly commands that the Churches shall not make ordinances contrary to the judgment of the Bishop of Rome' (ii. 8). And Sozomen says (iii. 10): 'Julius wrote that they had acted against the canons because they had not called him to the council, the ecclesiastical canon commanding that the Churches ought not to make canons beside the will of the Bishop of the Romans.'

They had chosen to have their own council under the emperor in isolation, although, as Theodoret says, 'Pope Julius, adhering to the law of the Church, both commanded them to repair to Rome and summoned Athanasius to trial' ('H. E.' ii. 4). 'Both they and we were summoned,' says St. Athanasius himself.²

¹ Mr. Puller, in his *Primitive Saints*, &c. p. 138, has nothing to say against St. Julius. He even calls him saint, a title which he denies to every other Pope in that century.

² *Apol. c. Arian.* n. 1.

These bishops, then, averred that the decision of the Council of Tyre should not be subject to appeal, on the ground that it was a council of bishops under imperial leave. It was on this point that the Roman Pontiff at once joined issue in his celebrated letter preserved by St. Athanasius. In the course of that letter he accuses these bishops of violating the discipline of the Church. They had condemned the Bishop of Alexandria, St. Athanasius. But 'why,' asks St. Julius, 'was nothing said to us about the Church of Alexandria in particular? Are you ignorant that this is customary, for word to be written to us first, and then for a just sentence to be passed from this place? If, then, any suspicion rested upon the bishop there, notice thereof ought to have been sent to the Church of this place [*i.e.*, Rome]; whereas, after neglecting to inform us, and proceeding on their own authority as they pleased, now they desire to obtain our concurrence in their decisions. . . . Not so have the directions of the Fathers prescribed. This is another form of procedure, a novel practice. . . . What we have received from the blessed Apostle Peter, that I signify to you.'

It was, then, according to St. Julius, a novel practice in the middle of the fourth century for a council of bishops to proceed to censure the second Petrine See, that of Alexandria, on their own authority, *instead of obtaining a just sentence from Rome*. The latter, he says, was the usual course, sanctioned by antiquity. And the authority thus to decide was, he adds, derived to Rome from 'that which we have received from the blessed Apostle Peter.' And this was under the very shadow of the Nicene Council. To this the reply of the Eusebian heretics was that 'it was not his [Julius'] province to interfere.' The Eusebians, in their endeavours to overthrow the Nicene faith as to our Lord's Divinity, adopted the programme, as we learn from St. Hilary, that things settled by a council in the East should be simply accepted by the West, and *vice versa*. It was all important for their cause that they should not be interfered with by the unyielding orthodoxy of the Apostolic See. They did not dream of a province settling

¹ Athan. *Hist. Tract.*, *Lib. of Fathers*, p. 56.

such things all by itself, without *any* communication with the rest, not even if the whole East were to be called one province—that would have been to rend the Church in twain—but they did hope to withdraw themselves from any active intervention on the part of Rome, such as had hitherto obtained as a matter of course. But, as we have just seen, both Socrates and Sozomen—Eastern historians—and Theodore and St. Athanasius (by implication) speak of the idea of canons being made without the concurrence of the Bishop of Rome as unheard of up to that time. But what is still more important is that the Council of Sardica (if the Sardican canons were really passed by that Council) or the Nicene canon itself (if the Sardican canons are really Nicene) condemned the Eusebians in this their endeavour to settle matters of high importance without reference to Rome. It will be necessary, therefore, to devote our attention to the canons which go by the name of Sardican.

§ II.—*The Sardican Canons.*

I have elsewhere¹ shown that it is quite possible that these canons represent actual decisions of the Nicene Fathers; but whether this be so or not, they certainly embody the mind of the Church in the fourth century. Only seventeen years after Nicæa St. Julius could speak of the 'custom' of referring judgment on the Bishop of Alexandria to Rome as one of the directions of the Nicene Fathers, with the approval of St. Athanasius, himself Bishop of that Eastern city.

Let us, then, waiving the question as to whether they are actually, or only virtually, Nicene—passed, that is, at Nicæa, or an accredited appendix to that council, passed at Sardica—examine their witness on the subject of appeals to Rome.

Three are of special importance in relation to this subject.

I. *Canon Three* decides against bishops passing from province to province, 'lest we should seem to close the door of charity.' If this were Sardican, it may have had special regard to Eusebius, who had passed from Berytus to Constantinople; if Nicene, it may have been concerned with his passage from Berytus to Nicomedia, where he was bishop

¹ Cf. Appendix II.

when the Council of Nicæa sat. The canon further provided that in the event of a bishop having a 'case' against another bishop the metropolitan should convene a provincial synod. If the accused lost his case he was not to be allowed simply of himself to appeal to some neighbouring bishops, as was the tendency, but if he wished it, an appeal was to be arranged for him, and in the same region. There is no question here of appeal to Rome in the full technical sense. But 'Julius, the Bishop of Rome' (if that be the true reading—for some copies have 'Sylvester,' which would be the true reading if the canon was Nicene in its origin), was to be asked to settle the judges that should form the new synod, if it was thought well for the case to be reheard. In deciding this, which consisted in asking Rome to select the judges, the unusual formula adds as a reason, 'Let us honour the memory of the Apostle Peter.' Supposing this to be Sardican, it would contain a judgment upon the Council of Tyre. The irregularity of that council consisted in the fact that not only did the emperor call a council without consulting the Holy See, but he actually selected the judges. The Greek historian Socrates says of the Council of Antioch: 'Julius, Bishop of Old Rome, was not there, nor did he, indeed, send a representative, although the ecclesiastical rule expressly commands that the Church shall not make canons without the consent of the Bishop of Rome' (ii. 8). It is difficult to suppose that Socrates refers to anything here but a canon of Nicæa. But be that as it may, the device of the Eusebians was a radical innovation on the constitution of the Church. Had such a course been permitted, Arianism, which was so successful in attracting to itself first Constantine, and then, still more decisively, his son Constantius, would have gained the day. Had it been allowed to the emperor to convoke councils for cases of appeal, without reference to the Holy See, as Constantine had done in the case of Tyre, and Constantius in the case of Antioch; had it, moreover, been permitted to the Crown to appoint the judges, the most fundamental feature of the polity of the Church would have been destroyed. It would have ceased to be Apostolical in its government; and, when the empire was separated into various nations, each

tribe would have had its own independent national Church. The theory of independent national Churches would have become a fact, the unity of the Church would have disappeared, and the guardianship of the holy faith been rendered impossible. No wonder, then, that the Sardican Fathers, if the canon was theirs, determined still to honour the memory of the Apostle Peter; or that the Nicene Fathers (whose canon we may suppose it to represent) in view of fundamental principles necessary in the immediate future, rather than of such bitter experience as the Sardican Fathers would have had, said amongst themselves, 'Let us honour the memory of the Apostle Peter,' in the future as in the past; and that the African Fathers, in this their commentary recorded these utterances of Nicene Fathers used in the discussion about the canon.

II. *Canon Four* deals with appeals to Rome. What was to happen in the case of bishops who, having lost their cause in the second court, had thence appealed to Rome? Their see must not be occupied by another. This was a matter which the Nicene Fathers could easily foresee would be likely to happen in the future, or if the canon be Sardican, this had already arisen; and here it is no longer the informal utterances of members of the council, and the particular occupant of the Holy See is no longer mentioned. It is now simply 'the Bishop of Rome.'

III. *Canon Seven*, again, deals with the case of a bishop who, having been condemned in the court of first instance—viz. the synod of his province—appeals, without recourse had to a second synod, straight to Rome. It will then, according to the canon, belong to 'the Bishop of Rome' to say whether he thinks it is a case for revision; and if he decides in the affirmative, it will rest with him either to remit the case to the bishops of the province adjoining that in which the condemned bishop lives, or to send a legate *a latere*, who can undertake the case, either by himself or in conjunction with the bishops of the neighbouring province.¹

¹ I have here adopted Jungmann's interpretation of these canons in preference to Hefele's. The Ballerini have an invaluable dissertation on the

IV. Now these canons obtained reception *eventually* in the East as well as (at once) in the West. They were, strangely, unknown in Africa during the first part of the fifth century; but the African bishops were in a small minority, and the canons were eventually incorporated even in their African code. They must, therefore, be admitted to represent the mature judgment of the Church, or, to be more accurate, the matured expression of her mind. Men cannot put themselves back into the beginning of the fourth century, and into the position of some African bishops (for the evidence is against St. Augustine having refused to receive them when fully made known); they cannot adopt as the basis of their permanent position an episode in the life of one portion of the Church which did not represent its maturer thought—they cannot, I say, do this—which is what some have claimed to do, and then call themselves by the name of Catholic.

Constantinople and Alexandria, although their (probably corrupted) copies of the sixth Nicene canon did not contain these said provisions, had not a word, so far as history tells us, to say against the justice of the regulations contained in these canons; whilst they certainly incorporated them eventually, as did Africa herself, into their code.

And yet these canons suppose a mode of unity which is irreconcilable with any but the Papal form of government. They barred the possibility of independent national Churches. They nipped that natural tendency in the bud. They do, indeed, condition appeals to Rome, but they assume their necessity. They do not inaugurate them. In neither of these canons is the question entertained as to whether there ought to be appeals at all. They suppose that there will. The third canon does not deal with appeals to Rome at all—in the strict sense of the word, it only provides for requests to Rome for the selection of judges in a fresh local court of appeal. Hence all that has been said about the words 'Let us honour the memory of the Apostle Peter' *inaugurating* appeals to Rome falls to the ground.

subject in their unrivalled edition of St. Leo's letters, but Jungmann's treatment leaves nothing to be desired (*Diss. Hist. Eccles.* vol. ii. pp. 15-27. Ratisbon, 1881).

V. But even if this canon could be proved to deal with direct appeals to Rome, it would be fair to argue that the memory of the Apostle Peter may be just as much honoured by adhering to an old custom as by a new arrangement. That is to say, the words do not indicate a novelty. And the defence which has been set up, that the canon specially mentions Julius by name, and that therefore the arrangement applied to him personally, and to him alone, in his lifetime, fails to account for the previous words, 'Let us honour the memory of the Apostle Peter.' It is as successor of Peter that Sylvester or Julius is to be asked to appoint judges; and Julius' successors were, equally with himself, the successors of the Apostle Peter.

But the fourth and seventh canons do deal with the subject of appeals to Rome, and in them, at any rate, the name of the Pope is dropped, and the general term for the office is used.

Whether, then, Nicene or Sardican—whether already in existence or soon to be passed, these canons bear out the statement of Julius to the Eusebians that they had offended against the established order of the Church in not recognising that, in the case of ordinary bishops, the appeal lay eventually from East to West, and that in the case of the Bishop of Alexandria the appeal lay straight to Rome.¹

Before passing on, it may be well to notice a fallacy concerning the relationship of the Popes to the canons. It is often said that, for instance, St. Leo denounced the third canon of Constantinople on the ground of the Nicene canon, and it is suggested that this is a sign that he could not fall back on his own authority simply.² But the obedience to the Nicene canons, and indeed to other canons of the Church, which the Popes professed, was an act of natural justice, not

¹ Dr. Bright lays stress on the fact that St. Julius uses the word 'all,' saying that the Eusebians should have written to 'all of us.' But the word 'all' obviously means all those bishops who were then in Rome, of whom there were several from all parts. And the sequence of the letter, which contends that, in accordance with the rule of the Church, they should specially have written to Rome about Alexandria, establishes the principle of Rome's relationship to her, viz. that of judge.

² Bright's *Hist. of the Church*, p. 417, 3rd edition.

submission to a superior power. The canons that they guarded, and by which in many matters they considered themselves strictly bound, were passed by themselves or by their predecessors, through their assent and confirmation. They were not, therefore, a hyper-Papal power, ruling the Popes themselves, for they acquired their force from the Popes. They were, therefore, bound by them in the same way that a king is bound to respect the laws where they affect his conduct, not because they are superior to him, but because he is bound by the natural and divine law to set the example. As St. Ambrose said to the Emperor Valentinian, 'What you have prescribed to others you have prescribed to yourself, for the emperor passes laws which he should be himself the first to keep.'¹ And Theodosius and Valentinian themselves say, 'It is worthy of the majesty of him who reigns to profess himself bound by the laws.'² The Popes could dispense from the observance of the canons, as St. Leo dispensed Maximus of Antioch from the results of an irregular ordination, and the council received him as bishop avowedly on the ground of the Papal dispensation;³ but they were bound, in natural justice, or in supernatural charity, not to dispense without legitimate reason. When, then, a Pope quotes a Nicene canon as the ground of obedience on the part of others, he does not place the canon above himself, but avows his natural obligation to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors, unless cause can be shown why he should in a particular case allow others to withdraw themselves from the operation of the general rule.

NOTE.—That the third Sardican canon does not relate to appeals to Rome is proved by the facts that the original judges, not the guilty party, are to write to Rome, and that this canon was not mentioned in the discussion between St. Zosimus and the African bishops as to the best mode of procedure in regard to appeals.

In the fourth canon it is to be noted that the effect of the appeal to Rome is suspensive. The bishop is spoken of as *seeming*

¹ *Ep. 32. ad Valent.*

² *De Leg. et Const.* (l. i. Cod. tit. 14): 'Digna vox est majestate regnantis, legibus obligatum se profiteri.'

³ *Cf. p. 435, infra.*

to be deposed, not actually deposed, until Rome has spoken. There is nothing *here* about the case being heard in the region in which it arose. It was obviously to be heard at Rome.

The seventh canon contemplates another quite different case, and one in which the case *was* to be heard in the province. Mr. Puller appears to have blended them into one; hence his idea that no cases were to be carried to Rome ('Prim. SS.' p. 158). But the seventh canon deals with the case of a bishop passing by the regular stages of appeal, and hence the provision that the case should go back to the province, and not to Rome, as Canon Four implied.¹

For the witness of Photius to the reception of these canons in the East see Appendix II. *ad finem*.

¹ Cf. Jungmann, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REIGN OF LIBERIUS.

§ I.—*His Personal Grandeur.*

I. MORE than half a century elapsed before the second œcumenical council met, and even this was not convoked as such, for the ordinary government of the Church does not lie with general councils, but with the bishops in union with the Holy See. It was to Rome that men looked in the anguish of those days, and not to general councils. In one sense, indeed, the eyes of all were for a while turned to the great Bishop of Alexandria; but St. Athanasius himself looked to Rome. Had the government of the Church rested with independent National Churches, or with an East independent of the West, the Church must have sunk under the Erastianism of imperial Christianity, and the restless activity of Eastern speculation would have wrecked the faith.

Constantius, one of the most dangerous foes that the Church has had, could deal with the fickle, quarrelsome, over-subtle Eastern mind; but with the West and its determined adherence to the Nicene settlement, and its consciousness of strength in the possession of the Apostolic tradition, he could do nothing. His success against Athanasius was at one time terrible; it was only checked by one obstacle—he could not gain the occupant of the Holy See. That see was occupied by one whom the Greek menology in its calendar of saints calls 'the blessed Liberius, defender of the truth,' and he threw the shelter of his impregnable position round the Bishop of Alexandria. The heathen historian Ammianus Marcellinus tells us how this one exception meant everything, and how the emperor could not rest satisfied whilst he had left one stone unturned to win the Roman Pontiff.

Liberius had succeeded Julius. The latter had consolidated the work of the Nicene Council by his brilliant and persistent justification of Athanasius. Liberius received the mantle of Julius, and like Julius stood on the rock of Apostolic tradition. He could say, 'Never was it my own statutes, but those of the Apostles which I guarded and carried out.'¹

Constantius, accordingly, set to work* to win Liberius, which St. Athanasius says would have been equivalent to winning the whole Church to his side. But neither threats nor bribes availed to move the aged pontiff. Firm as a rock he went into exile, 'the admiration of all,' in the words of Athanasius. St. Jerome's account, if genuine, is plainly inaccurate, and in direct contradiction to that of St. Athanasius; for according to St. Jerome—if (I repeat) that passage is genuine—Liberius, before he set out, signed an heretical formula. We may dismiss this as certainly untrue. He went forth, says St. Athanasius, 'the admiration of all.'

II. What he did towards the end of his two years' exile and ill-treatment we shall never know. We know from Sozomen that the atmosphere was thick with Arian calumnies, and that these calumnies did not spare the Pontiffs. In this case it would seem that calumny, which loves to shoot its arrows in the dark, availed itself of a period in the life of Liberius of which we have no authentic information, to suggest that his return from exile was due to his having signed against Athanasius. The formula he signed has never been produced, nor can anyone say what it was. Forgery has been busy about it; for all accurate writers now admit, as Canon Bright does in the second edition of his 'Church History,' that the 'Fragments of Hilary,' on which the accusations have mainly rested (as for instance in Dr. Pusey's 'History of the Councils'), are, at least in great part, spurious. The passage in St. Athanasius' 'Apology,' on which Mr. Gore relies, does not speak of a fall, but merely of Liberius not having completed his term of exile. The passage in the 'History of the Arians' was written before the supposed fall took place. And Father Bottalla, S.J., has completely demolished the idea that

¹ *Ep. ad Constant.* n. 3.

St. Athanasius added it afterwards.¹ *Even if it were genuine, it denies that the incident in Bercea counted for anything.* And there are, besides, these facts, that neither Socrates nor Theodoret alludes to the passage, although they had St. Athanasius' work before them as they wrote; that Nicephorus Callistus, whilst following Sozomen in his account of matters up to this, drops him here; and that Rufinus, though 'with his bark full of malice,' as St. Jerome describes him, was unable to find a reason in St. Athanasius' works for the return of Liberius, which confirms the idea that the passage was not at that time to be found in those works.

As for St. Jerome's witness, those who take their stand on this cannot take it as it is, but are obliged to correct it on one point, which opens the door for a further correction, viz. the excision of the rest, which has no contemporary evidence in its favour. The fact is, that St. Jerome is to be revered for his knowledge of Holy Scripture and his eminent sanctity, and as a witness to the Church's teaching; but in matters of history he is sometimes at fault.² Sulpicius Severus, Socrates, and Theodoret are more to be relied on, when they agree; and they agree in knowing nothing of any fall of Liberius. And, further, the passage about Liberius does not occur at all in the famous manuscript of St. Jerome which the Queen of Sweden gave to the Vatican, and which belongs to the sixth or seventh century.

There is, however, another form of evidence which needs to be emphasised. There was in the time of Liberius an active correspondence carried on by the bishops all round. They speak of the councils held, the professions of faith adopted, the zeal of some bishops, the defection of others. There is mutual encouragement and sympathy in the distresses of the times; but there is no mention, no distant allusion, to any idea of Liberius, the Pope, having subscribed a suspicious formula or condemned Athanasius. And yet the principal events of the time were known to these numerous bishops. There is also correspondence between Liberius and

¹ *Autorité du Pape*, vol. i. pp. 239-41 (1877).

² It is quite another matter to set aside his teaching as to the faith, as Mr. Gore and Mr. Puller do.

Athanasius, but no consciousness of injury in the past nor demand for renewed affection in the future.

No. What Liberius did sign for certain was all in support of Athanasius. What he did sign, as matter of history, was the condemnation of the heretical Councils of Tyre, Arles, Milan, Ariminum; he did sign the confirmation of the Catholic Synods of Rome and Alexandria. The authentic acts of his pontificate include a definition of the Divinity of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity; the reconciliation of the Macedonians; the mission of Eusebius of Vercellæ, and of Lucifer of Cagliari to the East; the nomination of Elfidius as legate to Slavonia; a letter of congratulation and encouragement to the bishops exiled for the faith, as well as general decrees touching the attitude to be maintained towards the penitent signatories of Ariminum.¹

III. But one of these episodes in the life of this great Confessor for the faith deserves further mention, for it stands on a level with that described by St. Athanasius, and it entitles him to be considered the special instrument of the great head of the Church for 'confirming the brethren' at this eventful period of her history—I mean his action in regard to the Council of Ariminum.¹

More than 400 bishops assembled there. The legate of the Holy See presided at the opening. It had all the conditions of an œcumenical council so far; it would only need the final confirmation of the Roman Pontiff. It began well with excommunicating the heretics that were troubling the Church; but its numbers after an interval, at the emperor's command, fell off as it continued its sessions, and its end belied its beginning. The legate of the Holy See withdrew, and the bishops, whose number was still very considerable, were induced to send deputies to the emperor who were completely overawed by the imperial presence. So great was the heretical emperor's anxiety to force them into accepting a semi-Arian programme, that although engaged for the onerous ceremonies of initiating new consuls on the following day, he sat up through the greater part of the night occupied with pushing on the signatures to the heretical

¹ *Revue des Questions Historiques*, vol. i., art. 'St. Liberius.'

creed. The bishops of the East in the simultaneous Council of Seleucia were equally pliant to the emperor's mission. Eventually, scarcely more than eighteen or nineteen bishops in Christendom remained uncompromised. It was then that, in the language of St. Jerome, 'the world found itself Arian, and groaned.' The faith had suffered an eclipse in the episcopal body. Who was to save the position? It fell to the lot of one man to stand in the breach—and that man was Liberius. The aged pontiff had once said to the emperor, in his memorable interview with his Majesty at Milan (when told that on that occasion, too, he would stand alone), 'If I *am* alone, the faith will not fail.' He knew himself to be the Atlas whom our Divine Lord had appointed to bear the world of Divine Revelation on his shoulders, on which the government of the Church had been laid. Another occasion for proving the truth of his courageous utterance had now come. Liberius found himself alone face to face with the triumphant Arians, who had overreached the Catholic episcopate at Ariminum and Seleucia. He saved the situation. In the tremendous troubles that beset the East, which led St. Basil to appeal so earnestly to the West for help, St. Damasus was able to point out to the Eastern bishops that 'he whose judgment was to be looked for before all others' had deliberately refused his assent to the Ariminian formula.¹ The three illustrious exiles, Athanasius, Eusebius, and Hilary, had not signed, and the bishops who had been entrapped, as St. Damasus explained, in the East and West, by the wary formula, were with them in heart. But the express repudiation of the formula rested, for the moment, with Liberius, and Liberius did not fail. He authoritatively rejected the proposed formula, and, in so doing, unchained afresh the emperor's wrath. He had once more to leave his beloved Rome—whether for the Catacombs or at a greater distance is not certain—but only to return and erect, through the devotion of his orthodox flock, the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, and to receive the retraction of the penitent signatories of Ariminum, as one who had himself never failed.

¹ Cf. *infra*, p. 209.

Such was the second Pope after the Nicene Council—‘the most blessed bishop Liberius,’ according to St. Basil; ‘the Pontiff of blessed memory,’ according to St. Epiphanius; ‘the great Liberius, the most holy Liberius,’ according to Cassiodorus, and ‘in all things most renowned;’ ‘the thrice holy bishop,’ according to St. Ambrose; and, in the words of Theodoret, ‘the illustrious athlete for the faith.’ In the Menology of the Greeks, he is a saint distinguished as ‘the blessed Liberius, the defender of the truth,’ ‘whose zeal for the orthodox faith caused him to undertake the defence of the great Athanasius.’ His exile is there related, and his return, but not a whisper of any defection, the account ending with saying that ‘he died at Rome, after having governed his flock well.’

§ II.—*The Meletian Scandal at Antioch.*

But I am anticipating. Liberius had the conduct of another affair, which ended less happily.

I. After the disaster at Ariminum—when the whole body of bishops, saving a few great saints such as Athanasius and Basil in the East, and the Sovereign Pontiff in the West, had yielded to imperial pressure and signed a semi-Arian confession—the Church seemed likely to receive still heavier blows at the hand of the new emperor, an apostate from the faith. But it was Julian’s policy to let the bishops slaughter themselves by intestine divisions; and, accordingly, they were allowed to return from their various places of exile and resume their episcopal duties.

Liberius, ever foremost in the faith, at once entered upon the work of pacification and ecclesiastical discipline. He proceeded to lay down the rules by which the Church should be guided in reconciling those who had in any way compromised themselves by complicity with the manifold forms of Arianism.¹ Antioch was naturally one of his chief cares; and he influenced and authorised the great Bishop of Alexandria to convene a council to consider the position of affairs in that central see of the East. The council at Alexandria adopted the rules laid

¹ Cf. *Acta Sanctorum* (Bollandist), Sept. 23, § 195, 6, 7.

down by the Sovereign Pontiff,¹ and did its best to conciliate the differences that divided the Catholics at Antioch.

The origin of these differences was as follows. St. Eustathius had been exiled from Antioch through the influence of the Arians. Amongst other things they had suborned a woman to asperse his moral character, who afterwards confessed her perjury. After his death, Meletius had been elected bishop under circumstances which rendered his appointment open to serious objection. He had been to some extent ‘led astray by the stranger’s hand,’ to use St. Gregory of Nazianzus’ expression—i.e. he had coquetted with Arianism. According to the Arian historian Philostorgius, he had ‘feignedly professed the *heterousion*.’² According to Socrates, he had signed the semi-Arian profession of faith put forth at the Council of Seleucia.³ According to St. Epiphanius, he belonged to the party of Acacius, which, if true, was a most serious blot on his life.⁴ According to Nicephorus Callistus, he had been originally elected to the bishopric of Sebaste through the suffrages of the Arians.⁵ Sozomen said that he was returned by the Eudoxians, the most thorough-going Arians.⁶ The See of Antioch being vacant, through St. Eustathius’ death, he was promoted to that important post. According to St. Jerome, he was ‘transferred to Antioch by the Arian bishops Acacius and George.’ But it seems that St. Eusebius of Samosata was assured of his having embraced the orthodox faith. St. Eusebius was perhaps, as Bollandus thinks, the instrument of his conversion. His change was kept a secret from the Arians, but known to a certain number of Catholics in Antioch, who in consequence voted along with the Arians for his appointment to the see. In view of what might happen, when his conversion became known, the Catholics had a written document drawn up concerning his appointment by the Emperor Constantius, which

¹ Cf. *Letter of St. Athan.* read at the second Council of Nicæa (Mansi, tom. vii. col. 75, 6), in which he says of the provisions for the restoration of the lapsed: ταῦτα καὶ ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐγράφη καὶ ἀπεδέξατο ἡ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησία (cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, loc. cit. 201). They seem to have been drawn up in Rome, and sent by Eusebius to the Synod of Alexandria.

² *Eccl. Hist.* v. 1, 5.

³ *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 44.

⁴ *Hæc.* lxxiii. 25, 6.

⁵ *Hist. Eccl.* ix. 48.

⁶ *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 25.

St. Eusebius afterwards refused to resign into the hands of the Arians.

This appointment of St. Meletius was a clear misfortune to the Church. Saintly as he proved to be, full of zeal and of most gentle, winning ways, his election was, nevertheless, the occasion of a separation between the Catholics of Antioch which lasted more than eighty years. 'The sound body of the Church,' says Theodoret, 'was divided into two.'¹ The Catholic bishops who, for the occasion, combined with Arians, could not free the election from the stain of complicity with these great foes of the orthodox faith. To understand, then, the Antiochene troubles of that century aright, it is necessary to bear in mind that St. Meletius entered upon his episcopate at Antioch under false pretences, and that the irregularity of his election could only be set right by some higher ecclesiastical authority.²

Meanwhile a numerous party of Catholics in Antioch, in horror at the idea of having a bishop who, however recommended by personal holiness, had yet ascended the throne under such sinister influences, refused their allegiance to Meletius. They chose for their leader a priest, named Paulinus, of irreproachable life and unimpeachable orthodoxy, and nothing would induce them to accept the ministrations of Meletius. Meletius, on gaining the see, had, indeed, at once openly avowed his belief in the *Homousion*, and engaged the Arians, who procured his election. He was forthwith driven into exile, and so became a confessor for the Catholic faith. But even this did not satisfy this fervent body of Catholics under Paulinus, who had kept themselves during all those years that intervened between the exile of Eustathius and the election of Meletius from all complicity with Arian worship. It had become the fashion to mix with Arians in divine worship to an extent which their more zealous orthodoxy could not brook. It was with these, and these alone, that St. Athanasius, when he went to Antioch,

¹ *Hist.* iii. 4.

² The account of the Meletian troubles in *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome* (pp. 163-176 and p. 238 *seq.*) fails in accuracy from losing sight of this point. The narrative on p. 163 is altogether misleading. The writer also neglects to give proper stress to the ruling of the Council of Alexandria.

communicated; and this great doctor of the Church interested himself in gaining for them a church of their own. Tillemont suggests that it was a penance which St. Meletius had to bear for his unfortunate antecedents, that he never enjoyed full communion with Rome, nor with the great saint of Alexandria. Even in the great sermon which St. Meletius preached as soon as he had succeeded to the throne of Antioch—holding up first three fingers, and then one, to signify his belief in the Eternal Trinity—there were expressions which St. Athanasius would not have sanctioned, and which St. Epiphanius considered to be open to objection. His actual orthodoxy had by no means established itself in men's minds, as is shown by the various reports which St. Jerome mentions and (according to St. Epiphanius) wrongly credited.

The people of Antioch were now divided into three. St. Meletius' followers, of course, separated themselves from the disciples of Euzoius, the Arian bishop, whom Constantius had intruded after the exile of Meletius, and for this they were praised by St. Gregory Nyssen as keeping themselves free from spiritual wandering.¹ They went and worshipped apart from the Arians in a suburb, in a church called the Palæa. As long as those set over them were professedly orthodox, they had worshipped with them; but now that a declared Arian, like Euzoius, was set over them by the emperor, they separated and preserved their spiritual chastity. Those who acted with Paulinus were often called Eustathians, from the last unquestioned bishop, St. Eustathius. They had a real grievance in the unfortunate election of St. Meletius, and, moreover, are thought by some to have had questionings as to the validity of the baptisms amongst the Meletians.² But their fundamental difficulty was the election of Meletius;³ they were otherwise at one in doctrinal teaching. As Theodoret says, 'The sound body of the Church was divided into two parts.'⁴ And so high did Paulinus stand in the esteem of all,

¹ *Orat. Fun. in Melet.* It was not for keeping aloof from the Paulinists, as Mr. Puller (*Primitive Saints*, &c. p. 166) applies his words. The phrase *ἐπεξεῖπε* would not apply to Paulinus, and the whole sentence implies a long interval before Meletius' second exile. This could only apply to a time before Paulinus had been consecrated.

² *Socr.* ii. 44.

³ *Niceph. Call.* ix. 48.

⁴ *Hist.* iii. 4.

that he was never interfered with by the emperor, nor spoken of disrespectfully by his adversaries; he and his flock also worshipped by themselves. The parties of Meletius and Paulinus held together in some sort of ecclesiastical intercourse. St. Meletius deposed before Sapor that 'their flocks held intercourse in religion,' and St. Meletius held that those who worshipped with Paulinus, after the latter had been made bishop, were under legitimate authority. 'You have received the care of the rest,' are his words to Paulinus.¹

II. Such was the state of affairs with which the Council of Alexandria had to deal. Liberius had sent his legates, Eusebius of Vercellæ and Lucifer of Cagliari, now freed from exile, to assist in the composition of the Oriental differences. Their conduct throughout suggests that they were not simply acting on their former legatine faculties, as De Marca and Thomassin thought; they seem to have been entrusted afresh by the Apostolic See with powers of extraordinary jurisdiction and authority in the East.² Western bishops could not have acted as they did, on their own authority, without protest both from the East and from Rome. But Liberius had previously joined Eusebius on to his legates to Constantius, and two letters are extant from the same Pope to Eusebius, in one of which he speaks of his legate having 'in no way deviated from the fellowship of the Apostolic See.'³ It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose, seeing that he acted with authority, that he was in possession of fresh legatine faculties.⁴

The council, then, 'few in number, but of sound faith, and many in merits,' as Rufinus says (lib. i. c. 28), with the

¹ Theodor. *Hist.* iii. 4. Mr. Puller's account of the position, in *Primitive Saints*, &c. ch. iv., is irreconcilable with St. Meletius' statements in Theodoret. Theodoret's statements are not always to be trusted, but in this matter his leanings would prejudice him against the position which he here assigns to the flock of Meletius.

² Cf. *Vita S. Liberii* (Stilting, S.J.), *Acta Sanctorum*, Sept. 24, § 202.

³ *Const. Ep. Liberii*, iii. v. vii.

⁴ Rufinus' statement that the legation was enjoined on Eusebius and Lucifer by the Alexandrian Synod could only mean, if it is not a slip, that the synod determined the special form which their general authority should assume. For Alexandria had not the jurisdiction over Antioch that would be implied; and, indeed, Lucifer did not go to Alexandria at all (cf. Stilting's *S. Liberius*, § 202, *Acta Sanct.* Sept. 24).

Papal legate presiding together with St. Athanasius,¹ followed exactly the rules for reconciling those who had tampered with the orthodox faith which had been drawn up and received at Rome,² and it applied the principles thus settled to Meletius and his friends. The ordination of Meletius was dealt with, and not rejected. This we learn from the Seventh General Council (A.D. 787), in which the history of the matter is thus succinctly given:—(1) The holy Meletius was ordained by the Arians; (2) he ascended the ambo and proclaimed the *Homo-ousion*; (3) the ordination was not rejected.³

So far, then, the scruples of the party of Paulinus were in the way to be removed. They could look on the irregularity of St. Meletius' ordination as having been purged by proper authority. The way was cleared for his acceptance as sole bishop, if the two parties agreed. But an event occurred which altered the whole position of things, and henceforth constituted the difficulty of the situation.

After the council, some bishops who remained in Alexandria drew up a letter in the name of the council, written, it would seem, by St. Athanasius, and obviously with the council's consent. This letter was addressed to Eusebius, Lucifer, Asterius, Cymatius, and Anatolius, and was also written in the name of Eusebius himself, amongst others, as having previously given his consent, and being now about to execute its decrees. But—and this is a point of the last importance—it was also signed by the two deacons of Paulinus. Now this involved a decision on the part of the council that the see of Antioch was vacant, until Meletius' ordination was in a manner validated, and he, or some one else, was chosen as bishop of the whole body of the orthodox.⁴ The alterna-

¹ 'Interfuit et præfuit Concilio Alexandrino cum Athanasio,' *Life of Eusebius from the Archives of Vercelli*, published under the authority of his successor, St. Honoratus. Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, May 20; *S. Lucifer*. c. v. 45.

² *Speech of Sabas* (Mansi, tom. vii. col. 75).

³ From St. Athanasius' letter to the Emperor Jovian it is evident that Liberius had dealt with the matter of the lapsed bishops before the Council of Alexandria met. Letters had come from Gaul and Britain. Cf. also the Council of Paris, which proves that the Council of Alexandria was not waited for in the West as the initiator.

⁴ He was acknowledged as a bishop, but the bishop had yet to be chosen.

tive would be, that Paulinus was himself bishop. For these deacons could only appear as legates, either as commissioned by a bishop or on the ground that they represented the presbyterate in the vacancy of the see. Baronius thinks that Paulinus was already known to be a bishop, and that his election was thus acknowledged. But it seems certain that this was not the case. The see, therefore, was considered vacant until, as a first step, Meletius' irregular consecration was formally condoned by a council, in which the Papal legate sat.

But the most important point follows. The letter signed by the legates and sent from Alexandria gave directions to the commission (of which the legates formed a part) as to what should be done at Antioch. 'Call to yourselves all who wish to be at peace with us, and specially those who meet in the Palæa: ' i.e. the Meletians. They were amongst those who presumably wished to be 'at peace with us,' and the deacons of Paulinus were amongst those who thus spoke. The followers of Paulinus were therefore the nucleus of the Catholic Church.' But, further, these commissioners were, 'as teachers and guardians,' to 'embrace all such,' and they were to 'join them' (i.e. the Meletians and others) 'to the party of Paulinus, well beloved of us.' Again, then, the party of Paulinus was treated as the nucleus. And further, 'Demand of them nothing more than to anathematise the Arian heresy, and to confess the faith professed by the Fathers at Nicæa, but also to anathematise those who say that the Holy Ghost is a creature, and separate from the substance of the Christ.'

Twenty years were to elapse before the Council of Constantinople was to meet and testify to the Eastern reception of this latter dogma; but, in spite of this, it was already a matter of faith that the consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost was contained in the Nicene Creed. That is to say, all that

¹ Cf. Mr. Puller's contention that the Meletians were the nucleus of the Church. An expression of St. Basil's (mistranslated, as it seems to me) cannot be placed over against the definition of this council sitting avowedly as judge in the matter; yet the position assumed in *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome* involves the preference of the former to the council's judgment.

the Council of Constantinople was about to declare was already taught under anathema. Liberius had already issued an authoritative decree on the subject.¹ This, however, by the way.

The Acts of the Council of Alexandria were eventually taken by Eusebius and Lucifer to Rome and submitted to the Pope, who confirmed and approved them.²

The point, however, that particularly concerns our present purpose is that the Synod of Alexandria emphatically endorsed the action of Paulinus and his party. It also relieved them of the difficulty of accepting the ministrations of Meletius, whilst it recognised the Eustathians under Paulinus as the really orthodox party. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of this synodical decision. Had Mr. Puller, in his 'Primitive Saints and the See of Rome,' given to it its due weight, the whole of his contention about Meletius must have been seriously affected.³ He would hardly have given us to understand that the Church of England is prepared to sink or swim with the orthodoxy and Catholic position of the Meletian party at Antioch from the beginning. He would hardly have drawn a parallel between the followers of Paulinus and the present Church of Rome in England on the one side, and the followers of Meletius and the Church of England on the other. What conciliar judgment with Papal legates has validated the election of Archbishop Parker? And what comfort is to be drawn from the fact that the followers of St. Meletius were told by St. Athanasius and the Alexandrian synod to join themselves to Paulinus and his disciples?

But, further, the Council of Alexandria entreated the episcopal commission at Antioch not to insist on any other conditions, in the case of those who assembled at the Palæa, and also bade the party of Paulinus to put forth nothing but

¹ Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*

² Cf. Papebroch, *Vita S. Luciferi*, c. v. 45, *Acta Sanctorum*.

³ Pp. 165-7. He seems to have been misled by the Benedictine editor of St. Chrysostom, whose words he quotes as his authority; but the Benedictine editor is more cautious than Mr. Puller: he only speaks of the endeavour of St. Athanasius, and in terms more capable of being reconciled with the facts than are Mr. Puller's, taken with their context.

what was put forth at Nicæa. Moreover, it decided that the question of the Three Hypostases, as between the East and West, was one of terms only; and it recommended that they should all meet together at the customary place (not at the Palæa) and settle the future place of divine worship according to the wish of all.

III. Thus the peace between the two parties seemed in a fair way to be concluded by legitimate authority. A council of Alexandria had, of course, no sort of right by itself either to purge the election of a bishop in Antioch of its irregularity or to settle matters in general for the great Oriental see by an episcopal commission, much less to elect a new bishop. And yet it seems as though the commission were to superintend this also, in case the Catholics in general should not select Meletius.¹ But the council was acting with the Papal legate;² and the legate Eusebius proceeded to execute his commission in conjunction with his brother-legate, Lucifer of Cagliari, who was already on the scene. It was, however, owing to the precipitate action of this latter bishop that the proposals of the council fell to the ground.

On arriving at Antioch, after leaving Eusebius to proceed to Alexandria, according, it would seem, to their mutual arrangement, Lucifer, having sent some one to represent him at Alexandria, found both parties without a bishop. Meletius had not returned from exile, and the Eustathians had only the priest Paulinus to lead them. From all we know of St. Lucifer,³ his whole soul would go forth towards the Eustathians, or party of Paulinus. They had never compromised, and he was uncompromising to a fault. They had never worshipped along with Arians, and his horror for the Arian heresy was unbounded. They had stood the brunt of the battle; their fiery zeal for the proper Godhead of their crucified Lord had stood the test of thirty years. All the exquisite beauty of Meletius' character could not now tempt them to

¹ Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*: *S. Lucifer*, May 20, c. 5.

² *Ibid. Vita S. Liberii*, § 195, 6, 7.

³ Tillemont is mistaken in supposing that the Luciferians were so called because they followed Lucifer into schism; they were disciples of his who went beyond him after his retirement. His retirement was not a schism.

condone the irregularity of his election, and his still (as they deemed it) too tender dealing with the Arian heresy. St. Lucifer accordingly decided to use his papal faculties, as he deemed it certain that anyone who was on the scene would feel justified in doing. He determined to act before the return of Meletius, and, assisted by two bishops,¹ he consecrated Paulinus, against whose character for orthodoxy and personal holiness no whisper had ever been heard, and who had been selected as leader, rather than thrust himself forward. But St. Lucifer had not counted on the devotion of the people of Antioch to the person of Meletius. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the panegyrist of St. Meletius, thus describes the state of matters in his eloquent discourse on peace:—‘Since, being men, we are liable to sin, our fault was that of loving our pastors to excess, and that we could not discover which of two good men was the more to be preferred, until we agreed to admire them both alike.’² He emphatically denies that there was any difference as to doctrine, in spite of St. Basil's assertion to the contrary. He says to the heretics: ‘However much you may desire it—i.e. to find a quarrel between us as to doctrine—it is in vain; “besides this there is nothing”—i.e. nothing but undue attachment to our several pastors.’

IV. The commission of bishops, with Eusebius at its head, now arrived in Antioch with their peace-making programme, only to find that the proposals of the Synod of Alexandria had been rendered futile by Lucifer's hasty action. The Eustathians were devoted to their new bishop, and delighted to find that their principles in the past had received the sanction of Rome and Alexandria. The Meletians, on the other hand, were not unnaturally sore at the new consecration, devoted as they were to the gracious and winning personality of the bishop, whom they had with such questionable diplomacy helped to the throne of Antioch. Eusebius was naturally disappointed with his brother-legate. If

¹ Cf. Jerome, *Chronicon*, and Tillemont, *Luc. de Cagl.* iv.

² An endeavour has been made to connect this with another passage in St. Gregory's life. With what success cf. Merenda, *De Vita et Gestis Damasi*, c. 18, § 2.

Rufinus' account be taken literally, he refused to communicate with either party. But considering that he is found shortly afterwards in close co-operation with Lucifer, before the latter shut himself up in Sardinia, we must understand Rufinus to mean that he did not decide as to the legitimate occupant of the see. Of course, if St. Lucifer had held no legatine faculties, and if the jurisdiction of Rome over Antioch had not been acknowledged on all sides, the case would have been simple enough. His consecration of a bishop in Antioch would have been a flagrant act of schism. Neither St. Athanasius nor St. Gregory, nor even St. Basil, could have spoken and acted as they did, unless they recognised the right of the Apostolic See to consecrate a Bishop of Antioch. They must have called it what it would have been, the most monstrous act of interference with the rights of Antioch. But they betray no distant consciousness of any lack of validity in the appointment on the score of the consecration. All that St. Basil, the most determined opponent of Paulinus, resented was that his friend should be ousted. All he pleaded for was that he should not be ignored. All he determined was to communicate personally with Meletius, of whose orthodoxy he was sure, and not with Paulinus, about whom he thought Rome had been misled. He had against him in this St. Athanasius and the Council of Alexandria, who had thoroughly investigated the question, besides St. Epiphanius (no mean authority), some eighty Egyptian bishops, and the entire West. But he declares that if anyone should come from heaven itself, and yet should be demonstrably not walking according to the sound word of faith, he would not communicate with him—an innocent resolve, which is that of every Catholic at this hour.

Eusebius, on arriving at Antioch, expressed his disapproval of Lucifer's action, and yet felt himself unable, with his present powers, to make any amicable settlement of the difficulty. It was the orthodoxy of the Eustathians, and the sanction given to their position by the Council of Alexandria, that constituted the difficulty. For, although the council purged the election of Meletius of its original stain, it had made Paulinus and his party the nucleus of Catholic life

round which the Meletians were to gather, and over which it was hoped St. Meletius would be chosen to preside by the spontaneous action of the whole Catholic body. But now that Paulinus had been (however unwisely) ordained by one who had authority to act in the name of the Apostolic See, and had been enthusiastically accepted by the orthodox Eustathians, there was, on the one hand, a difficulty in ignoring him, and, on the other hand, the impossibility of making him the only bishop. There is no parallel in the history of the Church to the state of things which thus arose in Antioch. And, accordingly, Eusebius, declaring it 'wellnigh incurable,' seems to have left Antioch without coming to any definite conclusion. He probably felt that the thing must work itself out, and that meanwhile he could only have recourse to Rome. Thither, with Lucifer of Cagliari, after transacting other business elsewhere, he appears to have taken the decrees of the Alexandrian Synod for the confirmation of Liberius and his account of what had happened in Antioch.¹

The further development of the matter belongs to the reign of Damasus.

NOTE.—It will be seen from the facts adduced above that Mr. Puller in his book 'The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome,' has given a version of the history of St. Meletius which is inconsistent with the facts of the case as a whole. He has ignored the real character of St. Meletius' election. He has misrepresented the judgment of the Council of Alexandria. He says, 'it recommended that the whole body of Catholics should unite together,'² whereas it said that the Meletians should unite themselves to Paulinus and his party. He is wrong about Lucifer having 'immediately afterwards' broken away from the Church. It is, to say the least, a moot point whether he ever broke away; it is certain that he did not immediately afterwards. Paulinus was not ordained by Lucifer without assistant bishops, as Mr. Puller states. There is no discussion (which was at least needed, if not an admission) of the legatine position of Eusebius and Lucifer. Consequently his readers would

¹ 'Tulerunt secum Acta Concilii ambo Legati et in Latinum transtulerunt et Romam portaverunt ad Liberium, qui omnia confirmavit et approbavit' (*Vita Eusebii ex Archivio Vercellensi*).
² P. 165.

gain quite a false idea, if they trusted to the version he gives, of the whole affair. There are other points in his account which will come under notice later on.

It will be seen also that Dr. Pusey's assertion, quoted by the Bishop of Lincoln (Preface to 'Prim. SS.' p. xxiii), viz. 'St. Meletius, even while president of this second General Council, was still out of communion with the West,' is not borne out by the facts of the case.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. DAMASUS—THE CHAMPION OF THE 'CONSUBSTANTIALITY' OF THE HOLY GHOST.

I. LIBERIUS having attained to his reward, the great Damasus sat on the Fisherman's throne. Ozanam, in his graphic description of the Church in the following century, says that until the accession of Leo the See of St. Peter had been occupied by saints and martyrs rather than by what we should call men of genius, and that in St. Leo the Church salutes the first genius in a Pope. There is some truth in this. The foundations of the Church's order were certainly laid by the hands of saints in the first three centuries, and, as we have seen, their normal end was the martyr's death. Indeed, the Popes being the infallible guardians of Divine tradition, there was, if we may so say, a certain fitness in their being conscientious even to sanctity, rather than learned in the world's judgment; zeal for the faith—that divine love of truth which will not brook or comprehend in the Church's net the teacher of false doctrine—is what we should most expect in the early occupants of that see which was set for the preservation of the deposit of revealed truth. And such, as a matter of fact, was the characteristic feature of the early Popes.

But in St. Damasus we have something more than this. He was a man of learning as well as of piety; a patron of art as well as a master of the spiritual life. 'Rarely, if ever, in the history of the Church' (says Dr. Lightfoot), 'has a great leader been fired with such zeal for recording the Christian heroism of the past.'¹ He was, moreover, a man of prodigious activity, and at the same time of singular

¹ *Apostolic Fathers*, Part I. 'St. Clement of Rome,' vol. ii. p. 444.

caution. He was too, says St. Jerome, 'the virgin Doctor of the virgin Church.' But although St. Jerome implies that there was an ascetic side to his life, he seems to have endeared himself to every class of men. He was called by his schismatic opponents 'the friend of diggers,' in allusion doubtless to his familiarity with the workers in the catacombs and their affection for him; he was called the friend of matrons, doubtless in allusion to the fact that the Roman matrons saw in him an embodiment of true religion, and lavished their wealth on his schemes for the improvement of the city (of which the traces remain to-day), or for the betterment of the poor, or the improvement of the condition of the clergy. To Saint Athanasius, who must have known him well during his stay in Rome, he was the 'beloved Damasus;' in Theodoret's eyes, looking at him from a distance, he was the reproduction of the great Bishop of Carthage, and 'conspicuous for the sanctity of his life.'¹ The emperor soundly scolded St. Damasus' schismatic opponents for disturbing the calmness of his 'most holy mind.' St. Ambrose, who knew him personally, speaks of him as 'the holy Damasus elected by the judgment of God.' Few characters come before us with more manifold recommendations than that of Damasus. His poems are at once scholarly and touching. What can be more exquisite than his poem on *Projecta*, what more touching than that on his sister Irene, whom he hopes to meet in a better world, and by whose side he asked to be buried? Half his life, he says, has gone from him on losing his sister in her twentieth year:

Non timui mortem cœlos quod libera adiret,
Sed dolui fateor consortia perdere vitæ.

But Damasus was above all a ruler. He ascended the throne at a time when firmness and prudence were, above all things, necessary; and the Sixth General Council is witness to the one, when (with a play on his name) it calls him 'the adamant of the faith,'² whilst Theodoret says that 'there was nothing that he was not prepared to say and do in behalf of the Apostolic teaching';³ and St. Basil is a reluctant wit-

¹ *H. E.* v. 2.

² Δάμασος ὁ ἀδάμας τῆς πίστεως (*Mansi*, t. xi. p. 661).

³ *H. E.* v. 2.

ness to his caution in dealing with the East. Ambrosiaster, bearing witness to his official position (in spite of his own Semi-Pelagianism), really describes the main feature of his life when he speaks of the Church as 'the house of God, of which Damasus is now the ruler.' But though a ruler, he was, to those who knew him, meek and gentle; St. Jerome, his intimate at one time, was particularly impressed with his mildness; and the title, 'Servant of servants,' which he adopted, which has been used by the Popes ever since, points to his humility. His position was one that needed this pivot of the Christian life, for on the one hand no man was ever more maligned by his enemies, idolised by the Christian world, or placed on a higher pinnacle by the policy of a Christian emperor.¹ It is not without special interest that to him also we owe the recitation of the Gloria after each Psalm in the divine office; whilst, above all, it is to his desire and encouragement that one of the greatest gifts of God to Holy Church is to be traced—the translation of the Holy Scriptures into what we may call the vulgar (or common) tongue of Christendom by St. Jerome.

It is to be regretted that some recent writers have taken the side of schismatic and heathen authors, rather than that of the contemporary Christian world, in regard to this great Pope. Dr. Littledale has a passage on Damasus which reproduces the venom of the 'Libellus Precum,' written by two bitter schismatics, whose statements have been proved, where they could be checked, to have been shamefully false;² and more recently Mr. Puller has argued from the surroundings of the saint, and from a passage from Ammianus Marcellinus, the heathen historian, to the effect that St. Damasus must himself have been guilty of a luxurious mode of life.³ Does Mr. Puller think that at a time when the throne of Peter was

¹ What is the real value of the saying of Prætextatus (quoted by Mr. Puller as evidence of Papal luxury), 'Make me Bishop of Rome, and I will become a Christian to-morrow'? A Hindu might say the same to the Archbishop of Canterbury—would it be any reflection on his Grace? Tertullian says that the heathen said the same of Christians in his day: which destroys Mr. Puller's application (*Apol.* p. 134).

² He quotes them alone as his authority.

³ *Primitive SS.* pp. 140, 141.

taking the place of the altar of Victory, a pagan historian would be a stranger to the seductive whispers of envy? Is a pagan historian to be trusted altogether in regard to the very Pope who, at the risk of his life, gave the death-blow to paganism in the city of Rome, and conspired to destroy its last altar? No doubt it would be something in favour of Mr. Puller's thesis if it could be shown that pure worldliness led to the position which the throne of Peter occupied in the days of Damasus;¹ but we need something more than the suggestions of a heathen historian, and a petulant expression that fell from the pen of St. Basil, writing to an intimate friend, to counterbalance the unanimous witness of the contemporary Christian world in favour of the 'virgin Doctor of the virgin Church.'²

St. Damasus had a good preparation for his life's work. He must have seen St. Julius and conversed with St. Athanasius, and he was the secretary of St. Liberius. He followed the latter, part of the way at least, out of the city when he went forth an exile for the faith 'to the admiration of all,' as St. Athanasius describes him; some think, but without sufficient ground, that he followed him to Beroëa. He at one time managed the ecclesiastical affairs of the city in the absence of Liberius; and he had a great deal to do (under the latter and in concert with Hilary, of Poitiers) with the restoration of the bishops who had lapsed at Ariminum. He was therefore a special object of aversion to the Luciferians, in whose eyes a moment's dallying with heresy was an unpardonable sin. These same men were probably the authors of the calumnies

¹ Cf. *Primitive SS.* pp. 140, 1. On p. 136 Mr. Puller says that Valentinian's edict 'had to be publicly read in the churches of Rome.' Damasus himself adopted this unusual course in his zeal for the reformation of his clergy. Mr. Puller's account of the bishops of the fourth century (p. 134, *seq.*) needs to be checked by the facts given by Thomassinus, *Disc. Eccl.* t. ii. part. ii. lib. iii. cap. 101, and a grand passage in Döllinger's *Hist. of the Church*, Period II. cap. v. § 1: 'The word bishop was synonymous with just and upright administration of the law.'

² St. Jerome, *Ep. ad Pammachium*. Ammianus Marcellinus laid stress upon the gorgeous attire in which St. Damasus appeared in public, and contrasted it with the robes of bishops in the country. Leo XIII. also wears the most gorgeous official robes, and yet he almost lives on air

both against Liberius and Damasus.¹ But no accusation could be successfully manipulated against the faith of Damasus; for there was no occasion (as in the case of Liberius) when he was removed from public ken, and when their calumnies could escape unchecked. But, in concert with the Jew Isaac, they attacked his moral character; only, however, to draw from all sides fresh witnesses to his sanctity.

II. When Liberius died, Damasus was his natural and fittest successor. He was immediately elected by the vast majority, and duly consecrated—'elected,' says St. Ambrose, 'by the judgment of God';² only four out of the forty presbyters of Rome went with his foe. There was no competitor for the throne at the moment when Damasus was elected. Ammianus Marcellinus, looking at matters from the outside, sees in Damasus and Ursinus merely two rivals for a great position. But Damasus was seated on the throne when the opposition began; he was the bishop, and the only bishop, on Cyprianic principles, 'since there cannot be a second after the first; and whoever is made such after one who ought to be the only one, is not a second, but no bishop at all.' St. Jerome expressly says that it was after an interval, however short, that a rival bishop was started ('post non multum temporis spatium,' *Chronicon*).³ Rufinus says that before the troubles began, Damasus 'had received the episcopate in the city by succession after Liberius.' He did not, therefore, mount an episcopal throne through streams of human blood.⁴

But Damasus having been elected and consecrated, not long—it may be immediately—afterwards, Ursinus, a deacon, stirred up a party against him, and succeeded in getting himself elected and consecrated on a single day,⁵ contrary to the

¹ Cf. Stilling's *Life of St. Liberius in the Acta Sanctorum*.

² We could hardly have a better judge of the matter than St. Ambrose.

³ 'A few days after' (Döllinger).

⁴ *Primitive Saints*, &c. p. 140. It is strange that Mr. Puller should content himself with saying that 'Ammianus Marcellinus divides the blame equally between the two competitors.' Just what a heathen would do. Mr. Barmby (*Dict. of Chr. Biog.* iv. 1069) thinks it a merit that Ammianus 'shows no bias on the one side or the other of the contest.'

⁵ Damasus waited the usual time.

canons, by the Bishop of Tivoli, an old and rough bishop, who usurped for the occasion the office of the Bishop of Ostia. His party seized on the basilica which Liberius had erected on the Esquiline in honour of our Lady, and in the endeavour to prevent the people, who sided with Damasus, flocking into it for their usual worship, a *mêlée* ensued. A savage Prefect of Corn, a considerable official, who took side with Damasus, mismanaged the matter, and a scene of bloodshed ensued. The whole matter (which included two frays) was, as Rufinus, a contemporary writer, says, 'turned to the prejudice of the good and innocent bishop'—*i.e.* Damasus. The judgment of the Prefect of Italy, a heathen, was against Ursinus as 'the author of the dissension'—so at least we may gather from an expression of Valentinian's. And in the second fray, whilst the Prefect of Italy, who was then, it would seem, under the influence of Isaac the Jew, sided against Damasus, the vicar of the city corrected the judgment of his co-official, and Ursinus was banished the city. St. Damasus built a basilica at Nola in thanksgiving for his release from the trouble.

III. No sooner had the reins of government been placed 'by the judgment of God' in the hands of Damasus, than he entered upon a course of procedure which characterised his whole reign. Like others before him, but with still greater frequency, he conducted the affairs of the Church in concert with other bishops. The council was his instrument of rule. So much was this the case that presently 'The Westerns' and Damasus presented themselves to the East as one man. St. Basil sets it down to their own sins that things were so different in the East. He and the bishops that agreed with him saw in the West a unity of faith and action which they fairly envied. But this unity was not obtained without a struggle. Milan, the imperial residence, was the scene of discord at the beginning of Damasus' reign. Ursinus seems to have succeeded in stirring up the embers of Arian misbelief outside Rome, and it found a champion in Milan in the bishop Auxentius. The bishops Ursacius and Valens, the old opponents of St. Athanasius, together with Auxentius, were busy in the same mischievous work. St. Athanasius looked to Rome for the settlement of these difficulties. Already Rome

had acted with vigour sufficient to induce St. Athanasius to say, writing to the African bishops, 'We thank him' (*i.e.* 'our beloved Damasus' as he had just called him) 'and those who met in the great city, that by casting out Ursacius and Valens, and others who thought with them, they had preserved the peace of the Catholic Church.' But St. Athanasius imagined that not enough had been done with regard to Auxentius. Various synods had met and condemned them, but Rome, he thought, had not yet spoken plainly. Accordingly he expressed his surprise that Auxentius had not been 'cast out of the Church.'¹ But in reality, Damasus had done more than St. Athanasius knew of. He had not only convened a council and reaffirmed the Nicene faith against Ursacius and Valens, but he had condemned Auxentius in an encyclical, in spite of the support given to him by the emperor. And he had written in the name of the synod to the Illyrian bishops, and through them to the East, a letter which was to set men's minds at rest as to the value of the Council of Ariminum, in which so many bishops had failed.

This letter is of great importance as evidence of the position held by the Holy See in the mind of the Church generally. It appears from St. Athanasius that nothing less than a Roman synod could authoritatively allay the disquiet abroad. But the value of a Roman synod could obviously only be rated thus by reason of its being an expression of the mind of the Bishop of Rome; for the rest of the bishops had no more influence than an ordinary Eastern prelate. Damasus then tells the Illyrian bishops, and through them the whole East, that they must not allow their minds to be swayed by the great number of the bishops who went astray at Ariminum. In this matter numbers do not count, 'for,' he says, 'it is evident that neither the Roman bishop'—*i.e.* Liberius—'whose judgment was the one to be looked for before all, nor Vincentius, nor others, gave any consent to such decrees.' Now it cannot be supposed that Vincentius and a few others

¹ θαυμάζοντες, πῶς μέχρι νῦν οὐ καθηρέθη καὶ ἐκβέβληται τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. In what follows I have, for the most part, followed Merenda, whose monograph on St. Damasus is to be found in Migne's edition of that Pope's letters, and seems to me a masterpiece of accurate reasoning.

could outweigh the immense number of lapsed bishops in the disastrous Council of Ariminum. Nor could Vincentius, and a few others, *plus* the Roman bishop, counterbalance such numbers, unless there were something special in the position of the latter bishop. Damasus, however, and his synod could assume in those to whom he wrote a recognition of the singular position of the Roman bishop, whose refusal to sign the Ariminian confession nullified the effect of the vast defection on the part of the bishops. The synodal letter also speaks of the bulwark against heresy raised by the Nicene Creed. The Western bishops were, be it remembered, writing to the East, and they thus described the Nicene Council: 'Our ancestors, three hundred and eighteen bishops, *directed from the city of the most holy Bishop of the city of Rome*, a council having been arranged at Nicæa, erected this bulwark against the devil's weapons.'

Later on¹ the Illyrians assented to the Roman programme, condemned certain heretics, and announced their adherence to the 'Consubstantial Trinity.'

But equally important from another point of view is the letter of the emperor accompanying his confirmation of the decrees of the Illyrian bishops. He warns bishops against pleading in the East the faith of their emperor, for that, he says, would be disobedience to the scriptural command, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' There was, therefore, no confusion in theory at this time between the temporal and spiritual order—a fact to be remembered when we come to the Rescript of Gratian. The Western emperor only gave civil privilege to that which the spiritual authorities themselves decided.

So far, then, the Bishop of Rome comes before us as the centre of Christendom at a time when the imperial residence was at Milan, and when some of the greatest bishops that the Church ever possessed were engaged in the conflict for the

¹ The chronology here is exceedingly difficult. Mansi and Merenda bring in Valentinian's action here. Hefele gives reasons for supposing it to be somewhat later, in the same year as his death (cf. Hefele, ii. 289; Merenda, *Gesta Damasi*, sub anno 370).

orthodox faith. This central position of the Bishop of Rome will appear still more clearly as we proceed. Milan, Treves, Sirmium, Thessalonica, Constantinople, possess in their turn the imperial court; but the headship of the Church remains at Rome. There, hemmed in by an idolatrous prefect, a mixed senate (of which pagans formed the larger portion), a disunited clergy, cosmopolitan heresy represented by the sectaries of Africa, Syria, the depths of Spain, organised calumny incited by the Jew Isaac, and above all, at one time, an anti-Pope at the Esquiline, Damasus proceeded with his work of ruling the Church from Great Britain to Africa, and from Gaul to Constantinople.¹ No mere headship, such as the Duke of Norfolk possesses amongst the English nobility, will explain the attitude of the Church in general towards the Bishop of Rome² in this fourth century.

IV. It was the special glory of Damasus that it fell to his lot to guard the Church's faith on two essential points, and to condemn the leaders of the two heresies that took the place of Arianism, during his long and fruitful reign. On both these questions the great St. Basil proved unequal to the task of discerning the germs of evil, and dealing with them with decision. His fight—and no words can describe the grandeur of his stand—was at the first against Arianism; and he ended with writing one of the most magnificent treatises that the Church possesses on the Divine glory of the Third Person. But when Apollinarius started his heretical teaching the Easterns could not believe that one who had deserved so well of the Church had fallen into a new heresy, and Basil least of all. Basil, indeed, thought Apollinarius 'ready to say anything,' but would not openly condemn his doctrine and break with him. Whilst wellnigh the whole East was resounding with his heterodox position, St. Basil would not allow himself to think of him as the victim accused of a fundamental heresy; and he managed to furnish his enemies with weapons of which it needed all the dexterity of an Athanasius to turn the point. There can be no question that Basil was absolutely orthodox on the point himself; but he did not see

¹ *Damase*, par l'Abbé Callen (Paris, 1871).

² This is the illustration selected by Mr. Fuller, *Primitive SS.* p. 229.

the danger that threatened the Church from Apollinarius. Yet this heretic had begun to organise; he was gaining a following among the bishops, and the East was in danger of being overrun with Apollinarianism as before with Arianism. But, as the Eastern historian notes, 'Damasus, Bishop of Rome, and Peter of Alexandria, having discovered the beginning of the new heresy, condemned it in a council held at Rome as contrary to the Catholic Faith.'¹

The same was the case with the Macedonian heresy which in part occasioned the Council of Constantinople. It was for a while dealt with too tenderly by the Greeks. St. Basil even incurred blame for his charitable tolerance of it. No blame, indeed, properly attaches to an individual saint for not perceiving the germs of heresy as they first appear; but at this critical moment in the Church's life, when Arianism was being put to death, it is to be noticed that, as a matter of fact, the Holy See was the source of strength to the episcopate in meeting the new forms of heresy that arose upon its grave. That see might be expected to be occasionally deceived by persons who dissimulated to gain its support, as in the case of Vitalis; but in regard to the doctrine at issue it was as a matter of fact the unerring judge.²

And the strength of its occupant lay as well in the divine assistance which was pledged to his office as in his own perpetual consciousness of his relationship to the Prince of the Apostles. Thus he says of his promotion:

Hinc mihi provecto Christus cui summa potestas
Sedis Apostolicæ voluit concedere honorem.³

To the Easterns he wrote: 'It redounds principally to your own honour, most honoured sons, that your love pays the reverence which is due to the Apostolic See.'⁴ At the same time he is careful to remind them of his own unworthiness to hold the position.

¹ Sozomen, vi. 25.

² When St. Basil speaks of the ignorance of the West concerning affairs in the East, on which Mr. Puller lays some stress, he is alluding to cases in which the orthodoxy of particular persons was temporarily in question, not of matters of faith. He exaggerates somewhat into the bargain.

³ *Damasi Carm.* xxxv.

⁴ *Ep.* iii.

We have to this day the distich which St. Damasus wrote in the baptistery, where he seems to have placed the chair of the Apostle. It runs thus:

'One chair of Peter, one only true bath.'¹

He sat, then, according to his own belief, in the chair of Peter. And nothing, as we shall see, but a recognition of this on the part of Eastern and Western Christendom can explain the action of the episcopate during his troubled reign.

V. The Church in the East had been plunged into the utmost distress. St. Basil's descriptions are heartrending, and he assured St. Athanasius that, in his belief, there was no way of help but for the Western episcopate to assist.

Now, what did St. Basil mean by the Western bishops? Not certainly individual bishops acting on their own account. Neither could they all act together, except by representation. But the West throughout these times was ordinarily represented by the Roman synod. And in what could the Roman synod surpass the rest of the Church, except in the position of its president, the Bishop of Rome? St. Basil in his sixty-sixth letter is thought to allude to the action taken recently by Rome in regard to Auxentius of Milan. He seems to long for something of the same kind, so that the scholiast heads this letter of St. Basil's to that effect. St. Basil tells St. Athanasius that his first idea was to induce the West to send an imposing array of legates, commissioned by a vast synod, which would impress these perverse Easterns by its numbers. He thought that there was nothing like appearance of numbers to counteract the impression produced by the immense array of bishops who had failed in their duty at Ariminum. But this he saw to be impracticable; consequently he fell back² on the regular mode of action in the Church. 'It appeared suitable to write to the Bishop of Rome and ask him to *oversee* [the verb of which *bishop* is the substantive form] matters here in the East and to give judgment, so that since it would be difficult for any of the Westerns to be sent by a common and synodical

¹ See an excellent summary of Rossi's argument concerning the chair of Peter in the Abbé Fouard's *St. Peter and the First Years of Christianity*, Appendix iv.

² Compare *Ep.* lxx. with *Ep.* lxxi.

decree, he [the Bishop of Rome] might act *on his own authority* in the matter, and choose out men equal to the task.' The work which these legates would have to do was that of persuading the Eastern bishops to accept the ruling of the West concerning the disaster of Ariminum, which consisted essentially in the signature of the bishops having been obtained from them by force.¹

Now St. Basil would never have recommended a plan against which these refractory bishops could lawfully exclaim on technical grounds—against which, that is, they could urge that the Bishop of Rome had no right on his own authority to send legates to persuade them to accept the decisions arrived at in the Roman synod. The relation of Rome to the East must have been recognised by St. Basil as that of a superior authority, and he must have been well assured that his Eastern co-prelates held the same view.

St. Basil, however, included in his requests a verdict in favour of St. Meletius and a condemnation of Marcellus, whose followers, as a matter of fact, were at that time siding with Paulinus. St. Basil's attitude towards Marcellus was, as we shall presently see, somewhat impetuous, and it is not certain that he was justified in his expressions referring to the past. The letters were sent to Rome by Dorotheus, a cleric from Antioch belonging to Meletius, and they were graciously received. St. Damasus sent a deacon of Milan named Sabinus, and afterwards the Bishop of Placentia, with the letters previously written to the Illyrians and the acts of the synod held two years before. In these letters St. Damasus had said that the Nicene synod defined 'that we ought to believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of one Deity and one substance,' and then that those to whom they were addressed 'ought to approve this by reciprocal letters.' Valentinian's rescript obliged all, so far as imperial authority could go, to believe in accordance with the synod of Rome and the synods of Gaul, that 'there is one and the same substance of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Three Persons.'

¹ ἐφάνη δὲ ἡμῖν ἀκόλουθον ἐπιστεῖλαι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ Ῥώμης ἐπισκεψασθαι τὰ ἐνταῦθα καὶ δοῦναι γνώμην, ἵν' ἐπειδὴ ἀπὸ κοινοῦ καὶ συνοδικοῦ δόγματος ἀποσταλῇναί τις ἀδελφὸς τῶν ἐκείθεν, αὐτὸν ἀνθεντῆσαι περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα (Ep. lxxvi.).

The Illyrian bishops anathematised all 'who do not hold and preach that the Trinity is consubstantial.'

I have laid stress on all this activity on the part of the Pope, because a recent writer has, as it seems to me, so thoroughly misrepresented the reign of Damasus. Speaking of this period, he says that St. Basil 'over and over again had written to Damasus to ask him, living as he was in comparative peace and quiet [*sic*], to help the Eastern Churches which were suffering persecution; but nothing was done, although much might have been done.'¹ It will be seen, however, that we can hardly talk of peace and quiet in regard to the life of Damasus, nor is it true to say that 'nothing was done.' As a matter of fact, the letters from Rome led to action on St. Basil's part, for he writes to say in a letter, wrongly headed 'To the Westerns,' that they in the East agreed to 'all that had been done by your Honour in accordance with the canons,' and that they had 'welcomed your Apostolic zeal concerning the true Faith.'²

VI. But it is true that affairs were not conducted at Rome exactly as Basil would have wished. St. Damasus and his synod did not agree with St. Basil as to the best method of putting an end to the differences at Antioch. It was considered at Rome that the uncanonical character of Meletius' election needed to be taken into account, and also Rome did not feel such perfect confidence in the orthodoxy of Meletius as St. Basil did. Rome required the matter to be accurately investigated before coming to a decision. St. Basil proposed a legation from Rome to the East; Rome preferred a legation from the East to herself. Considering all that we know of Eastern intrigue, and the terrible state of things in the Eastern Church, it was surely not unnatural that St. Damasus should wish for some more personal and searching

¹ *Prim. SS. &c.* p. 171. St. Damasus, as a matter of fact, was in perpetual and pressing trouble in the West—not, it is true, from the emperor, but from other causes.

² *Ep. xc.* In the same letter he calls Sabinus his 'fellow-deacon': the epithet expresses the brotherhood in which one was a bishop and the other a deacon. Attention to such phrases as these would have saved Mr. Puller from pressing the argument on p. 8. In the most Papal of Papal documents, viz. Hormisdas' Formulary, the Pope was addressed as 'brother.'

investigation of the matter. St. Basil was not infallible. As a matter of fact, he had to be defended by St. Athanasius in more than one matter, and he eventually owned himself wrong in the matter of Marcellus. There would be, so Damasus naturally thought, a better chance of an accurate decision if the case were heard at Rome, with some thoroughly trustworthy legates to give information, than if Western legates were thrown into the sea of intrigue and false-dealing which, according to St. Basil himself, characterised the East. This, then, was the state of things as described by him in a letter to Eusebius of Samosata. At Rome they were in favour of a more thorough investigation of matters, on account of which St. Basil speaks of some there being greater sticklers for accuracy than others,¹ and says that these were not pleased with his letters. Accordingly they were sent back by Evagrius, and St. Basil was asked (it was almost a demand, *ἀπαιτῶν*) to send another letter and to authoritatively arrange for an embassy through men of position and trustworthiness, in order to give Rome a colourable pretext² for undertaking that quasi-episcopal³ visitation of the East for which St. Basil had so earnestly pleaded. One cannot help seeing that St. Damasus wished the embassy from the East to repair to Rome that the whole matter of the Antiochene dispute might be gone into with care. At present he seems to have been acting on the line adopted by Eusebius of Vercellæ, his legate, when he left Antioch—that of withholding express and final sanction to either party.

Evagrius left Basil to consult St. Meletius at Antioch, and received a letter from the former, saying that he did not suppose that anything would come of the whole correspond-

¹ Mr. Puller has paraphrased Basil's words, 'the more accurate amongst those there,' as 'Pope Damasus and the Roman clergy' (*Prim. SS.* p. 285), and he translates *ἀκριβεία* 'preciseness.' It should be 'precision.' He adds that St. Gregory Naz. speaks of the Pope and the Westerns as 'the self-styled defenders of the canons.' St. Gregory does not use the word 'self-styled.' He speaks of the Westerns as being, in the matter of Meletius, 'the defenders, as they allege (*ὡς λέγουσιν*), of the canons,' i.e. their ground of action is that the canons were violated. He does not treat the matter with irony, but gives in fairness their plea.

² *ἐπιδόσωπον ἀφορμήν* (*Ep.* cxxxviii.).

³ *τῆς ἐπισκέψεως ἡμῶν* (*ib.*).

ence, considering 'the accuracy of the man and the [unsatisfactory] nature of writing.'¹ Judging from St. Basil's next letter (*Ep.* cxxix.) it would seem as if Eusebius of Samosata partly agreed with the advice of Evagrius, that St. Basil should at least write again to the Westerns.² Letters were accordingly addressed to the West, and in some of them³ they pleaded that the West cannot afford to do without the East any more than the head can say to the feet, I have no need of you.⁴ After describing in detail the fearful calamities that were oppressing the East, they say that 'doubtless many of us ought to run to your dignity and each be interpreters of his own matter [there]'—an emphatic incidental recognition of the central position of Rome in the Christian Church. They could not go to all the Western bishops and lay their matters before them; nor could the West have any claim to such a reference, except by reason of the possession of some right of hearing appeals. This recourse, however (they say), is out of the question by reason of the circumstances of the times.

The letters are exceedingly vague as to what was to be done, and they evade the request for an embassy to be sent to the West. True as it was that bishops could not, without great difficulty, leave their posts, still later on they did, for

¹ *τῆς τε τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀκριβείας στοχαζόμενος καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως τῶν γραμμάτων.* I have adopted Merenda's interpretation, although at first sight the *ἀκριβεία* would seem to refer to Damasus and not Meletius. But I have no doubt that Merenda is right.

² With regard to a note in Mr. Puller's book (p. 173) concerning the headings of some letters that passed between St. Basil and the West, it must be remembered that there is no more depreciation of Papal authority in calling the Pope and the rest 'the Westerns' than there would be of the Queen's in a French statesman saying that he was going to write to 'the English,' including their sovereign. We do not expect modern styles of writing in the fourth century; added to which there is some uncertainty about these titles. It seems quite certain that as they stand they are incorrect, and the scribe who transposed them may have simply headed them of his own accord. As for the title 'Bishops of Italy and Gaul,' the very idea of St. Basil was to get numbers into the proposed demonstration, and the letter was sent straight to Rome. There are occasions when the congregations, which include the Pope, are addressed.

³ *Ep.* ccxliii.

⁴ They also say that they do not write 'to inform your diligence,' *ἀκριβεία*. Clearly, therefore, the word has a good sense as applied to the Westerns—implying diligent investigation—not (as Mr. Puller, p. 285) irony.

such a purpose as that of a council, and one cannot help perceiving in them a certain unwillingness to submit to the searching investigation of the matter which was desired at Rome, and which it was doubtless felt would be more impartial there than in the excited atmosphere of the East.

St. Damasus seems, however, to have held a synod,¹ and sent them encouraging letters, and Basil's hopes forthwith rose high; but troubles soon came which materially altered the complexion of matters in his eyes. Vitalis seceded from Meletius at Antioch, and joined Apollinarius, and, it would seem, was presently summoned to Rome.² Thither at any rate he went, and there he presented Damasus with a profession of faith which St. Gregory describes as in actual words orthodox, and which, he says, accordingly deceived himself for a while. St. Damasus naturally thought him orthodox; but was cautious enough to hand him over to Paulinus on his return to Antioch, to be dealt with as that bishop might think best.

VII. This action of St. Damasus in regard to Vitalis was, to say the least, a sign of which side he took in the strife at Antioch. It was not, however, of necessity so emphatic a repudiation of Meletius as some have imagined. For Vitalis had quarrelled with Flavian, Meletius' agent at Antioch, and St. Meletius was himself in exile. It was, therefore, natural to send him to Paulinus. Still, it was an open acknowledgment of Paulinus as a proper person to deal with one under accusation for heresy, for St. Damasus seems almost immediately after Vitalis' departure from Rome to have come to the conclusion that he was not quite sure of his orthodoxy, and accordingly he sent to Paulinus a profession of faith which those were to sign who wished to be in communion with Rome.³ Just at this time Peter also, St. Athanasius' saintly successor at Alexandria, was in Rome, and he, too, emphatically sided with Paulinus. St. Athanasius had himself written

¹ Cf. Merenda (*Gesta Damasi*, sub anno 374) for the evidence.

² Tillemont thinks he came spontaneously; but St. Gregory speaks of his being required to make a profession of faith (*ἀπαρχή*), which implies something less than spontaneity (cf. Greg. Naz. *Ep.* ii. *ad Cled.*).

³ 'Qui . . . tibi, id est, nobis per te, voluerint sociari.'

letters of communion to Paulinus after being at Antioch. Before going there he was inclined towards association with Meletius, but after being on the spot he sent letters to Paulinus. Tillemont has slipped into a mistake in supposing the reverse to have been the case, and Mr. Puller has followed him. But a careful comparison of St. Basil's letters shows that it was really after being at Antioch himself that St. Athanasius came to his final conclusion that communion should be maintained with Paulinus, although this by no means hindered him from intercourse with St. Meletius.¹ St. Athanasius had now won his crown in 373, and his mantle had descended on St. Peter, who now followed him in siding with Paulinus. This was in the year 375 A.D.²

VIII. St. Basil was naturally aggrieved at Rome's recognition of Paulinus, and his tone suddenly changes. He wrote to Count Terence at Antioch to say that he 'hears' that the Paulinists 'are now carrying about letters from the Westerns, handing over the bishopric of Antioch to them, and ignoring the most wonderful bishop of the true Church of God, viz. Meletius.'

What right, we may ask, had the Westerns to hand over the bishopric of the central city of the East to anyone? By the Westerns St. Basil meant, according to the phraseology of the time, Rome, which he presently substitutes for 'the Westerns.' What right, then, had Rome to hand over any bishopric in the East whatsoever to anyone? What greater act of jurisdiction could Rome perform than to decide upon the person who was to be in charge of Antioch? Obviously Rome had the right, according to St. Basil. He never once disputes that right in itself. He had shortly before written³ to Eusebius of Samosata, asking his opinion as to whether he (Basil) could, under special circumstances of persecution, ordain a bishop outside his province, as he had been asked to

¹ Cf. the Benedictine note to Basil (*Ep.* ccxiv.; Migne, *Basil. Opp.* t. iv.).

² Merenda seems quite conclusively to have proved this: because (1) time must be left for St. Basil's phase of pleasure with Rome before these letters to Paulinus; and (2) Vitalis was not yet bishop (he was made bishop in 376); and (3) Count Terence, to whom St. Basil at once wrote, as being in Antioch, was there only from 373 to 375.

³ *Ep.* cxxxviii. 2.

do, it being against the canons. But he never once questions this right in the case of Rome. Paulinus had been ordained by a Western bishop, and he was now being established in his position by the Bishop of Rome. St. Basil distinctly refuses to take the ground that the Pope had no jurisdiction over Antioch. In his indignant letter about Meletius being passed over, when expressing the extent to which he was prepared to go in the way of disagreement with Rome, he never disputes Rome's right in itself. On the contrary, he congratulates¹ the Paulinists as having received the letters of communion from Rome. He numbers them amongst the household of the faith.² But he is not prepared on that account 'to ignore Meletius, or to forget, for his part (ἐπιλαθέσθαι), the Church under him.'³ For this also, he says, 'is the true Church of God.' He then defines his position still more definitely, and says that 'in the case of one who is not walking according to the rule [or word] of faith, he would not receive him, not even if he came from Heaven itself, much less if he was one of the sons of men with a letter of commendation.'⁴

There is nothing in this to contravene the decrees of the Vatican Council itself, as has been recently supposed.⁵ Those decrees do not force anyone to receive a person who is demonstrably contravening the rule of faith, whatever letters he may produce. It may be a matter of piety so to do, a question of humility whether we should take our own judgment as our rule, a counsel and a supernatural virtue, but it is not a matter of necessity under pain of sin, for such a decision as that of St. Damasus does not fall under the shelter

¹ συγκαίρομεν τοῖς κομισαμένοις τὰ ἀπὸ Ῥώμης. ² οἰκείου τῆς πίστεως.

³ Μελέτιον ἀγνοῆσαι ἢ τῆς ὑπ' αὐτὸν Ἐκκλησίας ἐπιλαθέσθαι.

⁴ St. Basil is probably alluding not merely to Paulinus but to Vitalis, who seems to have kept letters from Damasus to which he was not really entitled, as he was certainly not walking according to the rule of faith. I have transposed the limbs of the above sentence from St. Basil in order to show what seems to me to be the certain meaning. Mr. Puller has slipped in the word 'letter,' and translated στοιχῇ 'agree with'—a meaning which it never bears in Greek. The reference is obviously to Gal. v. 25, vi. 16, where the word is used of persons, not of things. St. Gregory Naz. has the same idea in reference to some Easterns' jealousy of Rome. He says that if angels were to come and occupy the East with their vain rivalries, he would protest (*Carm. de Vita*, 1605).

⁵ *Prim. SS.* pp. 238-240.

of Papal infallibility. It was not an *ex cathedra* pronouncement, not something concerning the faith itself, not a decision obligatory on the whole Church. It was not even, so far as we know, an injunction on anyone. He passed no direct sentence on Meletius; he certainly did not excommunicate him: St. Basil nowhere implies that. I do not say that what St. Basil said was commendable or exemplary. His fault was that which St. Gregory notices, that of too great affection towards Meletius. What he would have done had Rome refused her communion to Meletius, we are unable to say for certain, but we can make a fair conjecture from what followed.

In the beginning of the following year Dorotheus went to Rome again with letters from St. Basil and the Easterns, and, although a cleric under Meletius, was received as a matter of course.¹ It was in reference to this journey and the proposal that St. Basil's brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, should accompany Dorotheus to Rome, that St. Basil wrote one of his most petulant letters. It was a private letter to Eusebius of Samosata. He speaks 'of disdainful tempers' and 'Western superciliousness.' If the allusion is to St. Damasus, he was certainly indulging his imagination—he did not know him personally—and there is nothing in Damasus' letters to justify such an imputation, nor was it the impression which those who knew him appear to have gained. It is quite possible² that he does not in any way allude to Damasus, for he speaks of being 'minded' to write to their 'head' informally (ἀνευ τοῦ κοινοῦ σχήματος), nothing about ecclesiastical matters except to hint that they (*i.e.* the Westerns, not 'their head,') 'neither know the truth of what is going on amongst us, nor go the right way to learn it.'³ St. Basil knew that there were some who differed from him, like St. Peter of Alexandria and probably St. Ambrose, who had now been consecrated at Milan, and he seems to have been 'minded'

¹ Similarly, later on, Acacius of Beroea seems to have been sent from Meletius to Rome, and to have been at a synod with Damasus. This must have been before 381, when he helped to consecrate Flavian, and after 378, when he was made bishop. The date is significant.

² Vincenzi (*De Heb. et Christ. Sacr. Monarchiâ*) thinks it certain that he did not. Cf. *De Liberio et Damaso*, second edit.

³ *Ep.* ccxxxix.

to write straight to Damasus and tell him that 'these and such as these were misinformed.' He was 'minded,' but did not do it. In that case 'Western superciliousness' did not include Damasus. But considering how generally 'the Westerns' was at that time an expression used for 'Rome and the rest,' as 'Peter and the rest' in Holy Scripture, I am inclined to think that he did simply, though unjustifiably, attribute St. Damasus' action to superciliousness. Baronius, however, has a beautiful remark on this subject to the effect that although a saint may be caught humanly excited and disturbed in mind, he will not be detained in such a frame. Accordingly our saint did not actually write as he felt tempted to do, but in a very different tone. He asked the 'Westerns' to use their 'diligent accuracy,'¹ to 'denounce publicly to all the Churches in the East' certain persons whom he names, 'in order that either correcting their ways they may be in sincere harmony with us, or, persisting in their perversity, they may keep their harm to themselves, being no longer able to infect those near them through unguarded communion with them.' If this was not calling upon Rome to exercise jurisdiction in the East, it would be difficult to imagine what evidence could be produced that would satisfy those who see in the history of these times no indication of lordship over the universal Church. And, be it remembered, the lordship in this case did not simply come from Rome, but was attributed to her. She did not claim it here, but was asked to use it.

IX. So that St. Basil had come to a better mind concerning 'Western superciliousness,' and the same is true of his persistent accusation of carelessness in the matter of Marcellus. The truth about Marcellus of Ancyra is one of the most difficult points in the history of this century, and I shall not pretend to have solved it.² What is of importance to note here is that, whether rightly or wrongly, St. Basil modified his judgment as to the treatment of Marcellus, whose case he considered had been so inadequately dealt with at

¹ So I have ventured to translate *ἀκριβεια*, which occurs again here, and is unquestionably not ironical but laudatory (cf. p. 217, note 4).

² For a most careful summary of the case for and against Marcellus, see Hefele's *Councils*, vol. ii. p. 29 *seq.*, Eng. tr.

Rome. At this time and for some while he had considered that Marcellus had rejected 'all the dogmas of our hope;' but in the letter to Eusebius, in which he speaks of Western superciliousness, he refers to what had been *previously* done in the case of Marcellus.¹ One only hopes he does not allude, as Merenda thinks, to the action of the prelates of Sardica, whose judgment in the matter ought to have been sufficient for that period, but, anyhow, he ultimately admitted that there was another side to the matter. And as for his supposing that the Westerns, by whom he probably meant the Pope (though this is not certain,³ seeing that on this occasion he mentions him separately), could be guilty of 'supporting heresy,' this in no wise shows, as Mr. Puller thinks,⁴ that 'St. Basil had no conception of the Bishop of Rome being the divinely appointed monarch of the Church.' A bishop of the present day, believing *ex animo* in the teaching of the Vatican decrees, might say the same as St. Basil did to the Holy Father, for there are many ways (direct and indirect) of giving support to heresy. In this case St. Basil considered that the Westerns had done it through ignorance of the real state of things, and not by any actual decision, but by not acting in a more decisive way. He was at liberty to consider it to be so, and yet might believe in the Pope as the divinely appointed monarch of the Church. We can say this because we have the Church's teaching, especially that of the Vatican decrees, to help us to understand that the Pope's divinely appointed position, though that of a monarch, is not that of a monarch who cannot err. There *are* matters and circumstances in which the Pope cannot err, and in which absolute submission, under pain of mortal sin, is due from every child of the Church; but there are also circumstances in which, however we might shrink from acting upon the supposition, such submission is not a matter of necessity. It is necessary to say thus much because many of the arguments contained in Mr. Puller's book derive their force from this simple truth

¹ 'What they' (*i.e.* the Westerns) 'did before.'

² *Ep.* cclxxi.

³ Mr. Puller takes it for granted that Damasus is meant. But he does not seem in his whole account to take the context into consideration.

⁴ The sentence quoted from Bossuet is inaccuracy itself.

being kept out of sight. They are directed against something that those whom he is pleased to call Ultramontanes do not believe.¹ In this instance Marcellus had at one time at least succeeded in inducing the Westerns in general to consider him orthodox, although St. Athanasius seems afterwards to have written against him without mentioning his name. At the time when he was received by St. Julius, St. Athanasius, and the rest of the Westerns, it is not certain that he was not orthodox at heart, as he certainly was in word; but St. Basil probably knew Marcellus better than most men did, and he was at this time certain that at least in heart he was heterodox. The Pope, however, had only to do with his words and those of his followers, which was the point at issue at this present moment. Marcellus had not been condemned by any synod at the time that Basil wrote; his case had not been formally brought before Rome.

X. St. Basil, however, had calmed down before he joined in writing to the Westerns, and having appealed to their carefulness in such matters, he says that if they will only make it clear with whom they hold communion (and, according to Mr. Puller, 'they' must mean especially Damasus), they will be listened to, both from their being further removed from the scene of trouble, and 'by reason of the grace of God conferred on you for the oversight of those in trouble.' It is difficult to see how this latter sentence can imply anything less than a belief that Rome was in possession of a *charisma*—that is to say, something beyond a mere primacy of honour—in dealing with *Eastern prelates*. The West, of itself, could have no special 'grace' in this matter.² We can only explain the sentiment of St. Basil by that consciousness of a *charisma* attaching to the Apostolic See which made it the proper caretaker of the troubled East. He proceeds to say that if the multitude of them agree, as they did, so much the better. Their decrees would be beyond question even by these refractory Easterns.

¹ I know of nothing better calculated to help a diligent inquirer on this subject than Mr. Wilfrid Ward's second volume of the *Life of his father*. I think it right to mention that some expressions in this book, almost identical with those used by that excellent writer, were in MS. before I had read that *Life*.

² We could hardly apply such expressions to the Duke of Norfolk, who is the chosen type of Papal primacy in *Prim. SS. &c.* p. 229.

He then mentions first the case of Eustathius of Sebaste. He had, St. Basil says, been deprived of his bishopric,¹ but had found a way of recovering it. He went to Rome, and was restored by Liberius; and St. Basil says they neither know in the East what confession of faith he had put before the Pope, nor what conditions Liberius had laid down. All they know is, that 'he brought with him a letter' from Rome, 'reinstating him, and upon showing it he was restored to his position at the synod of Tyana.' No words can add to the force of this last sentence. If the restoration of a bishop by St. Damasus, on his own authority, is not an act of jurisdiction, what is? And the bishops at Tyana took it for granted that a Papal letter directing his restitution was to be obeyed, and St. Basil has not a word to say against their attitude in the matter. At the same time St. Basil is quite right in demanding, as he went on to demand, that they should now know on what conditions Eustathius was restored, not that they might criticise the conditions, but that they might know if he had fulfilled them. The right settlement² of the matter must come from Rome, said St. Basil, and letters needed to be written thence 'to the Churches.' He regrets that they could not hold council with the Westerns; but in spite of that he accepts their authoritative action as adequate. Only (he says) Eustathius has changed,³ and consequently his restoration does not appear to remain valid.

St. Basil then deals somewhat tenderly with the case of Apollinarius, and passes on to Paulinus. He has an important sentence about his ordination. He says, 'If there is anything to blame concerning his ordination, they [*i.e.* the Westerns] would say.' Now, except on the theory of Papal jurisdiction over the East, there must have been everything to blame in Paulinus' ordination; but St. Basil does not seem

¹ Viz. by the Council of Melitene. ² τὴν διόρθωσιν. *Ep.* cclxiii. 3.

³ μεταβληθείς. As a rule, the supremacy of the Holy See over the East was in those times exercised immediately only over the Patriarchal Sees, so to call them by anticipation. But this case of Eustathius of Sebaste is one of several instances in which the authority of Rome was exercised immediately over an Eastern bishop of lesser account, and it was on appeal from an Eastern synod, and the right of Rome thus to act was admitted both by the synod and by St. Basil.

to consider that he has any right to object to it. He considers that lies with the Westerns, *i.e.* with St. Damasus. 'What grieves us,' says Basil, 'is his [Paulinus'] sympathy with the dogmas of Marcellus, and admitting his followers indiscriminately to his communion.'¹ 'We ask for your careful oversight (*ἐπιμέλειαν*) of these things, which will be effectual if you will vouchsafe to write to all the Churches in the East, to the effect that those who deprave . . . are, if they amend, in communion (*εἶναι κοινωνοὺς*), but if they determine to persist in their novelties, you withdraw from them.' It would be difficult to put into plainer language the teaching that if people wish to be in communion with the Church, they must be in communion with Rome.

XI. St. Damasus at once, on receiving these letters from Basil, held a synod (at which Peter of Alexandria was present) and Apollinarius was condemned. Merenda gives most cogent reasons for believing that this was not later than A.D. 377. St. Basil's tone towards Apollinarius at once changed. Before this synod he had said² that Apollinarius was 'not exactly an enemy'—now in his letter to Bishop Eulogius and two other Egyptian bishops he speaks of him as outside the Church. The Roman synod had made the difference.

About this time St. Basil seems to have written to St. Peter of Alexandria to express his sorrow that the latter had spoken of Meletius and Eusebius of Samosata, in presence of Damasus, as though they were tinged with Arianism. Peter was probably alluding to the document which the two had signed, addressed to the Emperor Jovian, which led St. Jerome to speak of St. Meletius as having repudiated the *Homoousion*, and which probably influenced St. Athanasius in his cautious attitude towards St. Meletius. St. Damasus appears to have adopted the same cautious attitude, admitting Dorotheus, Meletius' agent, to full communion and calling him 'brother,' but not entering into close intercourse with Meletius. It must be remembered, as has been already remarked, that there was often a separation between a presbyter and his bishop, be-

¹ It will be noticed that Mr. Puller's version of this matter does not at all square with what St. Basil here says.

² *Ep.* cciv.

tween a bishop and his province, and again between a province and Rome, very far short of depriving them of the sacraments, but still reckoned as a serious calamity in those times. The separation would consist sometimes in the withdrawal of letters of communion, or of mutual access, or of conciliar intercourse, or other marks of that close association between bishops which was the normal state of things.¹ So Sozomen, speaking of the separation between East and West on the occasion of Flavian's ordination, says the Westerns sent 'the accustomed letters' to Paulinus, but 'to Flavian none.' It did not amount to constituting either side schismatics, although strong terms would be often used. But there was a chasm between putting a bishop outside the Church and interrupting the closer intercourse which was the ordinary result of being in communion with one another.

XII. Still, anyone in the East who wished to be completely on the right side would be anxious to know who was in close ecclesiastical intercourse with 'the Westerns,' by which was meant the Pope and the bishops in communion with him, and no one unless already in the meshes of heresy would wish to be thought out of communion with the West in the sense of lacking recognition by them as the lawful bishop of a see. Accordingly, we know from St. Jerome that at Antioch Paulinus, Vitalis, and Meletius all claimed to possess the seal of Rome's recognition.² Paulinus could say that he was on terms of closest intercourse, since, amongst other things, Rome had handed over Vitalis to be dealt with by him. Vitalis, having broken away from the faith, on returning to Antioch, still traded on the letters he had received from Damasus, when he had deceived the Pope by a profession of faith which was orthodox in terms, but which he understood in an heretical sense. Meletius was able to say that Rome, although not in closest intercourse with him, had never repudiated his communion.

There is no fair reason for distrusting St. Jerome's statement here. This assertion on the part of each of the three, repeated by their adherents (which shows the general value set on communion with Rome), caused him perplexity, and he wrote to Damasus to ask him with which of the three he was

¹ Cf. Merenda, sub anno 376, and De Smedt, *Diss.* 2, p. 70.

² *Ep.* xvi.

to communicate. He conceived that he was uttering the usual sentiments of a Catholic Christian, as indeed he was, when he said (in a previous letter) of the 'chair of Peter,' 'Upon that rock I know that the Church is built.' In this second letter he says, 'I meanwhile exclaim if anyone be joined to the chair of Peter, he is mine. Meletius, Vitalis, and Paulinus say that they adhere to you; if only one of them asserted this, I could believe him.' It is natural to suppose from this that all three claimed in express terms to be in communion 'with the chair of Peter.' The expression could not be an idiosyncrasy of St. Jerome's. He knew well the teaching of Rome; he had been eleven years in the Christian Church. All parties were eager to secure his adherence, as he himself says; his praise was already in all the Churches; he was more than the fit age to be a bishop.¹ No one seems to have told him that he should not speak of Damasus as occupying the chair of Peter; all they did was to claim each one to be in communion with that chair. That Damasus himself had all along claimed to sit in the chair of Peter, in more than one sense, is certain. The inscription which he wrote about the material chair of the Apostle, preserved at Rome, showed his teaching concerning the chair of Peter in the metaphorical sense.²

St. Jerome, it may be noticed, in his first letter speaks of the use of the term *Hypostasis*, by some in the singular, by others in the plural, in regard to the Holy Trinity—a controversy which had been laid to rest at the Council of Alexandria, either form of speech being allowed. But now, when Damasus had shown his special favour to Paulinus, the Eustathians, as the party of Paulinus was called, began to

¹ St. Jerome, it has been urged, a little before had spoken of himself as 'pene puer.' But it must be remembered that St. Jerome spoke of a person as 'adolescens' up to forty, and he was older than St. Athanasius was when, in the words of Canon Bright, 'he made himself felt as a power in the First General Council,' and older than the same saint when he was made Archbishop of Alexandria.

² Mr. Puller, speaking of the Popes pleading their succession from St. Peter as a religious basis for their jurisdiction, says: 'Whether Damasus did so plead it I cannot say' (p. 159). He may rest assured that Damasus was 'guilty' of pleading his succession to Peter throughout his reign.

draw the Meletians, in the absence of Meletius, towards themselves. Consequently St. Basil thought it right to revive the controversy, and to insist upon the importance of the difference between the two expressions. St. Gregory of Nazianzus on the other hand (at any rate later on) deprecated making this different way of speaking of the Godhead a 'dividing' question, since both parties meant the same.

It is clear from what St. Jerome says about some combining him as a heretic 'with the Westerns and the Egyptians'—i.e. with St. Damasus and St. Peter—that he was allowed by the former to use the Western expression of *one Hypostasis* in the Triune God (meaning substance) and that St. Damasus' answer led him to communicate with Paulinus, by whom he was shortly afterwards ordained priest.

XIII. And now a new chapter in the affairs of Antioch begins. The law of Gratian in favour of tolerance for almost all to practise their own religion had enabled Meletius to return to his flock at Antioch. He seems at once to have set to work to bring about some kind of peace between Paulinus and himself. All, however, that they could effect was to agree that when either of them died the survivor should succeed to the one throne. The churches remained as they were, the great majority in the hands of Arians, one in the possession of Paulinus, and one in the suburbs in the hands of Meletius. The flocks of the two bishops held communion with one another. Thus much seems to follow from the scene before Sapor later on. In that interview the question was, not as to whether the church owned by either Paulinus or Meletius should pass into the hands of the other, but who should have the use of the churches of the Arians, who by the law of Theodosius were now to be ejected. But we may trust Theodoret's account¹ so far, that the flocks were by that time already in the enjoyment of intercommunion. If it is to be trusted any further, it would establish that Paulinus refused to go further than the compact, which was certainly

¹ Theodoret's narrative is coloured by his partisanship for Flavian. It is not altogether reliable, certainly not as to Paulinus rejecting any overtures, which is contrary to the evidence of St. Gregory. But his witness on the other points is disinterested.

not made at that interview. Meletius, according to Theodoret, proposed joint action during their lifetime, but this Paulinus thought unadvisable or impossible. The reasonable supposition, then, is that the compact, which we know to have been made, was entered upon on St. Meletius' return from exile, and hence came the peace, to which St. Gregory alludes as having been established for at least some little while, and the disturbance of which the Council of Aquileia so strongly denounced, upon the ordination of Flavian.¹

Meletius at once set about the assembly of a council of his friends, one main object of which seems to have been to proclaim their adherence to the orthodox faith, that the Church might be seen to be thoroughly one in the doctrines which had been recently depraved, and on which they were themselves supposed by some to be in a state of hesitation. This great council (A.D. 379), at which the letters of Damasus were read—those from the first Roman synod (sent first to Illyrium and then to the Easterns) and those sent through Dorotheus from his second and third synods—accepted what was afterwards called in the Fifth Canon of Constantinople the 'Tome of the Westerns'—the dogmatic letter drawn up by the Roman synod under the presidency of Damasus, which proclaimed the 'one Deity and one substance' of the Holy Trinity.

Thus the entire West, the whole of Egypt, and the whole Eastern Church had embraced the decision of Damasus and the Roman Church concerning the Divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Meletius sent this important document to Rome, signed first by himself and next by Eusebius of Samosata, and it was duly registered in the archives. The entry in the 'Synodicus Libellus' seems an accurate summary of this eventful inauguration of the long-desired peace. 'Meletius, in his throne of Antioch, convened a divine and sacred synod, which confirmed the divine symbol, and anathematised Marcellus, Photinus, and Apollinarius, and he sent the exposition (of faith) to Damasus and the Western bishops.'²

¹ Cf. p. 253.

² *Syn. cap. lxxiv.* Tillemont labours hard to prove that the compact between Meletius and Paulinus had not been made at this time. Blondel, the

The theory that this all-important document was not sent formally and officially to Rome, but found its way thither accidentally and privately, is so contrary to the ways of that time, so utterly unreasonable in itself, that I should not mention it here, were it not that the author of 'The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome' has so emphatically adopted it.¹ The synod of Constantinople in 382, which is often confounded with that of 381, in its letter to Damasus, assumes that he had received official notice of the adoption at Antioch of this 'Tome of the Westerns.' The formal acceptance of Meletius' subscription as 'Bishop of Antioch' would not prove, as Mr. Puller thinks, that Rome accepted him as the only bishop. The letter of the Council of Aquileia proves the contrary.² Neither, if we are to trust Theodoret's account of the interview with Sapor at Antioch, did Meletius himself look upon himself as the only Bishop of Antioch, although he did consider that his flock had been entrusted to him by Almighty God. It was not an unknown thing for two bishops to rule in one city under anomalous circumstances by special arrangement. The Pope, St. Melchiades, gave permission to some of the Donatist bishops to retain their sees when they renounced their schism, so that there were temporarily, and by Papal dispensation, two bishops in one

Protestant, and Baronius and Valesius agree that it was. Tillemont's arguments have been met and, as it seems to me, fully answered by Merenda, who points out (in answer to Tillemont's assertion, that a compact so public could not have been broken by the Council of Constantinople) that the very point of St. Gregory's complaint was that a public compact had been broken, and in this he was followed by the older and more reverend bishops. For the disgraceful conduct of the bishops at that synod, which led to St. Gregory's resignation of the see, see pp. 252-3. The compact was disregarded at the council rather than by the council. The saints were opposed to its breach. Mr. Puller's argument about St. Meletius hinges so much on Tillemont's indefensible line on this point, and on a misunderstanding of the interview with Sapor (cf. *Prim. SS.* pp. 245-7) that it may be well to remind some readers that, in spite of Mr. Puller's attempt to rehabilitate Tillemont whole and entire, and his entitling him a 'Roman Catholic divine' more than once, the authority of Tillemont as a divine counts for nothing with us, and that his history has been submitted to 'corrections' on, so to speak, a thousand points. He was, as Merenda (who frequently exposes his mistakes) called him, 'doctissimus et piissimus,' but neither his learning nor his piety have saved him from serious errors.

¹ P. 242.

² Mansi, t. iii. p. 631.

city.¹ Dr. Döllinger's summary of the matter is perfectly accurate, viz.: 'The two Catholic parties at Antioch had mutually agreed, in 378, that the survivor of the two rival prelates should be acknowledged by all as sole bishop.'²

Thus far, then, the Church in the East could breathe again. The peace, of which St. Gregory spoke with real eloquence, was established. It only remained for those in Antioch to wait until one of the two bishops was taken to his reward for the perfect order of the Church to be restored. It would seem that in the same year the Church asked of the new emperor a civil confirmation of this peaceable, if abnormal, solution of the Antiochene trouble.³

¹ Until a fresh see was found.

² *Lehrbuch* (1843), vol. i. p. 91.

³ Mansi, t. iii. p. 623. 'Partium pactum poposcimus ut . . . permanerent' (cf. *infra*, p. 265, and the note on p. 267).

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOMAGE OF KINGS; OR GRATIAN'S RESCRIPT.

I. DURING the reign of St. Damasus the relation of the civil power to the Church entered upon a new phase. During the first three centuries the Church had developed her internal relations in doctrine and discipline wholly irrespective of the State; but so soon as Constantine adopted the Christian religion as professedly his own the Church had to adjust her administrative forms to the exigencies of her new position. She had, from time to time, to decide upon what was essentially under her own direction, and her own alone, and what could fall under the joint action of Church and State. But the complete adjustment of her relations to the civil power could only be accomplished when the occupant of the imperial throne was (what Constantine was not) a faithful subject of the Church. Until then, she acted on the principle enunciated by St. Gregory the Great, of obtaining what was practicable and accepting the unavoidable with the best grace possible. But from the first she laid down the principle that the typical relation of the two powers was not that of separation, leaving each to its own sphere of action, but of co-operation, in which the civil power should aid the spiritual, in certain external matters, whilst the spiritual announces the laws which must govern every man's exercise of whatever power he has received from God. The Church and the State have each of them received their powers from the One God; those powers, therefore, cannot properly come into conflict. But not only so; they must in the nature of things be meant to act in harmony and co-operate towards the one end of man, his final beati-

tude. Moreover, when their spheres seem to conflict, the Church is, necessarily, the judge of the limits which each is bound to observe. She has the custody of the laws which govern man in the attainment of his supernatural beatitude, and consequently wherever she may decide that a mode of action is necessary for that end, any exercise of civil authority that contravenes or hinders such action is not the use of a power given by God, but a transgression of the limits within which the civil order was meant to act. The classical metaphor which expresses the relation between the civil power and the Church is that of the body and the soul. The Church's action stands in relation to the civil order as the soul to the body. It was at this very time that this metaphor, which is commonly used in the theology of the Church to express this relationship, was first used by St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and it was at this time that the actual relationship between Church and State approached more nearly than at any previous period to its typical expression.

II. Constantine used the power which the gratitude of Christians awarded him, on the whole, with moderation,¹ but on coming under the influence of Eusebius he began to encroach on the prerogatives of the Church. Constantius altogether exceeded his powers in ecclesiastical matters, and Valens became a scourge to the Catholic Church. Valentinian I. had espoused the orthodox faith, and gave the celebrated reply to a request that he would call a council, saying that it was not for him as a layman to decide upon ecclesiastical matters. But his attitude towards the Church was nevertheless one of reserve; and it was in his son, Gratian, that the Church greeted her first thoroughly filial subject amongst the line of Roman emperors. The first to refuse to wear the robe of the Pontifex Maximus,² he was the first to throw himself into the arms of the Church and seek from her, in submission to her laws, the power which he believed could alone make up for his desertion of the ordinary methods of obtain-

¹ Cf. Döllinger's *Hist. of the Church*, Period II. ch. v. § 1.

² Tillemont and Fleury think this improbable, but cf. Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain au IVme Siècle* (3me partie, pp. 294-299, 1866) for a juster estimate of the incident.

ing his subjects' support. 'It was not the emperor, but the empire which on that day, by his lips, proclaimed itself Christian.'

III. Gratian was, indeed, over-persuaded by his first surroundings to a horrible deed of vengeance on the Count Theodosius; but he presently came under a new influence, which determined his line of action in future, and may be said to have been the instrument in Divine Providence for sparing the Church from the expiring efforts of Arianism. St. Ambrose had mounted the throne of Milan: a man specially qualified to deal with the new state of things, from his acquaintance, during his secular life, with the principles of the civil order, and from his unswerving devotion to the orthodox faith after his consecration to the episcopate. Had Milan been the see of Peter, St. Ambrose would have been the central figure of the age; but not even an Ambrose could make Milan the centre of the Church's unity. It was, however, his to direct the mind and action of the young emperor. The relationship between them was, according to Gratian himself, that of father and son; and the extant letter of Gratian to St. Ambrose is a beautiful example of filial respect in the spiritual order.

IV. Soon after Gratian's accession, his uncle Valens, lying wounded in a hut, was left by his attendants to burn to death, and Gratian succeeded to the entire empire. He took with him a copy of St. Ambrose's treatise on the true faith, as he repaired to Sirmium to enter upon his new honours; and at once proclaimed liberty of worship for all sects except those which were disturbers of the public peace, such as the Manicheans, or were coming into prominence, such as the Photinians and Eunomians. And in this he appears to have afterwards thought himself remiss, as though it became a Christian emperor to forbid any heretics to worship according to their ill-advised conscience. It must be carefully borne in mind, in this connection, that heresy had invariably itself used the civil power when possible, and with an amount and kind of persecution to which neither Gratian nor Theodosius ever stooped, and that for most of the heretics of that time the only persuasive force was that of legal compulsion; but

some time in the early part of his reign¹ Gratian appears to have adopted the measure which was of all others the best calculated to bring about the destruction of Arianism in the West. He decided upon making the exercise of spiritual jurisdiction in the West easier and more decisive by ordering that all bishops within the Western Patriarchate who rebelled against being tried by their brethren should be compelled, if cited, to appear at Rome; and it should be the duty of the Prefect of Italy to expedite their appearance there. In the case of 'the more distant parts' (such as Africa) the duty of trying the bishop lay with the metropolitan. We cannot say for certain that the earlier rescript contained more than this. It is not open to us to argue, for instance, with any certainty that the exact provision of the later rescript about the metropolitans was contained in the earlier. Our only data for deciding the contents of the earlier rescript (which is not extant) are the instances of its violation given by the synod of 378. These, it may be noticed, include Parma, which shows that the whole of Italy came under its purview, and also Africa. For both a bishop of Parma and a bishop in Africa are mentioned as having rebelled against the provisions of the earlier rescript. But the complaint against the African bishop appears to suppose a provision of the same kind as is contained for the regulation of matters 'in more distant parts' in the later rescript.²

Thus Gratian made the execution of episcopal judgments easier than it had hitherto been. He did not create a patriarchate, but found one in existence. The jurisdiction of Rome, in its actual exercise, differed in the East and in the West. In the East it was for the most part exercised only directly over the patriarchs; in the West it was exerted over individual bishops more directly. The Pope stood to the West in a double relation, that of ruler of the universal Church, and that of patriarch. And Gratian supplied facilities for the

¹ Possibly quite at the beginning—certainly so if this famous rescript is dated 378—for Florentius had been banished six years previously, in accordance, it would seem, with the earlier law. After six years 'repsit in civitatem' (cf. the letter of the Roman Council to Gratian).

² Consequently all that Mr. Puller says (*Prim. SS.* p. 157) about Gratian having enlarged the sphere of his earlier rescript in the later one falls to the ground.

exercise of the patriarchal jurisdiction in the West, which were in perfect conformity with the subordinate character of the State in ecclesiastical matters. His great object, according to the synod of 378 and his own rescript, was to keep the trials of bishops to the episcopate. And in doing this he simply supplied legal facilities for executing the judgments of the episcopate, which were arranged in accordance with rules already established by its own action, as, for instance, at Sardica or Nice.

Gratian's action was, we cannot doubt, inspired by St. Ambrose. The Bishop of Milan was himself interested in the new aid given to the administration of the Church. His own church came under the sway of the rescript, and, indeed, profited by it. The result was that after a few years the West was able, in the words (probably) of St. Ambrose, to report that there were not more than two Arian bishops left.¹

V. Now, this civil aid granted to the judgments of the Holy See was considered by Newton, when he dipped into theology (*sutor ultra crepidam*), to be the starting-point of Papal jurisdiction. Merenda thinks it worth while to notice Newton's theory, but does not think it worth while doing more than notice it. Mr. Puller, however, has made it part of the backbone of his argument against the divine origin of the jurisdiction of the Holy See, 'Was I not right in saying that the pontificate of Damasus forms a new point of departure in regard to *all matters connected with the growth of Papal jurisdiction?*'² He compares the effect of Gratian's rescript in 378 with the mode of procedure sanctioned by the Council of Sardica, and considers that it was an enlargement upon the latter without any canonical basis. He thinks that 'by one stroke of his pen the Emperor Gratian created, so far as the civil power could create, a patriarchal jurisdiction over the whole Western empire, and vested it in the Bishop of Rome,'³ and that this was the only source of the Pope's patriarchal jurisdiction over Gaul, Britain, Spain, and Africa.

¹ During the winters of 378–381 Gratian was at Milan in closest intercourse with St. Ambrose, his spiritual guide. The rescript of Gratian must, as has been shown, be assigned to 380.

² *Primitive Saints*, &c. p. 159.

³ P. 157.

Again and again he insists upon the paradox that the only patriarchal jurisdiction possessed by the Pope over the West came to him from the State, *i.e.* from this rescript—‘as State-made Patriarch of the West he had a jurisdiction derived from the emperor’¹—‘it was in the time of Damasus that the State made the Pope Patriarch of the West.’²

Now (i.), if this was the case, where was the protest against such a violation of canon law? What had become of all that enormous tenacity of the saints to the spiritual and independent character of the kingdom of God? For saints there were most certainly; indeed, it is impossible to suppose that St. Ambrose himself was not a party to this legislation; whilst the bishops of the Roman synod call the earlier rescript of Gratian that ‘sentence unquestionably most excellent and worthy of religious princes.’³ Is it to be supposed that the bishops of that synod, who were themselves concerned, would thus go out of their way to dignify with the title of ‘excellent’ a detestable act of Erastianism which deprived them of their own liberty? For the synodical letter speaks of the Bishop of Parma as one who had evaded the earlier rescript; and Parma was outside what Mr. Puller considers the area of the suburbicarian churches, in which alone he thinks the Bishop of Rome had a ‘full and commanding metropolitan jurisdiction’ (p. 182). This bishop had been properly deposed at Rome by the spiritual power (*‘dejectus iudicio nostro’*), and ought therefore (they say) to have come under the ruling of the rescript to which they allude. In other words, their spiritual sentence ought to have had its civil effect. He ought no longer to hold his church, as they say he does, and the Bishop of Pozzuoli, although deposed, had crept back into the city; whereas there again the spiritual sentence ought to have had its civil effect. The imperial official, the prefect, ought to have carried it out. Such instances show that according to that synod all that Gratian’s rescript was meant to effect was the civil enforcement of spiritual judgments over an area in which those judgments ‘ran’ by ecclesiastical custom.

But (ii.), further, Mr. Puller relies on a passage in the

¹ P. 182.

Ibid.

Præclara ista plane et religiosis principibus digna sententia.

synodical letter which he misinterprets. He thinks that ‘during the pontificate of Damasus the Emperor Gratian conferred on the Pope a very large measure of jurisdiction over the bishops of the whole Western Empire,’ and that ‘this jurisdiction received from the emperor had no canonical basis,’ and this theory he bases on a comparison of the rescript of the emperor with the letter of the Roman synod. The emperor, he says, was asked by the Roman synod ‘that contumacious bishops should be compelled by the prefect of the prætorium of Italy, or else by the vicarius of the city of Rome, to come to Rome to be tried. *This mention of the officials who were to coerce the refractory prelates limits the scope of the application of the enactment for which the synod petitioned to Italy and Illyricum.*’ The emperor in his rescript brings in the prefect of the prætorium of Gaul and the proconsuls of Africa and Spain, and thus *extends the system of appeals* which he is establishing to the whole of the Western Empire, to Gaul, Britain, Spain and Africa.’¹

Now a careful attention to the words of the Roman synod’s letter will show that it is not the case that the mention of the officials limits the scope of the synod’s petition to Italy and Illyricum.

The letter is addressed to Gratian and Valentinian alone, as being so entirely concerned with Western affairs.² It begins with saying that it redounds to their honour and piety that when the bishops ‘almost innumerable from the various (*diffusis*) parts of Italy had gathered together to the sublime sanctuary of the Apostolic See,³ and were considering what should be asked of the emperors on behalf of the state of the Churches, they could find nothing better to ask than what the imperial care and foresight had [already] spontaneously conferred upon them.’

They then say that the emperors, full of the Divine Spirit

¹ P. 156. The italics are mine.

² It is a mistake to suppose that the omission of Theodosius’ name shows that this letter was written before his accession to the throne. There are several instances in the Theodosian Code in which the name of this or that living emperor is omitted. And here there is a reason for the omission, although it would not have been strange if it had been added.

³ Mr. Puller omits these words.

and having the patronage of the Apostles [Peter and Paul] in their high estate, decided—for the restoration of the body of the Church, which the fury of Ursinus, in his endeavour to snatch a dignity which was not his due [*i.e.* the chair of Peter] had divided in twain—that, the author of the mischief having been condemned and the rest whom he had associated with himself having been separated from him, 'the Bishop of Rome should have the trial of the rest of the bishops of the Churches, so that the Pontiff of religion should judge concerning religion together with his partners and [thus] no injury would be done to the episcopate, if a bishop were not easily subjected to the decision of a secular judge, as might often happen [before].'

After enlarging on the superiority of the episcopal judgments, they say that they would end here were it not that Ursinus and his followers are evading the imperial sentence and wrongly remaining in their Churches, and conspiring in a rash and profane contempt, so as not to 'acquiesce in the judgment of the Bishop of Rome.' They were managing by bribes and threats of death [to the civil officials] to hold their bishoprics. 'Therefore we ask not for a new imperial decree, but the confirmation of the old.' They then instance the case of the Bishop of Parma, who, although deposed by an episcopal sentence, 'shamelessly holds his Church.' And they mention also Florentius of Pozzuoli, likewise condemned, who 'would have deserved a similar rescript.' They then mention the case of an African bishop who had evaded the rescript, refusing to have his cause tried before bishops ('*apud episcopos*'). And further, the African Donatists were creating disturbance through one Claudianus, destined for bishop in the city of Rome. In spite of the imperial rescript, he too remains in Rome. They then say that the Jew Isaac went so far (alluding, it would seem, to what took place some years before, as an example) as to 'attack the head of our holy brother Damasus with this deceitful aim, viz. that whilst he is on trial, who had been constituted judge over all, there might be no one to pass judgment on the lapsed, or at any rate on those who had seized on the episcopate.' But Damasus' innocence has been proved, so there is an end of that matter. 'Now, therefore, we ask that your goodness would deign to order that whoever

shall have been condemned and shall have determined unjustly to retain his Church, or when summoned by an episcopal judgment shall have decided not to present himself, may be summoned to Rome by the illustrious prefects of the prætorium of your Italy, or by the vicar.'

Thus far, it is true, the petition of the synod seems to limit the contemplated action of the rescript to Italy and Illyricum. But the petition does not end here. For the synod proceeds to say: 'Or if a question of this kind shall have arisen *in the more distant parts*' (clearly such as are not contained within the above limits), 'the trial may be held before the metropolitan for local decision (*per locorum judicia*), or if it is the metropolitan himself, he should be ordered to repair, of necessity, without further process, to Rome, or to judges appointed by the Bishop of Rome. And if the metropolitan or any other bishop shall be suspected, it should be allowed him to appeal either to Rome, or at any rate a council of neighbouring bishops.' It is clear that they are acting on the provisions of the Sardican (or Nicene) canons. Now, who was to deal in a civil capacity with these bishops in 'more distant parts'? They were obviously beyond the reach of the prefect of the Prætorium of Italy or the Vicar of Rome. The synod did not enter into that question, possibly because it was obvious who were the officials that would manage the matter in these distant parts, or still more probably because it was not their business to say. The emperor in his rescript does, naturally, mention the officials who would enforce the episcopal sentence or the transference of *venue* in these more distant parts, and *thus he covers the ground occupied by the petition of the synod*. Otherwise the rescript would have fallen short of the synodical request. They mention the officials who would necessarily superintend the cases which they specify as actually pressing; it was unnecessary or beyond their competency to mention the others, but their request goes beyond the jurisdiction of these officials into 'more distant parts.' It is therefore not the case that Gratian was 'extending the system of appeals,' as Mr. Puller puts it; he was merely facilitating the mode of procedure which had already commended itself to the Church. 'The

more distant parts' are but covered by his rescript, as they had pleaded in their letter.

Nor is it correct to say or suggest that there is nothing in the correspondence to show that the bishops were resting their case on higher and strictly Papal grounds. The opening of the synod's letter, which speaks of the bishops having gathered together from various parts of Italy¹ 'to the sublime sanctuary of the Apostolic See,' is suggestive; and they speak of Damasus, compared with other bishops, as being 'equal in office,² but he excels in the prerogative of the Apostolic See.'

And if we go outside the actual letter, as we have a right to do in search of the context, we know that St. Ambrose, probably the virtual author of the rescript,³ considered that Damasus sat in the chair of Peter,⁴ and he held Peter to be the rock in Matt. xvi.,⁵ and taught that from the Church of Rome 'the rights of venerable communion flow to all.'⁶

Mr. Puller says, 'It sometimes seems to me that ecclesiastical historians have hardly done justice to the immense importance of this act of imperial legislation.' But two or three words slipped into an imperial rescript were at the best a slender basis whereon to rest so enormous a superstructure as the patriarchal jurisdiction of Rome over the West. And at least it should be absolutely certain that even this basis is sound; whereas it seems quite certain that it is itself without foundation, for the words in Gratian's rescript, appealed to by Mr. Puller, cover no more ground than did the actual petition of the Roman synod.

¹ 'Ex diffusis Italiae partibus.' Mr. Puller (p. 156, note 1) has no right to limit this to the suburbicarian churches. I do not know why he puts asterisks in place of the words 'sublime sanctuary of the Apostolic See.'

² I.e. what we should call order, as distinguished from jurisdiction, his 'prerogative' embracing the latter.

³ It was written during the period when the emperor spent the winter with St. Ambrose at Milan.

⁴ 'Peter the Apostle, who was Bishop of the Roman Church' (*De Sacram.* lib. i. § 5).

⁵ Cf. his hymn *Ipsa Petra canente*.

⁶ Mansi, t. iii. p. 622.

CHAPTER XVI.

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

§ I.—Theodosius and the Imperial City.

I. IN January 379 Gratian decided upon a step which both reflected the greatest credit upon himself and was fraught with far-reaching consequences to the fortunes of the Church. After the death of his father by Gratian's order, Theodosius the son had retired into private life. Gratian drew him forth by the magnanimous offer of half his empire, which, as De Broglie says,¹ Theodosius first refused with modesty and then accepted with simplicity. History presents few more touching pictures than that of these two young men, of rare virtue, the one forgiven, and the other forgiving, entering upon the government of the empire with devout attachment to the Christian faith. For during his winter's stay at Thessalonica Theodosius, who was by parentage, so to speak, an orthodox Christian,² but not yet actually enrolled in the Christian army, fell ill of fever, and in fear of death called upon St. Ascholius, Bishop of Thessalonica, to baptise him, having previously ascertained that the bishop had never given in to the Arian heresy. He arose from his sick bed to exercise the virtue of divine faith which he had received through the waters of regeneration. As he surveyed his imperial charge a huge scene of religious conflict presented itself to his sight. For nearly half a century Constantinople had been under the influence of heretical bishops, and the scene of the most dis-

¹ Cf. the whole account in Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain au IVme Siècle*, 3me partie, p. 357 seq. 1866.

² 'ἄνωθεν μὲν ἐκ προγόνων Χριστιανὸς ὑπάρχων, καὶ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ πίστεϊ προσκείμενος (Soc. v. 6).

graceful turmoils. Each heresy, as it emerged, found its home there, and the Catholic faith had wellnigh disappeared when Gregory left Nazianzus to do his best to revive it in this New Rome, as they delighted to call it.

II. Theodosius determined at once to strike a blow for the true faith. But how was he to define that faith? The Nicene Creed was the very subject of contention, and each formula that was promulgated by way of explanation had been twisted into a new heresy. He decided to begin by insisting on the observance of the rule of faith itself. He would not—as a devout layman he could not—issue any dogmatic definition, but he could insist on the norm of religious truth being observed, such a rule as no Christian could dispute, and as no Christian did dispute *quâ* the rule. In regard to the heresy that was creating fresh confusion at Constantinople, Damasus and the Roman synod had issued a clear decision, and it was accepted at Alexandria by the successor of St. Athanasius. What could be better calculated to reduce to unity the scattered forces of religion than to recall the Easterns to the true centre of teaching? He therefore ordered that the *religion delivered to the Church of Rome by the Apostle Peter*, as expounded by the Pontiff Damasus and by the present Bishop of Alexandria, should be preached by all Catholics. ‘We will that all people who are governed by our clemency should practise the same religion as the divine Apostle Peter delivered to the Romans, as the religion proclaimed by him up to this time declares it; and which it is clear the Pontiff Damasus follows, and Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic sanctity—that is, &c. Those who follow this law we order to take the name of Catholic Christians.’¹

Now, nowhere do we discover a single note of surprise at the East being thus called upon to practise ‘the religion of the Romans.’ In fact the evidence afforded by the incidental notice of the Apostle Peter is of the most irrefragable nature, to the effect that the Christian world, East and West, had

¹ ‘Cunctos populos quos clementiæ nostræ regit temperamentum in tali volumus religione versari quam divinum Petrum Apostolum tradidisse religio usque nunc ab ipso insinuata declarat.’

learnt to look to the *See of Peter* as the central authority on matters of faith. The religion practised by the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and now held by the chosen successor of St. Athanasius, such was the form of faith delivered from the throne of the imperial neophyte to the Eastern world. It is clear that Theodosius draws a distinction between Damasus and Peter of Alexandria of a vital character. Damasus is the pontiff, Peter the bishop; Damasus is mentioned simply as the pontiff, Peter as a man of apostolic sanctity, as though some reason needed to be given for tacking on his name to that of the pontiff. His adherence to the religion delivered to the Romans by the Apostle Peter was worth mentioning; it suggested what Theodosius required of his own East, viz. a similar adherence. Rome, then, is indicated as the centre; Rome in its connection with the Apostle Peter, and Rome as the seat of the Pontiff of the Christian religion.¹

Did Constantinople resent such a description of the Christian religion? Was it an idiosyncrasy of the young emperor’s?

It is clear that it was, at any rate, the teaching of St. Ascholius of Thessalonica, whose religious pupil the emperor had become, and Constantinople was unable to say that the faith of Old Rome was not the norm for the faith of New Rome. She received her new emperor with open arms, so St. Gregory tells us.² There were soon to be plenty in that city prepared to disagree in fact with Rome, and some, as we shall see, in theory; but not the saints or the theologians of the East. Prosper of Aquitaine expressed the conviction of the day as he sang:

Sedes Roma Petri quæ pastoralis honoris
Facta caput mundo.³

III. The state of things in Constantinople, whither the new emperor now prepared to go, was as follows. St. Gregory, whom the Church specially dignified with the name of ‘the

¹ Of course the word ‘pontiff’ could be used of any bishop, but it is here the distinction of terms that is to be noted occurring in a legal document.

² ‘Cupidus accessit ad sibi cupidissimos’ (*Carmen de Vita sua*, 1305).

³ I.e. ‘Rome the See of Peter, which has been made to the whole world the head of the pastoral office.’

theologian,' had stirred the city by his eloquent preaching of the true faith, seconded by his great holiness. You might see St. Jerome sitting an eager listener at his expositions of the faith, whilst St. Gregory made use of his unrivalled knowledge of the text of Holy Scripture. But also you might see a figure wrapped in the mantle of the philosopher, and leaving the oratory with the classical staff and his hair in philosophical disorder, full, to all appearance, of enthusiasm for the eloquent bishop as he refuted the Arian, the Eunomian, or the Macedonian. Warned against this man, whose name was Maximus, Gregory nevertheless took him into his confidence, and even alluded to him in the way of defence in one of his public orations. But presently Maximus threw off the mask, and after having intrigued with the enemies of Gregory, induced some Egyptian bishops with (unhappily) the consent of Peter of Alexandria, to consecrate him to the see of Constantinople. Gregory had thus rendered himself ridiculous in his support of Maximus, and in the bitterness of his disappointment retired. On his reappearance to bid a final farewell, the people of Constantinople, enraged at the appointment of Maximus, suddenly settled that the only remedy was to make Gregory himself their bishop. The scene that ensued seems to have baffled description—Gregory resisting, men throwing themselves on his person and forcing him into the episcopal chair, and women crying out, 'If you leave us, you take away with you the Holy Trinity'¹—i.e. the true faith. Gregory consented on condition that his election obtained conciliar sanction, and at once retired a little way into the country. Maximus repaired to Thessalonica to gain the ear of the emperor,² from whom he met with an unfavourable reception, and forthwith he turned to Alexandria, where he was also coldly received by Peter.

IV. Such was the state of things when Theodosius approached Constantinople. He seems already to have formed the idea of an Eastern council, and to have consulted St. Damasus in regard to it, through Ascholius, who appears, from an incidental expression in Damasus' reply, to have

¹ συνεβαλεῖς γὰρ, εἶπε, παντὶ Τριάδα (*Carmen de Vita sua*, 1100).

² Cf. Broglie, *loc. cit.* p. 404.

been for some time past in the position of Papal vicar at Thessalonica.¹ The Pope replied to Ascholius in favour of a council, and condemned the election of Maximus. The letter reads like a private one, so much so that it has been doubted whether it is genuine; but the verdict of scholars is in favour of its genuineness, and that being so, it seems perfectly clear that the council had the approval of the Pope. It was, however, so far merely an Eastern assembly—in no sense an œcumenical gathering.

Theodosius approved of the nomination of Gregory, and the settlement of the whole matter of the bishopric was handed over to the council; but meanwhile the emperor went a step further in the direction of maintaining the true faith. In January, 381, appeared a short edict forbidding all heretics to assemble for divine worship. He also went a step further in defining a heretic. He had bidden all Catholics to follow the religion taught by the Pontiff Damasus, and, as a matter of fact, by Peter of Alexandria, and had spoken of the consubstantiality of the Holy Trinity as part of that faith; he now specified the teaching which obtained at Rome concerning the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit.² Theodoret, in describing the effect of this decree, says that the churches were now to be given to those who held 'the faith of Damasus.'³

Thus the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son was at once a matter of faith, and now also a matter of civil obligation for Catholics, before the council met. The French bishops, in their letter to Innocent X. in the seventeenth century, admitted that the anathemas of Damasus were irrevocable before the Council of Constantinople; and the law of January 381 shows that Theodosius did not conceive of these bishops meeting to discuss an open question.

¹ 'Hoc est quod *sæpe* dilectionem vestram commonui, ne fieret aliquid inconsiderate' (*Ep. v.*). For the opposite view maintained by Mr. Puller, relying on the words of Innocent I. to Anysius and Rufus, cf. *Prim. SS.* p. 162. The Pope's words only show when the emperor gave civil sanction to the arrangement, not when Damasus made it.

² Cf. Theod. *De Religione Decreta*, lib. xvi. tit. v. 6; Migne, *Patr. Lat.* vol. xiii.

³ *Hist. Eccles.* v. 3.

And St. Gregory treated the question as closed in his preaching to the people, to the chagrin of some, friends of Macedonius, but with the consciousness that they were standing alone in the Catholic Church.

§ II.—*The Council.*

I. Meletius was already on the scene to institute St. Gregory into the bishopric.¹ We may picture to ourselves the meeting of St. Jerome and St. Meletius, the uniform magnanimity of the latter and the enthusiasm of the former for his newly acquired master, St. Gregory, binding the two together. There were many saints at this Eastern council, which began so well and ended so unhappily. St. Basil's brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, joined the little throng gathered round the eloquent and mortified bishop of the same name, the choice friend of St. Basil, who had passed from his labours on earth to his work of intercession in heaven. Meletius was the hero of the hour; he had already synodically expressed his agreement with the 'Tome of the Westerns';² his people were in the enjoyment of intercommunion with the disciples of Paulinus;³ he had arranged with the latter that whoever survived the other should be the sole Bishop of Antioch.⁴ There were, for the present, two Bishops of Antioch, but that had been recognised by 'the West,'⁵ and consequently he came as the symbol of what the young emperor hoped, and the saintlier souls in the East sighed after—continued peace with the West⁶ and the inauguration of peace amongst themselves in the East.

The first business of the council was concerned with the bishopric of Constantinople itself. Maximus had been condemned by Damasus in a private letter to Ascholius meant for the emperor's ear. He condemned his appointment to Constantinople on the grounds that it was done by externs, the ceremony performed at an unusual hour, without consul-

¹ Socr. *H. E.* v. 8.

² Antiochene Synod, 379.

³ Theodoret. *H. E.* v. 3.

⁴ Greg. Naz. *Carm. de Vitâ suâ.*

⁵ *Ep. Concil. Aquil.* 5. Cf. Dam. *Ep.* v.

⁶ Letter of the Italian bishops to the Easterns (381), 'dudum.' Mansi, t. iii. 623.

tation of the clergy and people, and that the very appearance of Maximus was, according to accounts, that of a philosopher rather than of a Christian.¹ At the same time there were some difficulties about the election of St. Gregory, which probably account for the matter being reopened later on, and for the election of Maximus finding favour for a while, in spite of his character, with the law-abiding West² before they had full information on the subject.

The council was presided over, in the natural course of events, by St. Meletius. There were no Papal legates, for the council had not been convoked as an œcumenical assembly. Alexandria was not yet represented; it was in mourning round the death-bed of its patriarch, the saintly Peter. The Bishop of Antioch was, therefore, the natural president, according to ecclesiastical custom, Antioch being the third of the greater sees of Christendom, the third see of Peter. The ordination of Maximus was investigated and repudiated, and so far the East was placing itself in harmony with the West—so far as the judgment of the latter was known. St. Damasus had urged St. Ascholius to use his influence with Theodosius previous to his leaving Thessalonica for the appointment of some bishop against whose election there could be no objection from a canonical point of view.³ Whether this could be said as to St. Gregory's election opinions may differ. He had been consecrated by St. Basil Bishop of Sasima, and had acted as Bishop of Nazianzus out of affection to his father's memory. However this might be thought to affect the canonicity of his election (translation from see to see being the great flaw in Eastern elections and the source of some of its greatest troubles), his election was confirmed, and it seems as though his first act was to intercede for the Egyptian consecrators of Maximus. They were spared the usual censure.

II. Difficult as it is to settle the order of transactions in

¹ Damasi, *Ep.* v.

² If this be the true account of the matter there would be nothing unnatural in a council in the West treating of the subject, on which Damasus would not naturally consider the opinion given by him in his letter to Ascholius as irrefragable.

³ Dam. *Ep.* v.

this council, of which we do not possess the Acts, it seems almost certain that they must have at once proceeded to consider the dogmatic question,¹ and were probably interrupted in their work of proposed pacification by an event which altered the whole course of events for some years to come. Meletius died—not, as Canon Bright expresses it, ‘a saint outside the communion of Rome,’² but a saint of chequered career, who, originally recognised amongst the bishops of the East by the Pope Liberius, of mild rather than unpromising nature, yet a magnificent confessor of the faith as against the Arian Euzoius, having thrice suffered exile, was for a while distrusted at Rome, but after publicly signing the ‘Tome of the Westerns,’ was welcomed by Rome as Bishop of Antioch in her archives. Some while ago he had made the advances to Paulinus which led to a formal compact as to their successor, and he had now endeared all hearts to himself at Constantinople. He ended his life with inducting into the see of Constantinople her first orthodox bishop for more than forty years. He had perhaps also agreed to the principle embodied in the so-called fifth canon of the council, that all at Antioch should be acknowledged as orthodox who, whether they spoke of one or three Hypostaseis, acknowledged the oneness of the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.³

III. The death of Meletius was an event which not only plunged the city of Constantinople into a profound gloom, and was felt throughout the East, but it introduced a complication into the subject of the Antiochene disputes. After a funeral, in which the procession of bishops and clergy and others, with their lighted tapers in hand, is described as illuminating the city, and after the body of the saint had left to enter, on its way to Antioch, cities into which, in accordance with the sentiment of the time, no corpse had been allowed to be borne,

¹ De Broglie seems to think that the dogmatic question was not dealt with at all till later on, which is, of course, possible. But I hope to show that it is more probable that the course of events was as I have described it.

² *Hist. of the Church*, p. 172.

³ Cf. Canon v. This was a reversal of the judgment of St. Basil on the subject. The actual canon was probably drawn up at a later council in 382.

the bishops met to consider the question of St. Meletius' successor. It was a question which ought never to have been submitted at all.¹ Its proposal can only be accounted for by the state of the Eastern episcopate at that moment. The Emperor Valens had scattered bishops over the East to support the cause of Arianism, who were quite unfit for the sacred office, and many of these had ‘conformed’ upon the edict of Theodosius, without a religious conviction of any kind.² Their main sentiment was a deep-seated hatred of the West, which had supported the orthodox faith. They were violently Eastern, because they were but faintly orthodox. These men, St. Gregory tells us, had come all sunburnt from the plough, or from the smith's anvil, or the office of the petty scribe, or the baker's shop, or from handling the oar, or from the rank and file of the army.

A great deal is sometimes said about the authority of the Second Council and the galaxy of saints that are supposed to have promulgated the third canon, and to have proposed a successor to St. Meletius. St. Leo, with his provoking accuracy, describes the men who did this part of the business as ‘certain bishops.’ St. Gregory considered them the offscouring of the episcopal body, and the very dregs of the Christian community. He distinctly states, as Tillemont points out, referring to St. Gregory's account of the council, that there were men loaded with gold who set to work to corrupt the bishops.³ As long as Meletius lived, the question of the compact which he had made did not press, and they would probably have considered it too dishonourable to provide for the perpetuation of the state of strife which St. Meletius plumed himself on having brought to a peaceful issue with the consent of the West. But now came the difficulty; that some of these bishops would have to be under Paulinus, whilst with others there was the still greater difficulty that they would be giving in to the West. Behind Paulinus they saw the Pope, and the Pope was to these abandoned men the symbol

¹ Tillemont says of this that ‘some enemies of peace proposed in the council a thing of which they ought never to have dreamt’ (*St. Greg. de Naz. art. lxxi. p. 475*).

Cf. Tillemont, *St. Greg. de Naz. art. lviii. p. 441. Paris, 1703.*

³ *Loc. cit.*

of the *Homoousion*. They could not deny the truth of the latter nor the rights of the former. They never in the whole strife objected that Lucifer had offended against the canonical rights of the East in consecrating a Bishop of Antioch. Neither St. Basil, nor St. Gregory, nor even these quarrelsome men, seem ever to have suggested that obvious flaw, as it must have been considered, *unless* the Papal regime was, in principle, acknowledged throughout the East. St. Basil distinctly refused, *totidem verbis*, to decide against the validity of the consecration. St. Gregory assumed its validity throughout. A fact such as this is of vital import in determining the general current of Eastern thought as to the canonical relationship of the West to the East. But these half-Christian bishops (as St. Gregory calls them), at Constantinople, whilst they could not plead a lack of canonical validity in Paulinus' consecration, did demur to the shadow of Western patronage which lay on the rights of Paulinus. They had learnt to cherish a certain unchristian bitterness against the West, whilst others were influenced (to a less extent) in the same direction because the West had refused them the particular mode of support which under the leadership of St. Basil they had claimed in their struggle against Valens. Tillemont attributes their malignant spirit to this, and also to the spirit of 'pride, pique, and jealousy.'¹

St. Gregory indignantly repudiated the dishonourable course on which they were embarking. He rose above their 'low reasons,' as Tillemont calls them—'reasons,' he adds, 'unworthy of a bishop. He sought only the will of God, the honour of the Church, and the good of souls.'² He deprecated their miserable attempt to turn the question of religion into a question of astronomy. He urged them, instead of advancing the miserable plea that things should go from the East, where Christ was born, to the West, and not *vice versa*, to think more of our Lord as the first-fruits of the whole human race, and to allow themselves 'to be a little conquered.'³

'This,' as Canon Bright remarks, 'was clearly the right course.'⁴ St. Gregory said that it was pardonable in them

¹ *Loc. cit.* p. 476.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Carm. de Vitâ suâ*, 1690 and 1653.

⁴ *Hist. of the Church*, p. 173.

'in some measure to vex' the West during Meletius' lifetime, and when they were uncertain how he would be received (as was the case before the peace was made), being annoyed—defenders, as they say, of the laws²—but now he considered it wanton and inexcusable. Paulinus (he urged) could not live long, and so he entreated this 'mob of youngsters,'³ to rise above this false patriotism and act for the peace of the Church. He told them plainly that he might resign 'his throne, but not his opinion.'

But 'party feelings proved too strong for this good counsel.'⁴

Flavian, who, it is to be feared, had promised not to accept the bishopric, was elected. He had been St. Meletius' right-hand man, and even if he had not definitely agreed to the compact, it was a sad sight to see one who had been so intimate with Meletius entering upon his new charge by a violation of that saint's most cherished hope. It was a sure renewal of the breach with the West which St. Meletius had so carefully closed, and it was a deliberate prolongation of strife at the very heart of the East.

IV. St. Gregory's disappointment may be imagined rather than described. His high soul, eager for the peace of the Church, revolted from the rude and contemptuous attitude of the uneducated and undisciplined band of young bishops who secured a sufficient majority to carry the dishonourable proposal. He no longer attended the sessions regularly, and since they were held in the episcopal palace, he soon removed

¹ *Carm. de Vitâ suâ*, 1614.

² Mr. Puller's translation (*Prim. SS.* p. 251), 'these self-styled defenders of the canons,' is not a correct rendering of the original. There is no irony in his words.

³ *Carm. de Vitâ suâ*, 1636.

⁴ *Canons of the First Four Councils*, by Canon Bright, 1892, p. 110. Mr. Puller's account of this deplorable incident is distressingly apologetic and it must be added, inaccurate. He calls it the action of the Œcumenical Council, and he says: 'It is, I think, allowable to express regret that the bishops at Constantinople did not ratify the compact in the interests of peace. What they actually did was canonically legitimate, but it may be doubted whether it was wise or charitable' (p. 248). St. Gregory thought it morally wrong. De Broglie thinks that the influence of this saint had waned since the Maximus affair. This is possible; but the reasons St. Gregory gives are sufficient. Tillemont's piety here fortunately gets the better of his Gallicanism.

to another dwelling. The council was thus without a regular head, and the friends of St. Gregory were withdrawing from participation; it was, in fact, nothing in itself but a small Eastern synod.

What was the young emperor doing all this while? In the spirit of a Christian ruler he held himself aloof from the strife, but he sent for his spiritual father, St. Ascholius, from Thessalonica, who, as belonging to the Western Patriarchate, had not attended the council.¹

At the same time a new element of disturbance entered upon the scene. The Egyptians arrived with their new metropolitan (or patriarch) Timothy. Tillemont remarks that they had been delayed² by the necessity of arranging matters on the accession of Timothy.

The Egyptians felt themselves compromised by the affair of Maximus, and that they had been pardoned rather than justified—a humiliation which they owed to Gregory.³ To add to the complication, the bishops who came at Theodosius' wish from Illyricum brought with them what St. Gregory calls a sharp 'Western breeze.'⁴ They must have felt a somewhat disdainful compassion for the intricate quarrels of the East, compared with their own steady simplicity of faith. They were specially scandalised at the constant translation from see to see in the East, and neither they nor Timothy of Alexandria approved of Gregory's elevation to the see of Constantinople. They looked upon the argument that he had never gone to his original see, and had only administered his father's see provisionally, as insufficient; and the whole council became a fresh scene of confusion. Gregory forthwith announced his resignation, which was received with a respectful silence. The fact was that he had proved too uncompromising in his preaching to please those who originally hailed his promotion, and too mortified in his life for the fashionable capital of the East; consequently there was no

¹ This is the simplest solution of the difficulties raised in one direction by Papebroch, May 9, *Acta Sanctorum*, and in another by Tillemont, *St. Greg. de Naz.*, note 43, p. 717.

² *Loc. cit.* St. Gregory says: ἐξαπίνης κεκλημένοι, but probably means that they came suddenly, having been originally invited.

³ De Broglie, *loc. cit.* p. 435.

⁴ *Carm. de Vita sud.*, 1802.

section sufficiently enthusiastic in his favour to counter-balance the displeasure of Alexandria and the Egyptians. The Egyptians were in accord with St. Gregory in deprecating the selection of Flavian for Antioch, but this was not sufficient to counteract their dislike to his intrusion into the see of Constantinople in place of Maximus, for whom they had no respect from a moral point of view, but whose election they considered canonically valid.

St. Gregory, therefore, resigned in the interests of peace, and delivered a farewell address, which for theological exactness combined with pathetic eloquence has hardly its equal in Christian literature. He was a man not born to rule such elements of discord as then met in the Byzantine capital; but for holiness, and orthodoxy, and polished eloquence he had hardly a peer in that century. He made his will in the presence of several bishops, leaving what he had to the poor of Nazianzus, whither he now retraced his steps. On his way he passed by Cæsarea, the scene of his beloved Basil's labours, and after delivering a panegyric there on his brother saint, retired to his father's city of Nazianzus.¹

V. The council had now lost its two greatest saints—Meletius and Gregory, and with St. Gregory several of his friends appear to have more or less withdrawn themselves. We may safely reckon amongst these St. Gregory of Nyssa and Helladius, and the little throng that had gathered round their master, the 'Theologian,' as he was called.

It was necessary to elect another bishop. Amongst the names presented to the emperor was that of a civil dignitary, whose life had been somewhat free, though irreproachable of late, and who in consequence had delayed his baptism. We may guess, though we cannot say for certain, under what influences his name was entered on the list proposed by the bishops. The emperor selected him, and he received all the sacraments at once. His appointment was a scandal and

¹ Rufinus says that men had never seen a holier and more blameless life, more brilliant eloquence, a purer and more orthodox faith, more perfect and consummate knowledge. Tillemont has a beautiful description of his preaching. He used to say to the Third Person, 'Thou art my God, and I shall not cease repeating—yes, Thou art my God.'

promised ill for the Church. Constantinople and Antioch were thus, both of them, filled with bishops on whose election a cloud rested. But both of these bishops happily belied their bad beginnings. Flavian, indeed, ended as a saint, and Nectarius set to work to do his duty in good earnest. It must have been now that the council addressed itself to the work of bringing the Macedonian heretics to the acceptance of the full faith concerning the consubstantiality of the Eternal Trinity; but it had lost its one guiding spirit in theology in the retirement of St. Gregory, and its main power of peace-making through the death of Meletius. The Macedonians could not have been impressed with what they had seen of the bishops so far, and they simply refused to accept the teaching that was proposed to them. The imperial influence was brought to bear upon them, but in vain. The emperor pressed upon them the submission they had made to Pope Liberius, but they simply left the council, leaving a letter of warning to their followers as to anything that might be done in favour of the Nicene Creed. They had found that the Nicene Creed involved not merely the *Homoousion* of the Son, but of the Holy Spirit, and one can well imagine that the bishops of the synod had lost their moral influence after the incidents that had marred their sessions hitherto.

VI. But this council has nevertheless taken a high place in the consciousness of Christendom, having attained to the rank of one of those Four Œcumenical Councils which St. Gregory spoke of as next to the Four Holy Gospels. How was this? It was for one act, which brought the East into harmony with the West, and which was confirmed by the Popes. The departure of the Macedonians may have had the effect of hastening¹ the agreement of the bishops in a formula which had already been in use for years, and which expressed the synodical teaching of St. Damasus on the subject of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. We do not know how or when, after what discussion, if any, the said formula was adopted; we only know that it was not new, and that it *was* adopted. It had already been called by St. Epiphanius the Creed of the

¹ So De Broglie.

Church, and the faithful had been required to learn it, almost as it now stood, by heart. If formally adopted after St. Gregory and his friends had withdrawn, we may fairly assume that there had been some discussion before the death of St. Meletius, and that St. Gregory and others had left their proxies or their signatures for the said doctrinal decree. And the list of signatures, as we have it, suggests this. It is clear that the signatures are not those of the bishops given at any one session, they must have been placed together more or less at random; but it is reasonable to suppose that the signatures were each of them attached to some document, though not all to the same. The signature of Timothy of Alexandria, or again of St. Meletius, were neither of them, as the said list would imply, attached to the third canon; for Alexandria never accepted it, and St. Meletius died before it was drawn up. But it is reasonable to suppose that St. Meletius might be claimed as having accepted the form in which the Nicene Creed had been frequently recited by way of explication (with the approval of individual bishops in their several dioceses) before the council met, and that Timothy signed at the council itself. Consequently, the scribe finding both signatures, entered them as though they were attached at the same session and to the whole of the council's doings.

Although we have no Acts, no record of the discussions, nor even of the order or number of the sessions, we have nevertheless the clear testimony of history to these three points—viz. that the enlarged form of the Nicene Creed, such as was already in use in some parts of the East, and was in harmony with the teaching of St. Damasus' *ex cathedrâ* pronouncement in the Roman synod, was agreed to by a sufficient number of bishops to make it the act of the council; next, that the ordination of Flavian to Antioch did not meet with the approval of the council as a whole; and, lastly, that the third canon was, if it was mooted in this council at all, not the judgment of the 150 Fathers, but of a portion only. These are the broad facts for which there is historical evidence; beyond this we seem to be in the region of mere conjecture. When Mr. Fuller speaks of 'so many

great saints' having approved of Flavian's ordination, he is met with St. Gregory's statement that it was only a 'crowd of youths,' and those of a very unsaintly character, who succeeded in drawing after them some of the 'older stars.' When certain writers speak of the third canon as though it possessed the authority of the Church, they need to be confronted with St. Leo's determined accuracy in calling it only the decree of 'certain' bishops; but when the Council of Chalcedon, eighty years afterwards, admitted the Council of Constantinople into a rank which was denied to it by the Council of Ephesus, it recognised a patent of orthodoxy as having been conferred upon its one unanimous act—viz. the enlargement of the Nicene Creed—a development by way of explication, embracing the truth which Rome had already pronounced to be of faith, and which the Emperor Theodosius had already decided to enforce on those who wished to be called Catholic Christians. The synod thus rose at length from a mere Eastern assembly of great saints, mixed up with a crowd of unedifying bishops, summoned to bring the East into line with the West on the subject of the Third Person of the Eternal Trinity, to the rank of one of those four œcumenical councils which exhibited the faith of the Church on the co-equality of the Son and the Holy Spirit with the Eternal Father, and the Divine Personality and perfect human nature of the one Mediator between God and man.

§ III.—*New Rome, or the Third Canon.*

Before proceeding further, it will be well to consider briefly the so-called canons of this Second General Council. One of them plays such a conspicuous part in the controversy between our Anglican friends and ourselves that it calls for special attention.² It has been contended by the former for the last three centuries, that the Council of Chalcedon set its seal to the principle that the primacy of the See of Rome (whatever that primacy may involve, whether actual jurisdiction or merely a position of honour) was due to the secular position

¹ *Prim. SS.* p. 148, note 1.

² 'That the Bishop of Constantinople should have the prerogatives of honour after the Bishop of Rome, because it is *New Rome*.' Canon III.

of the imperial capital. This will be considered at length when we come to that council. But the action of that council, whatever it be considered to involve, was based on this third canon of the Council of Constantinople. Hence the necessity of considering this canon with care.

Its history is involved in great obscurity. When was it passed? Not, we may safely assert, after Timothy of Alexandria had arrived at the council, unless it were after his departure; neither could it have been passed whilst St. Gregory was president. No one who has read ever so little of his writings at this time will suppose that he would have given his consent to a measure so certain to frustrate his cherished hopes of peace, and prompted by the spirit of over-reaching which he so emphatically denounced. One hardly sees, therefore, how it could have been passed at all. Canons were always drawn up at the close of a synod; but this could not have been the case here, by reason of the presence of the Bishop of Alexandria and the Egyptians, who never accepted the regulation contained in this third canon. Neither is there room for it in the previous sessions, considering, not merely St. Gregory's presence, adverse to such a proposal, but his account of the synod, which makes no allusion to it.

Was it, then, a canon of the council in the strict sense of that term?

In considering this question, we must bear in mind that it was never sent to the West, and that, consequently, whenever passed, it was considered not to be a canon which concerned any but the Easterns themselves. It was not, it would seem, sent even to Alexandria, possibly on the ground that it was not considered to affect the question of jurisdiction. On the next vacancy in the See of Constantinople, Alexandria acted as its superior, and placed St. Chrysostom in the vacant see.

It may be said, however, that this was done in defiance of the canon, just as at the next General Council (as it was intended to be) Alexandria occupied the seat of president, above Constantinople, at the order of the emperor himself. But had it been a canon in the ordinary sense of the term, it could hardly have been so completely passed over in both cases.

But, further, on the first occasion on which it was publicly quoted at a General Synod, the Western bishops present denied that it was amongst the canons of the Church at all.

And the evidence is strong to the effect that it was not contained as a canon even in the oldest Greek versions of the canons of the Church. In the Latin version of the canons called the *Prisca*, which drew its list from very ancient Greek manuscripts, it is placed after the Council of Chalcedon, as though it had made its first appearance, as an œcumenical rule of action, on the occasion of that council, and there is fair ground for supposing that it was missing in the earliest version of the Isidorian collection of canons. Now these two versions, the *Prisca* and the Isidorian, supply us with our earliest information as to the most ancient Greek manuscripts.

Much doubt, therefore, hangs over this supposed canon on these grounds.

Add to this the fact that the first canon is generally admitted to be not so much a canon as a part of the Tome which was drawn up by the council, and that the fifth and sixth canons are now admitted by all scholars to belong to a second council held in the following year; whilst the seventh is not a canon at all. On all these grounds we have reason for hesitating to call this, which comes in their midst, a canon even of the Eastern Church.

And yet the subject must have been mooted and settled by some authority. Now, Socrates puts the regulation contained in this canon before the confirmation of the Nicene Creed. His account cannot be depended on as giving the order of time; but his placing this decree, as he calls it, by itself, before the time came, according to him, for the canons about bishops keeping to their provinces and looking to provincial synods for the transaction of provincial concerns, seems to suggest that it stood on a different footing from these. It is certainly remarkable that the council of the following year, in giving a detailed description of what was done at the council of 381, mentions the subject-matter of the so-called first canon and of the second, as well as the ordination of Nectarius and Flavian, but makes no allusion to this

third canon. Of course, this might be due to a conviction on their part that Rome would never accept the new arrangement. But if it really was one of the first three canons properly enacted, and they mention the subject-matter of the first two, but keep silence as to this, we have to suppose them guilty of a dishonourable reticence.

We are therefore driven to the conclusion that the decree of which Socrates speaks, and to which they allude in their letter to Theodosius, stood on a different footing to the second and fourth canons. It was an arrangement on which they agreed amongst themselves after Timothy had left, and which would therefore concern *any future* ecclesiastical intercourse between Alexandria and Constantinople. It had nothing to do with jurisdiction, but related to the mere question of honorary precedence (*πρεσβεία τῆς τιμῆς*). It did not concern Rome, as it would have done had it related to jurisdiction; for in that case they knew well Rome would be obliged to have her say. It was, after a time, slipped in amongst the canons.

Theodosius, in his law of July in that same year, adopted the new order of precedence in naming the prelates who in each region were considered orthodox. But this might be due to the petition of the bishops concerning their new decree, not to its figuring amongst canons of the council; though, indeed, it would be unsafe to argue much from the order in the law of July 30, because the persons named therein are so named, not because of the dignity of their sees, but their personal merit.

It is, however, certain that Theodosius approved of the move, and one cannot but see the hand of the *quondam* civil functionary,¹ now bishop of the Byzantine capital, in the whole matter, and consequently Socrates may be so far right in placing this decree immediately after the ordination of Nectarius, that it was due to his particular influence. Theodosius naturally sanctioned, if he did not also promote the arrangement, for although a good Christian, he was an emperor. His successor set it at nought when precedence would have involved jurisdiction, as at Ephesus.

¹ Nectarius.

The reason given in the canon for thus exalting Constantinople over Alexandria contains a curious mixture of fact and fiction. 'Because it is New Rome' was the ground assigned. Now it was true that the precedence of Old Rome over the West, viewing the West as its patriarchate, was in one sense due to her being the capital of the empire; but it was an arrangement which was made by Rome herself in virtue of her higher relationship to the Church. She chose to rule a portion of her world-wide spiritual dominion in the character of Patriarch as well as Pope¹—that portion which came at this time under the civil rule of the West, of which Rome was the capital, though not now the imperial residence. It is therefore true, as Canon Bright has said, that 'the representation' contained in the canon was 'unfaithful to the facts,'² i.e. untrue, for 'it is certain' (as the same writer has elsewhere said) 'that the Bishop of Rome enjoyed this pre-eminence not simply because his city was Rome, but also because he held the chair of Peter.'³ At the same time, whilst wrong in supposing that patriarchal honours could be assigned to a capital because it was a capital by themselves and the emperor, they were right in implying that the patriarchate of the West came about (in one sense) through Rome being the capital; only it was through the choice of the blessed Apostle Peter and his successors selecting the Papal for a Patriarchal centre. We have no reason to suppose that this was meant to be denied.⁴ Their mistake may have consisted in imagining that such a matter as even

¹ 'In the decrees of the bishops of Rome the distinction between their supreme and patriarchal jurisdiction is not always fully observed; the latter is often supported and exalted by the former; the one influences the other, and not unfrequently both flow on together: that is, the bishops of Rome perform many things both as Popes and Patriarchs. The Popes themselves do not always draw the precise line of distinction; they possessed, indeed, both powers as successors of St. Peter, and often appeal even in acts which were connected immediately with their patriarchal authority to their supreme pontifical power' (Döllinger, *Hist. of the Church*, Period II. cap. v. § 4).

² *Canons of the First Four General Councils*, by W. Bright, D.D., Canon of Christ Church, Regius Professor of Eccles. Hist., 1892, p. 107.

³ *History of the Church*, by W. Bright, D.D., 1882, 1892, p. 178.

⁴ It seems inconsistent with the submissive tone of the letter sent in 382 to Rome to suppose that they in any way questioned the supremacy of the See of Peter.

honorary precedence, when it concerned two of the three Petrine Sees (Alexandria and Antioch), could be settled by these Eastern bishops, or that honorary precedence could be for any length of time divorced from actual jurisdiction. May be they thought to bar in the future such action as that of Peter of Alexandria in allowing his bishops to ordain Maximus to Constantinople; and it might not unnaturally seem that Antioch, considering her long-standing divisions, would be better protected by Constantinople if the latter held the place of honour. And they could count on Flavian, in his present position, owing (as he did) his election to the bishops of the council, acquiescing in an arrangement which commended itself to the political and military instincts of Theodosius.

But there mingled with this a certain lust of earthly honour which culminated in the great schism which was consummated through the unrestrained ambition of the ablest and most unscrupulous prelate that ever managed to intrude himself into that ill-fated Byzantine see. The decree which goes by the name of the Third Canon of Constantinople was the germ of the successful mendacity of the arch-rebel Photius.

§ IV.—*The Western Disapproval of the Election of Flavian to Antioch.*

Thus far, then, the synod was thoroughly and exclusively Eastern, in its composition, its range of action, and its internal discord. There was no idea of its aspiring to the rank of an œcumenical synod. But whilst it ended in some confusion and disagreement in regard to the Antiochene troubles, it nevertheless placed itself in line with the West in the matter of dogma. But they sent no official report to Rome, conscious, doubtless, of the impossibility of expecting Rome to accept their choice of Flavian. The account, however, of what had taken place necessarily reached the West, and was animadverted upon by a council that met that year in September to consider the case of two bishops who, although teaching Arian doctrine, refused to be numbered amongst the Arians. These bishops desired to be tried before

an œcumenical synod; but St. Ambrose and (we may presume) St. Damasus considered that a small but influential council of thirty-two neighbouring bishops was sufficient to adjudge their case. It was not a representative synod of the West, neither Rome (where Damasus was pressed by fresh opposition from his old enemy Ursinus) nor Spain being represented, although their letter to the East implies that they were acting in unison with Damasus.

Its president was a great and holy bishop named Valerian, and its ruling spirit was St. Ambrose himself. This council, which met at Aquileia, addressed a letter to the Emperor Theodosius, which is of importance as showing that the West had long ago accepted the compact between St. Meletius and Paulinus as to the survivor being sole successor at Antioch. They say that, owing to the dissensions there, they had intended sending legates from the West to compose the strife,¹ but that 'since our desires could not take effect at that time owing to public disturbances, we presume that our petitions were presented to your Piety, in which we asked, in accordance with a compact between the parties, that on the decease of one the churches might remain in the hands of the survivor, and there should be no attempt to ordain anyone over his head.'

Such had been their previous petition, after they had heard of the compact made before the Antiochene Synod of A.D. 379, in which St. Meletius and his friends signed the 'Tome of the Westerns' and sent it to Rome. This, however, had now been rendered useless, owing to what had taken place at Constantinople.² Accordingly they proceed to say: 'And

¹ 'Qui sequestres et arbitri refundendæ, si fieri posset, pacis existerent' (Mansi, t. iii. p. 623).

² Mr. Fuller rests much of his argument (*Prim. SS.* p. 249) concerning the continued existence of the breach with Rome and St. Meletius on this letter and the succeeding one from Milan. He argues that the Council of Aquileia did not know of what had taken place at Constantinople, and hence made a proposal about the survivor of either bishop at Antioch. But this is impossible for two reasons, viz.: (1) it is impossible to suppose that they would ask for a 'fuller council' at Alexandria (as they did in this letter) before they knew the issue of the council at Constantinople, and (2) they knew of Theodosius' law of July, for they thank him for passing it, and this law was passed subsequently to the Council of Constantinople, and brings in the name of Nectarius, who was ordained at that council.

therefore we ask and beseech you, most clement and Christian emperors, to convoke the whole body of Catholic bishops to a council to be held at Alexandria, who may fully discuss and settle the question as to who are to be admitted to communion and who are to have their communion with us maintained.'

They had said in the same letter that they were bound to have a care for the Paulinists at Antioch, because they had long ago received the letters of both sides.¹ What they intimate is, that they cannot throw over Paulinus and his followers, which the acceptance of Flavian would involve. They had once hoped to send legates, but that being impossible under the circumstances, they had sent letters which they think the emperor must have received,² in which they had asked for the imperial sanction of the compact entered into by the two sides. That compact having been set aside, *i.e.* at the Council of Constantinople, they now ask for a General Council to meet at Alexandria, and consider 'to whom communion should be given and with whom it should be maintained'³—*i.e.* whether they should extend their communion to the followers of Meletius now placed under Flavian. For themselves they wish the compact to stand ('quod stare volumus'). We learn from Sozomen that several at Antioch at once decided to join the party of Paulinus, as they presumed St. Meletius would have wished them to do, and so these Western bishops say that they do not wish any of these to seem neglected, 'who also in accordance with the compact, which we desire should stand, have asked for our communion.'⁴ They therefore ask for a fuller council ('cœtu pleniore') than that of Constantinople, which will have a better chance of restoring peace.

Very shortly after this, another council seems to have met at Milan,⁵ in which the bishops came to the conclusion that it would be better to have the council at Rome itself, to decide the affair of Nectarius, whose ordination they considered

¹ 'Utriusque partis dudum accepimus literas' (*loc. cit.*).

² 'Oblatas pietati vestræ opinamur preces nostras.'

³ Mansi, t. iii. p. 634.

⁴ 'Qui et pacto, quod stare volumus, communionem nostram rogarunt' (*loc. cit.*).

⁵ So Hefele and others think. Mansi makes the letter only a second from Aquileia.

illegitimate. From what follows we may assume that St. Damasus himself, whilst he would have supported Gregory as against Maximus, felt that Maximus' ordination had elements of canonicity which were lacking in the case of Nectarius.¹ The letter of this Council of Milan further censures the election of Flavian in place of Meletius. They say that the confusion which had recently ('nuper,' i.e. at Constantinople) taken place is indescribable. Things now stand thus, 'We had written long ago' ('dudum,' i.e. long before the Council of Constantinople, alluding to the letters spoken of above as having been sent instead of legates, after they knew of the compact between Meletius and Paulinus) 'that, since the city of Antioch had two bishops, Paulinus and Meletius, whom we considered to agree in faith, either peace and concord should be established between them without detriment to ecclesiastical order, or that, at any rate, whichever of them died before the other, there should be no election in the place of the deceased whilst the other lived. But now that Meletius has died . . . it is said that one has been not so much substituted as intruded into his place.' 'And this is said to have been done with the consent and by the advice of Nectarius, the regularity of whose ordination does not seem clear to us. For in the council lately (*nuper*),' &c.

Now from this letter we gather that there had been no formal notification of the enactments at Constantinople, but that information had reached them, as it must have done even before September (the date of the Council of Aquileia) as to the course of events at Constantinople—and information of a sufficiently precise nature to justify them in writing about it to the emperor, and calling it a state of inexplicable confusion. Further, they allude to letters which had been sent to the emperor concerning the compact long ago ('dudum')—that is, as compared with the Council of Constantinople, of which they speak as comparatively recent ('nuper'). These could only have been the letters to which the bishops at Aquileia alluded as having been sent previous to the Council of Constantinople.

¹ This explains the apparent change of front on the part of Damasus. It is, however, quite possible that it was a real change of mind in consequence of information as to what happened at Constantinople.

Now that the compact had been set aside, they ask for a larger council. It is therefore quite certain from these letters that when St. Meletius went to Constantinople he was a bishop accepted by Rome,¹ and absolutely certain that he died in communion with Rome.² Indeed, considering what has been advanced above,³ it may be safely said that he had been in communion with Rome during the interval between the Synod of Antioch (379) and his death. And further, no case has been made out for the assertion that he was ever excommunicated by Rome. It must be remembered that the refusal to acknowledge a person as bishop is by no means equivalent to excommunication, and again, that the refusal of letters of intercourse may mean something much less than a decision that the person to whom they are refused is under the *excommunicatio major*.

NOTE.—It will be seen that I have drawn a perfectly opposite conclusion from the above letters to that deduced by Mr. Puller, 'Prim. SS.' pp. 247-251. He regards them as containing a demonstration that St. Meletius was out of communion with Rome at the time of the Council of Constantinople. It may well be asked, Whence this difference? It originates in the simple fact that Mr. Puller has disregarded the ordinary rules of grammar in his translation of the first letter. He translates the past tense in the Latin by the present in English. 'Oblatas pietati vestræ opinamur preces nostras, quibus partium pactum poposcimus, ut . . . permanerent . . . attentaretur,' is all in the past. But Mr. Puller actually translates *poposcimus* 'we pray,' and *oblatas* as 'should be offered,' and *permanerent* as 'may remain' (p. 250), which alters the whole sense. He then, to make it more complete, understands *nunc Meletio defuncto* as meaning that the bishops at Milan had now, i.e. since the Council of Aquileia, heard of Meletius' death. One could wish that Mr. Puller had restrained himself a little in making such sweeping accusations about others rendering history an impossibility as he has indulged in on p. 327. Nothing surely can equal the hardihood of turning the past tense into the present, and then making the passage thus translated the pivot of his argument as to the relation of St. Meletius to the See of Peter. As has been

¹ They speak of 'two bishops.'

² They had 'long ago' sent letters to both.

³ P. 229.

seen in the text above (cf. also note to p. 264), what the bishops are speaking of when they wish the subject of whom they should admit to communion to be dealt with, is *the state of things that had arisen in consequence of Flavian's election*, not the matter of communion with St. Meletius, 'Prim. SS., p. 250 (last line).' So that instead of its being 'perfectly clear from this letter that St. Meletius up to the time of his death was still cut off from the communion of the Western Church, which was so fully represented at Aquileia' (p. 251), it seems perfectly clear that the exact opposite is the truth. As for the West being 'so fully represented at Aquileia,' that is a minor matter, but it is difficult to see how the West could be fully represented, without Rome or Spain, by thirty-two bishops. So that on p. 251 (last line) of Mr. Puller's book the word 'Flavian' should be substituted for the words 'St. Meletius'—in other words, the whole superstructure of argument so laboriously built up by Mr. Puller falls to the ground.

CONCLUSION OF SECOND PERIOD.

§ I.—*Councils of Constantinople and Rome (382).*

BEFORE closing the second period it will be well to take a rapid survey of the action taken by the East and West in regard to the council which met at Constantinople in 381, in order to see how the whole matter ended in peace for the distracted East. Two great synods were held, one at Constantinople and the other at Rome, in 382, instead of a larger one of East and West in one place.

I. The West having (p. 266) expressed its dissatisfaction with the doings of the council at Constantinople in regard to the appointment of Nectarius to Constantinople and of Flavian to Antioch, now demanded a General Council, and suggested Alexandria as the best place wherein to meet. What Theodosius actually did was to summon a fresh synod to Constantinople. Meanwhile St. Damasus (for by the West we must understand St. Damasus and the Western bishops) proceeded a step further and proposed a General Council to meet at Rome.¹ This invitation, however, came too late. Numerous bishops had already met at Constantinople and left their dioceses for the time that would be required for a synod there, and had not made arrangements which would permit of their extending their journey, neither (it would seem from what they say) had they met at Constantinople in such numbers as would be

¹ Theodoret speaks of 'the West' calling for a council of Easterns and Westerns. But, as Merenda observes, everybody knows ('*nemo qui nescit*') that by this expression the Pope is frequently meant (*Gesta S. Damasi*, cap. xx. § 2). Merenda also thinks that the letter written by the Emperor Gratian to Damasus about assembling a synod, mentioned in the *Lib. Synodic.* cap. lxxiv. refers to the Council of Aquileia.

required for an œcumenical council of East and West. This they stated in their letter, which they at once wrote to St. Damasus and the Western bishops. In that letter, after cordially¹ responding to the desire of the West to bring matters to a peaceful issue, and speaking of themselves as 'members' of the West (as containing, it might perhaps be fairly argued, their head²), they say that 'it was indeed our wish, if possible, to leave our Churches in a body and gratify the need or desire,' *i.e.* of repairing to Rome. 'For' (they continue) 'who will give us wings like doves to flee away and be at rest *with you*?' In the West was their true home—so the expression used implies;³ there was their mother, who could gather them under her wings and give them shelter and peace. But this, they plead, was simply an impossibility at present. It was impossible to leave their Churches for so long, or to send notice to the other bishops. They had already 'flocked in eager haste' to Constantinople⁴ 'in consequence of (ἐκ) the letters sent by your Worthiness last year after the synod at Aquileia,⁵ to the most God-loving Emperor Theodosius.' It would therefore now be impossible to let the other bishops know. This last reason throws some light on this Synod of 382 at Constantinople. It was not the 150 Fathers who met, except by representation. Of course, we know that St. Gregory of Nazianzus refused to attend; and we do not know how many others did the same. They themselves call the synod of the *last year* ('πέρυσσι' [381])

¹ Several writers on the subject imagine that these Eastern bishops were not sincere in what they said. There is absolutely nothing in the words they use to convey the notion of hypocrisy.

² Of course they might mean only to speak of being members one of another, but the context suggests the above meaning.

³ Mansi, t. iii. p. 583: πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Cf. the well-known expression in St. John i. 1, πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, indicating the infinite communion of the Son with the Father, the πηγή θεότητος. The Greek preposition in such contexts is equivalent to the French 'chez vous.' Jerusalem was the mother-Church as the older; Rome was their mother as the present centre of the Church.

⁴ συνδεδραμήκαμεν, lit. 'We had run together.'

⁵ It is therefore evident that the order of things was this. St. Damasus, in concert with the bishops at Aquileia, had proposed a council at Alexandria. The Easterns were at once summoned by Theodosius to Constantinople, where they received the subsequent invitation to Rome which is recorded in the letter from the council held (as is supposed) at Milan.

œcumenical, not their own—a term which they could hardly have meant to use even of that in its full significance, unless in the sense that the dogmatic decisions, being but an echo of the pronouncements already promulgated in the West, witnessed to the universal acceptance of the teaching of the Roman Synod of 372. Probably, however, they used the word in the same way that the Africans used the word universal, *i.e.* of a Synod of All Africa.

This whole letter is a witness to the fact that the East had no idea of such a thing as the independence of national Churches. Neither provinces, nor even the whole of the East, felt themselves at liberty to plead that they could manage their own affairs without reference to the West.¹

They then proceed to say that they had adopted the next best course (ὁ δεύτερον ἦν) by way of righting matters and showing their love² for the Western bishops. 'We asked Cyriacus, Eusebius, and Priscianus to undertake the work willingly of going to you, and through these we show our own peaceful determination, and how we aim at unity.' They then describe their faith in exact accord with the teaching sent originally by the Roman Synod (372) on the subject of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, and they refer to St. Damasus and the Westerns for a further explanation of their faith to a certain doctrinal formulary, which they speak of as 'the Tome which was adopted³ at Antioch by the synod assembled there, and to the Tome put forth last year at Constantinople by the Ecumenical Synod.' This passage proves two things: first, that the Council of 382 did not regard itself simply as a session of the Council of 381, but as a separate synod; and secondly, that the so-called Fifth Canon of the

¹ The letter of Theodosius quoted by Mr. Puller (*Prim. SS.* p. 274) does not exist; and though it did once exist, it probably had nothing to do with this matter; and, if it had, it was denounced by St. Ambrose as erroneous in its teaching (cf. Appendix III. p. 479).

² I feel myself quite unable to take the line that these bishops were mere hypocrites. Without rating them too high, they must have had the courage of their opinions sufficiently to say so, if they were, as some suppose, all the while offended with the West. At any rate, they thought it best to say the exact opposite. They were not the same as those of the previous year.

³ I have thus translated γεγενημένον, as being a word which does not necessarily imply that the bishops at Antioch drew it up themselves.

Œcumenical Council belongs to the assembly of the Second Synod of 382.¹ The Council of 381 put forth a Tome, and the Council of 382 embodied it in a canon.

What, then, was the 'Tome of the Westerns,' the doctrinal formulary adopted at Antioch and identical at least in substance with that put forth at the Œcumenical Council of Constantinople? Hefele has furnished most convincing proofs² that it was the doctrinal formulary addressed by St. Damasus and his synod of 369 to the East, sent formally and officially in 372 in response to St. Basil's entreaties for help. It was all that St. Damasus had seen it in his power to do at that time. He settled the faith, as contained implicitly in the Nicene Creed, concerning the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, and sent back the Eastern legate, Dorotheus, with this formulary. For the rest, he could but wait on Divine Providence to come to the aid of the East. It came in the form of an orthodox Eastern emperor, who entered upon his career of pacification by insisting on his subjects, who wished to be called Catholic, practising 'the religion delivered to the Romans by the Divine Apostle Peter,' as taught now by the Pontiff Damasus, with whom at that time the saintly successor of St. Athanasius agreed.

So that the object which Theodosius originally had most at heart when, on leaving Thessalonica shortly after his baptism, he summoned a general council of the East at Constantinople, had now been achieved. The 'faith of Damasus' had already, according to Theodore, been made the touchstone of orthodoxy at Antioch when the prefect Sapor decided to whom the churches held by the Arians should be handed over. The emperor had further been able to point in the previous year to Nectarius, Timothy, Helladius, Gregory of Nyssa, and others in his law of July, 381, as the orthodox centres in the East, for each of these could now be said to hold, on the vexed questions of the day, that which 'the religion taught up to this time declares to have been delivered to the Romans by

¹ The canon runs thus: 'As to the Tome of the Westerns, we also recognised those in Antioch who confess one Godhead of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost.'

² They seem to me to amount to demonstration.

the divine Apostle Peter.' And now the council assembled at Constantinople (382) to establish peace could report that their 'Œcumenical' Council of the previous year (381) had professed the same faith, and they were able to tell the West that they unanimously accepted in the East the doctrinal formulary which had issued from Rome in the midst of their troubles under Valens, and had been accepted by St. Meletius and his synod at Antioch, two or three years previously, and by the more General Council of 381.¹ So far, then, as the faith was concerned, the East had now been brought into line with the West.

But peace was not yet restored; for the new Bishops of Constantinople and Antioch had not yet received the assent of the Bishop of Rome to their appointment. Meanwhile the council, which had been originally intended as Œcumenical, met at Rome, shorn of the Eastern contingent that met at Constantinople, but one of the most remarkable synods as concerned its composition that had assembled during the reign of Damasus.

There was St. Ambrose himself, the foremost prelate of his time, the spiritual guide of the Western emperor, and the spiritual father of the great Augustine; the metropolitan of the city (Milan) selected by the emperor for his frequent residence; a bishop who has more vividly impressed his memory upon the West than perhaps any other Western saint of that critical time.

The great Bishop of Thessalonica, St. Ascholius, who had baptised the Eastern emperor, had also come with the special desire of meeting St. Ambrose in the flesh. He came in his anchorite's garment, and found his brother saint ill in bed. St. Ambrose himself describes their meeting,² their long embrace, the tears they shed.

There was the great St. Jerome, the student of Holy Scripture, who had drunk in the theology of St. Gregory of Nazianzus from his own lips, to whose inspection St. Gregory of Nyssa had submitted his writings, and who was one day to be the instructor of St. Augustine himself.

There was, above all, the great Saint Epiphanius, one of

¹ It had not yet the right to the title Œcumenical. ² *Ep.* xv. n. 10.

the greatest men of the day; born in Palestine, brought up a Jew, converted by the sight of a monk giving away his garment to clothe a beggar; the friend of St. Athanasius; inhabitant of the Thebaid as an anchorite, where the monasteries rang with the fame of his many miracles; drawn out of his cell against his will and made Bishop of Salamis—a man consulted by East and West, profoundly versed in Hebrew and Syriac and Greek, one who had investigated to its depths every heresy, and who was called 'the Apostle, the new John, the herald of the Lord.'

These great saints were now in the city of St. Peter and St. Paul. And there was one object, which must have had a special interest for them at that time—the chair of Peter. St. Damasus had built a new baptistery, and placed the chair of Peter in it, to which the description he put up in this baptistery alludes—

Una Petri sedes, unum verumque lavaeum.

St. Optatus, the African bishop, had lately written his work against the Donatists, and in answer to their boast that they had a successor of Peter in Rome, having consecrated a bishop for Rome, named Macrobius, for their own sect, he had written thus, 'In fact, if Macrobius be asked where he sits in Rome, can he say, In the Chair of Peter?—which I am not aware that he has ever seen with his eyes, and whose shrine he, as a heretic, has never approached.'

St. Ambrose, St. Ascholius, St. Epiphanius, and St. Jerome may be thought of in devout reverence at the shrine of Peter, one in their faith, as expressed by St. Ambrose in the Council of Aquileia, that from Rome 'the rights of venerable communion flow abroad to all.'¹

Unfortunately, the Acts of this important synod have perished, and we can only guess at its decisions by the action of the West towards the East subsequent to the assembly.

Hitherto St. Damasus had expressed his disapproval of Maximus' appointment to Constantinople privately, before the appointment had been made;² but the Council of Aquileia,

¹ Mansi, t. iii. p. 622.

² Damas. *Ep. ad Aschol*

which met by his authority,¹ and was presided over by Valerian and attended by St. Ambrose, who was its ruling spirit, had asked for a general council at Alexandria, in consequence of its being obliged to say in the name of the West that the arrangements of the Council of Constantinople (381), concerning either Maximus, who had apparently appealed to it, or concerning the see of Antioch, would never meet with their approval.

But the Council of Milan had gone further, being doubtless in possession of further details. It had protested against the appointment of Nectarius, and asked the emperor to send his bishops to Rome. That most extraordinary man, Maximus, had appeared in the West, having probably dropped his yellow wig and philosopher's mantle and staff, and had claimed the privilege of appeal. He had not handed in an appeal whilst in the East, and hence his case did not technically come under the operation of the Niceno-Sardican canon. But the principle of that canon might fairly be invoked,² and the council did claim that the East should act in accordance with its provision.³ The East ought to have waited for the sentence of the West, the council says. It disclaims the idea of making itself the court of first instance, but claims to be consulted in the matter.⁴ It was one which could not be concluded in the East; there must be a common judgment.⁵

All this must have been reviewed, at the great synod at Rome in 382, by the Pope, by St. Ambrose, St. Epiphanius, St. Ascholius, St. Jerome, and the bishops in synod. What they decided can only be conjectured from the sequence of events, which was as follows:—Maximus was disowned by the West, the two consecrators of Flavian were excommunicated, but towards Flavian himself Rome maintained silence,⁶

¹ Cf. *Valesii Nota* apud Sozom. lib. vii. c. 9; and Merenda, *Gesta Damasi* (Migne, p. 328).

² Viz. that no bishop should be appointed during an appeal to Rome.

³ Mansi, t. iii. 632. Not mentioning the canon, but obviously arguing upon its lines.

⁴ *Prærogativam examinis* (Ambr. *Ep.* xiii.).

⁵ A common judgment is not necessarily one in which all parties are on a par, and all contribute the same amount of authority, but in which all, head and members as well, join.

⁶ *συνήντησεν* (Soz.).

neither passing actual sentence upon him nor admitting his claim—placing him, in fact, in much the same position as that held by St. Meletius before 379, *i.e.* neither excommunicated nor adopted by Rome¹—whilst the East applied to Rome for its approbation of Nectarius, thus acting in accordance with the request of the Council of Milan, that the matter should not be concluded in the East. Theodosius did not consider Nectarius' position safe without Rome's approval; accordingly, a solemn embassy of bishops and imperial officials² was dispatched to Rome for her approbation, the emperor asking for a letter of communion to 'confirm the episcopal position' of Nectarius.³ The Council of 382 had used an expression in the end of their synodical letter to Damasus to the same effect; they express a hope that Damasus and the West will 'congratulate' them on what they had done—a courteous ecclesiastical formula to request confirmation.⁴

It seems also that the Apollinarian heresy was dealt with at the Roman Synod (382). St. Damasus would be particularly anxious for consultation with such as St. Epiphanius and St. Ambrose on this subject. The condemnation of that heresy had been one of the great works of his reign. It had sprung, as so many heresies, from a zealous opposition to one form of error leading to an error on the opposite side. In opposing the Arians, Apollinarius came to imagine that our Lord's freedom from sin was incompatible with the possession of a human soul, and that the possession of two natures, each entire and distinct, was inconsistent with the Unity of His Person. He, therefore, denied that our Lord had a human soul in its higher element or operation (a rational soul), and asserted that this was supplied by His Divinity. As you entered the house of a disciple of Apollinarius you would see written up on the door or portico, a sentence to the effect

¹ Mansi, t. iii. p. 640: 'Ab excommunicatione Flaviani cessatum est, et schisma Antiochenæ ecclesiæ ad tempus certum toleratum fuit.'

² 'Missis a latere suo aulicis cum episcopis' (Bonifacii I. *Ep.* xv. *ad Rufum*, &c.).

³ 'Quæ ejus sacerdotium roboraret' (*loc. cit.*).

⁴ Nectarius' ordination needed to be purged of its irregularity as contravening the Second Canon of Nicæa.

that Christians should not adore a man who bore God within himself, but a God who bore human flesh. Both St. Basil and St. Athanasius exhibited a certain natural reluctance to condemn Apollinarius himself, though, it is needless to say, themselves absolutely free from any taint of his error. St. Damasus condemned him synodically in a synod (377) and deposed both him and his disciple Timothy, Bishop (perhaps¹) of Berytus, and the example of the Pope was followed at Alexandria and Constantinople. St. Damasus had been asked to depose these bishops after he had done it. Accordingly he replied, 'Why, then, do you ask me again to depose Timothy seeing that he was deposed by the judgment of the Apostolic See, in presence of Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, together with his master, Apollinarius?'²

At this synod of 382 at Rome St. Jerome was deputed to draw up a formulary to be accepted by all suspected or convicted of the heresy of Apollinarius.

After this, various bishops met in the following year at Constantinople, and Damasus in a synod of the same year³ confirmed all that had been done at Constantinople in 381, 382, and 383 in regard to dogma. The canons were not sent to Rome, and therefore had no œcumenical authority.

After the synod of 382 St. Damasus took St. Jerome for his secretary, and we know from the latter that the Pope was occupied, during the time that remained to him, in settling matters referred to him by synods from the East and West. He had been the centre of the Church's life now for nearly eighteen years, and during all that time he had been constantly employed in either meeting the attacks on his own person or those, more serious still, on the faith of the Church. He had been, as the Sixth General Council called him, the 'adamant of the faith.' As an instance of the way in which he was able to 'confirm the brethren' at times, we may remember his action in regard to the saintly and orthodox successor of St. Athanasius at Alexandria. This bishop's name was Peter. He was driven out of his see by the Emperor Valens, and one named Lucius was intruded. Peter

¹ The difficulties of settling who this Timothy was are considerable

² Damas. *Ep.* 14.

³ Mansi, t. iii. p. 642.

betook himself to Rome, and in 377 he returned to Alexandria with letters from Damasus which, says the historian, 'confirmed the faith of the *Homoousion* and the ordination of Peter. Whereupon the people of Alexandria took courage and drove out Lucius and brought back Peter in his place.'¹ Eutherius, Bishop of Tyana, and Helladius, Bishop of Tarsus, two unimpeachable witnesses, probably referred to this amongst other instances when they said, in their remarkable letter to Pope Xystus, 'And often in former times when the tares of heresy were growing up out of Alexandria your Apostolic See sufficed during the whole of that time to convince of falsehood, repress impiety, and correct what needed correction, and to guard the world for the glory of Christ, as well under the thrice blessed Damasus as under several others.'

It was, however, the chief glory of this Pope that he was the chosen instrument of the Holy Ghost to declare His Divine Majesty coequal with the Father and the Son, as part of that Catholic faith which had been enshrined in the Nicene Creed, but which needed explicit statement. This St. Damasus did in his *ex cathedrâ* pronouncement in the synods of 369 and 372, and his utterance gradually gathered into itself the entire Church, issuing in the assent of the great Eastern Synod in 381, which, by its acceptance at Rome, became one of the first four œcumenical councils,² so far as its dogmatic decision was concerned. No wonder that the heathen prefect at Rome, as he saw the central position of the see of Peter, the reverence paid to it in the midst of the troubles it met with through an Ursinus or an Isaac (the Jew), should say that he would become a Christian to-morrow if he could be made Bishop of Rome. He would probably have said the same of the bishopric of Milan, as he saw the heads of departments flock to the entertainments which St. Ambrose, himself the most mortified of men, occasionally gave in that city, and as he considered the influence of the great bishop on the Emperor Gratian. No wonder the heathen historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, felt the sting of jealousy as

¹ Socr. iv. 37. Sozomen accounts for the fact that Valens did not avenge himself for this insult by his being just then distracted with troubles elsewhere (Soz. vi. 39).

² i.e. eventually.

he saw the state with which previous emperors had surrounded the heathen religion now transferred to the Christian. He would not understand how a mortified man like Damasus viewed such matters, accepting the ritual of imperial homage whilst he knew that his real strength lay in the divine promise to the blessed Apostle Peter, in whose name, together with that of the holy Apostle Paul, he ruled the Church, and in whose chair he sat.

PERIOD III.

(THE FIFTH CENTURY.)

400-452.

CHAPTER XVII.

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

§ I.—*The Letters of St. Innocent.*

A RECENT writer, whose statements have been often traversed in this book, has said of us, in regard to the subject of this chapter, 'As honourable men, let them refrain from pretending that the Church of North Africa, in the time of St. Augustine, believed in the principles laid down by the Vatican Council. Such a pretence is an impertinence and an act of folly, which must alienate every person of good sense and Christian simplicity who is cognisant of it.'¹ The particular teaching of the said Council against which this writer's remarks are directed is given in the immediate context. It is 'the principle that, *jure divino*, every member of the Church, whether clerical or lay, has an inherent right to have "recourse to the Pope's judgment in all causes which appertain to the jurisdiction of the Church." The African Fathers absolutely deny that right.'²

It must be observed in passing, that it is not *jure divino*, according to the Vatican decrees, that everyone has the right of direct and immediate recourse to the Holy See. It belongs to ecclesiastical authority to regulate the channels of access to the supreme authority, which may differ at different times and in different countries. In a word, whilst the principle of appeal is open to all the world, the mode of procedure by which the appeal is set in motion is matter of ecclesiastical arrangement.

Ever since the sixteenth century, or at any rate the seventeenth, the Church of North Africa in the days of St. Augustine has been quoted as an authority for separation from

¹ *Primitive Saints*, &c. p. 203; cf. also the Preface to the work by the Bishop of Lincoln, p. xxxi.

² p. 202.

Rome in this country. At the time of the final separation, when Elizabeth had an archbishop made without leave from Rome, and without connection with Rome of any kind, no theory had been struck out to justify the state of things in which men found themselves; but as soon as they sought for the shelter of Church history the Church of North Africa was invoked in justification of the step taken. And when Archbishop Laud endeavoured to defend his position from history he laid great stress on the misunderstanding that arose between Rome and Africa in the beginning of the fifth century over the affair of Apiarius. Dr. Pusey followed in the same line and insisted that 'England is not at this moment more independent of any authority of the Bishop of Rome than Africa was in the days of St. Augustine.'¹

It is no exaggeration to say that if it can be shown that the Church of North Africa in the days of Augustine held that the Bishop of Rome was the supreme Governor of the Church under Christ, by His divine appointment, one of the great obstacles to reunion between ourselves and many of our fellow-countrymen will have been removed. It is this that I now proceed to show.

I. The fifth century, in its first few years, saw the beginning of a heresy which struck at the roots of all Christian piety. It originated with a fellow-countryman of our own, a British monk named Pelagius, who denied that death was the penalty of sin—that sin had in any substantial way affected our nature, so as to weaken it and make it incapable of fulfilling the commands of God. Pelagius confused grace with the grant of free-will, and held that it was possible by the mere virtue of our free-will to keep the law. He denied that any interior strengthening of our nature was needed, admitting only the necessity of instruction, as by the doctrine and example of our Lord. He held that the assistance which helps us more easily to fulfil the divine commands is merited by the proper use of our free-will.²

¹ *Eirenicon*, p. 66.

² See in Migne's *Patrol. Coursus* a most exhaustive account of Pelagius' teaching in Garnier's *Seventh Dissertation on the Works of Marius Mercator*, in which the above points are dealt with one by one.

The great difficulty of dealing with this false doctrine lay not so much in the nature of the heresy as in the character of the heretics. Pelagius had no scruple about denying and asserting at random, professing perfect harmony with the teaching of the Church when pressed by authority, and proceeding to teach its contradictory when absolved.

His disciple, Coelestius, was the first to come to the front; and his action in Africa led to an expression of opinion on the value of a decision from Rome which ought to settle the question as to what the Church of North Africa held concerning the authority of the See of Peter.

Coelestius had found his way to Africa, and disseminated his opinions there. He was condemned by a synod at Carthage under Aurelius, A.D. 412. The synod wrote to Pope Innocent and described Coelestius as 'struck with anathema and deprived of communion until he should openly anathematise the things objected against him.' Coelestius appealed to Rome. The African Fathers took no exception to his appeal, which is mentioned quite naturally by Marius Mercator, a contemporary, and later on by Facundus the African writer. He left Carthage and went, not, as it was supposed he would, to Rome to prosecute his appeal, but to Asia. His object seems to have been to get into the priesthood whilst he was yet finally uncondemned. He was ordained priest at Ephesus, and was therefore outside the patriarchal jurisdiction of Rome.

Meanwhile Pelagius had gone to Jerusalem to disseminate his errors in Palestine; there he found a sympathiser in the Bishop of Jerusalem, named John. But at a synod consisting mainly, if not altogether, of priests, a Spanish priest, named Orosius, whom St. Augustine had sent, as he says, to sit at the feet of Jerome at Bethlehem 'to learn the fear of the Lord,' explained what had happened at Carthage, how this Coelestius had been condemned for false doctrine. Such a difficulty of language, however, arose, and Pelagius seemed so to evade all that Orosius accused him of teaching, that it was agreed to refer the matter to Rome, and John, the Bishop of Jerusalem,¹ concurred, 'confirming,' says Orosius, 'our demand and con-

¹ This bishop seems to have believed in Pelagius, without, however, having any sympathy with Pelagianism. Cf. Natalis Alexander, *H. E.* vol. ix. pt. 2.

tention that the parties and the letters should be sent to the blessed Innocent, the Roman Pope, all agreeing to follow what he should decide,¹ but on the understanding that the heretic Pelagius should impose silence on himself meanwhile.'

The Bishop of Jerusalem, however, fearing that Pelagius would be condemned at Rome, seems to have instigated the Bishop of Palestinian Cæsarea, Eulogius, to summon a synod of the bishops of the province at Diospolis, in which Pelagius imposed upon his judges and was declared orthodox. Some of St. Jerome's monasteries were now burnt to the ground, owing to his opposition to this new heresy which Pelagius was now spreading about on the pretence that it had been sanctioned at the synod.² There were, however, two wandering bishops from Gaul, named Eros and Lazarus, who at once wrote to Africa and acquainted the bishops there of what had happened in Palestine.

II. A large council of bishops was now held at Carthage to consider what step should be taken. It was contrary to the canons to condemn a man in his absence, and accordingly their plan was to give the sanction of the entire province to the Carthaginian decision of five years ago, and obtain for it the authoritative confirmation of the Apostolic See. I say of the Apostolic See, for this was the point of all their endeavour, not to obtain a condemnation from the see of the great city of Rome, but to obtain the authoritative sanction of 'the Apostolic' See. 'We have considered,' so they write to Pope St. Innocent,³ 'that we ought to acquaint your Holiness with this which was thus enacted, lord and brother, that the authority of the Apostolic See may be applied to the statutes of our lowliness, for the sake of guarding the salvation of many, and also of correcting the perversity of some.' And after describing the teaching of Pelagius, they say (n. 3), 'And we fear lest we should seem to act unbecomingly in bringing forward before you those very things which you proclaim

¹ 'Universis, quid ipse decerneret, secuturis.' *Orosii Apol.* num. 4.

² Jer. *Ep.* 24, apud Aug.

³ Innoc. *Ep.* xxvi. The letters which follow are to be found in most collections of the Councils and in every complete edition of St. Augustine's works. The following quotations are from the Benedictine edition, Paris, 1694.

with higher grace from the Apostolic See.'¹ And, again, 'If, therefore, in what is said to have been enacted by the bishops in the East, Pelagius shall seem to your Reverence to have been justly absolved, still the error itself and the impiety, which now has many champions scattered through divers regions, deserves the anathema of the Apostolic See' (n. 4).

Almost immediately afterwards a synod of African bishops was also held at Milevis, at which St. Augustine was present, having come, it is supposed, from Carthage (where the letter just quoted was probably written by him) to assist in similar proceedings under Silvanus, the presiding bishop of the Numidian province. In the letter of this provincial council to Pope Innocent, the bishops say that they write, in imitation of their brethren at Carthage, 'to the Apostolic See.' They speak of Cœlestius, as well as Pelagius, being still 'in the Church' (n. 3), although the former had been anathematised and excommunicated in Africa. Only his appeal to Rome could justify them in thus speaking. The three saintly bishops, Augustine, Alypius, and Possidius, were present at this council, and the synodical letter to the Pope strikes the same key-note as that of the Carthaginian council. 'Because the Lord, by the special bounty of His grace, has placed you in the Apostolic See,' is their opening salutation. They excuse themselves, after setting forth the heresy, for saying so much to one who is doubtless moved to act of his own accord, and then speak of Cœlestius being still within the Church (n. 3). And they give their reason for wishing for the exercise of authority in this matter in words which ought to be written over every page of those treatises which endeavour to enlist the witness of 'the Church of North Africa in the days of St. Augustine' against the supremacy of the Holy See. They say, 'We think . . . that those who hold such perverse and pernicious opinions will yield more readily to the authority of your Holiness,² derived from the authority of the Holy Scriptures.' But whether they will or not, there are 'others who, as your Reverence perceives, have to be cared for quickly and at once.'

¹ 'Quæ majore gratia de sede Apostolica prædicas.'

² So they speak of it as (i.) something beyond their own, and (ii.) as of divine institution.

At the same time Aurelius, Augustine, Alypius, Evodius, and Possidius wrote besides a joint letter to the Pope to the same effect, asking for his rescripts.

III. We have now to consider the two celebrated letters of St. Innocent in reply, and I shall quote them, not as showing what he claimed, but what the African bishops are found to have accepted without a murmur. These bishops, it will be seen, were either the tamest and most hypocritical of men, or they believed in Papal supremacy.

To the synod at Carthage he writes: ¹ 'Preserving the ancient tradition, and mindful of the ecclesiastical discipline, you have in true method added strength to your religion,² not less by your present consultation [of us] than by your sentence having approved the principle of referring to our judgment, knowing what is due to the Apostolic See, since all of us who have been placed in this position desire to follow the Apostle himself, from whom the episcopate itself and all the authority of this office has proceeded.³ Following him, we know how to condemn what is wrong and approve what deserves approval.⁴ The same is the case as to your judgment that the arrangements of the Fathers are not to be trodden under foot, in that they decreed, not by a human but by a divine sentence, that whatever is done from the separated and remote provinces they would not consider should be final unless it should come to the cognisance of the Apostolic See, so that whatever sentence shall have been justly delivered should be confirmed by the entire authority of this see, and that just as all waters should flow from their natal fount and the pure streams of the uncorrupt head flow through the diverse regions of the whole world, so other Churches should take from this see (*inde sumerent*) what to teach, whom to cleanse, who should be avoided, as stained with ineradicable filth, by the wave that is worthy of pure bodies.' He then gave his decision.

This one rescript contains the teaching of the Vatican

¹ Aug. Ep. 181.

² 'Vestrae religionis vigorem firmastis.'

³ 'A quo ipse episcopatus et tota auctoritas nominis hujus emerit.'

⁴ It is obvious that St. Innocent speaks of the infallibility of the Holy See. It is 'sequentes,' not 'cum sequamur.'

Council entire. Before, however, considering its reception, listen to the sister letter to the Council of Milevis: ¹

'Diligently, therefore, and fittingly do you consult the arcana of the Apostolic office (a dignity, into which flows the care of all the Churches, besides those things which are without) on matters of anxiety, as to what opinion should be held, following the ancient rule, which you know as well as I do has been kept always by the whole world. . . . Why have you confirmed this, unless as knowing that replies are ever emanating from the Apostolic fountain through all provinces to those who petition it? Especially as often as a matter of faith is being ventilated, I consider that all our brethren and fellow-bishops are in duty bound to refer only to Peter, that is, to the author of their own dignity and office, as your love has now referred, what may be for the common good of all Churches through the whole world. For the inventors of wrong must necessarily become more cautious, when they shall see that at the report of a double synod they are separated from ecclesiastical communion by the decrees of our sentence.'

The Pope then proceeds to cut off Pelagius and Cœlestius from the communion of the Church by Apostolic authority ('*apostolici vigoris auctoritate*') until they repent; and in his reply to the five bishops he says that his sentence will have its effect in whatever part of the world Pelagius may be, and that he has no reason to suppose that he has been absolved by any synod, because, if he had, letters would have at once been sent to Rome. If he has repented, it is not for us, says St. Innocent, to summon him to Rome, but for him to hasten here that he may be absolved.

IV. Now, the important point for the argument of this book is, How did the African bishops, and, in particular, St. Augustine himself, receive this letter? The whole of the Vatican teaching is contained in it. This simple fact is not without its bearing on much that has been written of late. The mere fact that that teaching was fully before the public consciousness of the Church in the year 416 has left St. Leo little or nothing to add in regard to the authority of the

¹ Aug. Ep. 182.

Apostolic See. But the important point is, Did the African bishops, did any African bishop, take exception to St. Innocent's definitions of the place occupied by Rome towards the rest of the Church as *the See of Peter*? Did they throw out the remotest hint that, in accepting the net result of St. Innocent's letters, they excepted the passages about the authority with which it was done? Not one. Yet the letter was much before the world. Later on, three African councils quoted one of the very passages in which St. Innocent so clearly defines the office of the See of Peter. This, it will be said, was too late to be a witness of the Early Church. But a very important writer, St. Prosper, a Gallic bishop, writing as a contemporary in defence of St. Augustine against Cassian, speaks of St. Innocent as 'most worthy of the See of Peter.' The expression is significant, for Prosper knew well what St. Innocent had said of that See. Also, 214 African bishops said: 'We determined that the judgment should stand which was issued by the venerable Bishop Innocent from the See of the most blessed Peter.' They are referring to these very letters of Innocent, and again, I say, the reference to the 'See of Peter,' considering what those letters contain about it, is significant. I have been unable to find any single hint in any contemporary writer to the effect that St. Innocent was exaggerating the privileges of his see. Indeed, he hardly went beyond the declaration of the African bishops as to the Scriptural source of his authority.¹

But what of St. Augustine himself? St. Augustine says that Innocent, 'in reference to all things, wrote back to us in the same way in which it was lawful and the duty of the Apostolic See to write.'²

I do not know how it would be possible for St. Augustine to set his signature to the Vatican decrees by anticipation in plainer terms. Of these two great letters of Pope Innocent he says, in another place, challenging the Pelagian bishop, Julian, 'Reply to him [*i.e.* Innocent], yea, rather to the Lord Himself, whose testimony that prelate used.'³ Again, he

¹ The *Liber Pontificalis* speaks of St. Innocent having drawn up a 'constitutum' for the whole Church.

² *Ep.* 183, n. 2.

³ *Lib. i. c. Julian. c. 4.*

says that if anyone should come across Pelagians, he is no longer to exercise towards them a mistaken mercy; he is not to conceal them, but to bring them before their bishop. 'For already two councils have been sent (or have sent) to the Apostolic See about that matter. Thence rescripts have come. The case is ended; would that the error may be sometime ended too!'¹ St. Augustine knew that there were plenty who had already, when he wrote these words, resisted the decision of the Holy See, but nevertheless that decision was authoritative—'The case is ended.'

It has been customary to express the latter sentence in the short maxim, 'Rome has spoken; the case is at an end'—words which, it will be seen, are the exact equivalent of what St. Augustine here says.

Hardly any decree exists in which the position of the Apostolic See has been more clearly defined than in that of St. Innocent; and no decree was received in terms of more unqualified admiration by the Church of North Africa in the time of St. Augustine.

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

Dr. Pusey² has made the relationship of Zosimus towards Pelagianism one of his test cases against the infallibility of the Holy See; but in his handling of that Pope's history he has, in express terms, whether he knew it or not, contradicted St. Augustine, and in his own imaginary history of St. Zosimus he has founded his opposition on an incorrect description of Papal infallibility. It is the old story of the conflict between science and religion. The opposition is always found to be between imaginary facts (or gratuitous deductions) and Christian teaching, or between ascertained facts and a caricature of that teaching. In this case neither the facts exist nor is the representation of our teaching correct.

I. In A.D. 417 Zosimus succeeded St. Innocent, and Coelestius at once hastened to Rome and resumed the appeal against

¹ *Serm.* cxxi. n. 10.

² *Sermon on the Rule of Faith*, Pref. p. xiv, and *Eirenicon* pt. iii. pp. 219-226.

the African sentence, of which he had given notice at the time, but which he had failed to prosecute.¹

Zosimus admitted him to an audience. Cœlestius had brought with him a letter of approbation from the Bishop of Jerusalem, and had avowed his desire to submit to the decrees of Innocent.² It is this that alters the whole case, and wrests the memory of this Pope from the accusation which Dr. Pusey so persistently brought against him. It is this that never appears in that writer's arraignment of the Pope. St. Innocent had expressly said³ that if Cœlestius and Pelagius should condemn their depraved teaching, they were to receive 'the usual medicine'—i.e. be received back into the Church. They did present documents in which they promised amendment.⁴ Dr. Pusey says that the document which they presented was heretical, and that Zosimus failed in his guardianship of the faith, because he approved a Pelagian confession.⁵ St. Augustine says he did no such thing. He insists upon the fact that, all through, St. Zosimus was entirely on the orthodox side. These are his words:—'Zosimus never said, never wrote, that what they think about children is to be held—moreover, also, he bound over Cœlestius again and again (*crebra interlocutione*), when he was endeavouring to purge himself, to the necessity of consenting (*consentiendum*) to the above-mentioned letters of the Apostolic See' (i.e. the letters of Innocent); and he argues that whilst Zosimus eventually condemned Cœlestius and Pelagius, repeatedly and authoritatively ('*repetita auctoritate*'), what took place meanwhile 'was the most kindly persuasion [for the purpose] of correction, not the most hateful approval of depravity.'⁶ And elsewhere he insists that Zosimus dealt with Cœlestius on the understanding 'that he should condemn what had been objected against him by the deacon Paulinus [i.e. at Carthage], and give his assent to the letters which had emanated from his own predecessor,'⁷ i.e. St. Innocent. St. Augustine is meeting the cavils of the Pelagians, who wished to make out that the Pope, St. Zosimus,

¹ Paulini *Libell. ad Zosim.* apud Baron. ad ann. 418.

² Zosim. *Ep. i. ad Africanos.*

³ Innocentii *Ep. xxx.*

⁴ Marius Mercator, i. 4.

⁵ *Sermon on the Rule of Faith*, Pref. p. xiv.

⁶ Aug. lib. ii. *ad Bonif. cap. 3.*

⁷ Cf. *Lib. de Pecc. Orig.*, cap. 6 and 7.

had favoured their cause; and by an appeal to the actual history of the case, he overthrows their contention, and in doing this he answers Dr. Pusey by anticipation.

II. Moreover, St. Zosimus did not absolve these heretics there and then, but wrote to Africa for any 'instruments' of information, and said that if no one offered within two months to present a further case against Cœlestius and Pelagius, he should consider all doubt removed.¹ He had received their letter of entreaty, he says, before he gave judgment.² The African Fathers had met and represented to the Pope that his absolving these heretics would cause great confusion. They said that they decided that the decision of St. Innocent should hold good *until* Pelagius should confess that the doctrine he had taught was false.³

Zosimus was really acting with the caution of a judge: and as a judge he was in the right. It is the office of a judge to give sentence according to the evidence produced, and Zosimus was, from a formal point of view, right in his decision to hear Cœlestius and Pelagius. They professed amendment, and until evidence of their insincerity was forthcoming, Zosimus was in duty bound to admit them to a hearing. Dr. Pusey is mistaken in nearly every assertion that he makes on this subject. He says that Zosimus 'formally acquitted' Cœlestius. He only promised to do so if nothing from Africa turned up to the contrary, but meanwhile he discovered his insincerity. Dr. Pusey also says that Cœlestius 'presented to Zosimus an heretical confession of faith.' Now St. Augustine expressly says that this document was not heretical. He calls it 'Catholic.' Whence this tremendous difference between St. Augustine and Dr. Pusey?

III. St. Augustine shall explain. He says that Cœlestius and Pelagius promised submission and correction, if in anything they were judged to be wrong. This, according to our saint, stamped the document as Catholic. There were errors contained in it, it is true; but St. Zosimus himself says to the Africans that they have misunderstood the text of his letters, as a whole, 'as though we had given credence to Cœlestius in all things, and without discussing his words, had

¹ *Ep. i.*

² *Ep. iii.*

³ Prosper, *Lib. c. Coll. cap. v. n. 8.*

assented, so to speak, to every syllable.'¹ It was the submission promised to the Apostolic See, which made Zosimus accept them as worthy of a hearing, and it was this that, St. Augustine expressly says, made the document 'Catholic in its meaning.'²

Pelagius said of his confession of faith: 'In which, if anything has been laid down unskilfully or incautiously, we desire to be corrected by you, who hold both the faith and the See of Peter; but if this our confession is approved by the judgment of your apostolate, then, whoever shall affix a stain on my character will prove himself to be unlearned, or ill-willed, or even not a Catholic, and not me to be a heretic.'

This was the addition which in St. Augustine's judgment made the document strictly Catholic in tone.

Cœlestius likewise said, 'We offer them' (i.e. their teachings) 'to be approved by your apostolic judgment [lit. the judgment of your apostolate], so that if perchance any error of ignorance has crept in upon us, as being men, it may be corrected by your sentence.'

Consequently, Marius Mercator, whose authority is of great moment, says that Cœlestius 'by frequent answers' gave hopes that he condemned the heads of teaching for which he had been condemned at Carthage, and that this was the reason why 'he was thought worthy of some kindness by that holy bishop' (Zosimus), for he 'was commanded with special urgency' to renounce what had there been objected against him.³

I have said that Zosimus was acting in the spirit of a real judge, and this his letter to the Africans shows. They had really acted without the proper procedure. Although (as it proved) substantially right, they were formally wrong. They had acted on the accusation of two deposed bishops, Eros and Lazarus, whose motives were not beyond question, and who,

¹ Zos. *Ep.* iii.

² He says (*Ep.* clvii. *ad Opt.*) that 'the Catholic faith' is so clear in Zosimus' letter 'that it is not lawful for Christians to doubt concerning it.' And that it was Catholic 'because it is the part of a Catholic mind' to do as Cœlestius then pretended to do, viz. consent to the letters of Pope Innocent (*c. du. Ep. Pelag.* lib. ii. c. 5).

³ *Common. sup. nomine Cœlestii*, cap. i. § 4.

as degraded from their office, had no longer the right of accusation.¹ Zosimus, who had the care of all the Churches, pointed out the evils that would ensue if such wandering stormy petrels as Eros and Lazarus were allowed to enter upon the rôle of accusers of others. And in their previous trial the Africans had failed in duty towards Cœlestius, who had given notice of appeal to Rome; for, although they appear to have respected the appeal, they took no care to have it properly conducted. It must be remembered also that Zosimus did not rehandle the dogmatic question. It was merely with the sincerity of Cœlestius and Pelagius that he dealt, and in this he was deceived. But this has nothing to do with his infallibility. Rome has never taught, Rome does not teach to-day, that the occupant of the Holy See cannot be deceived, but only that when he is led to determine a matter of faith or of the moral law as of obligation on the whole Church, he is secure of divine assistance.

The whole case, therefore, of Zosimus is outside the region of infallibility, as that infallibility is defined in the Vatican decree. As Facundus, the African writer, says, in reference to the whole matter, 'Simplicity, through not penetrating the wiliness of the wicked, ought not to be reckoned a crime;' and, as St. Augustine says, Pelagius could not deceive the Church of Rome beyond a certain point. Zosimus discovered that Cœlestius was not in earnest, summoned him to appear, and on his non-appearance excommunicated and anathematised him.

IV. But he did more than that. He drew up an encyclical on the matter of faith, which consisted of an enlarged form of the decree of Innocent, accepted by the African Church; and by the advice of St. Augustine, the subscription to this was made obligatory on all bishops, and on the laity whenever suspected of heretical leanings.² The emperor gave the aid of his civil authority, and St. Augustine of his

¹ This, at any rate, was the view of Zosimus. Tillemont has done his best to defend them. But see Garnier's notes to Marius Mercator for an answer (Migne's edition).

² In writing to the Africans the emperor spoke of his rescript as agreeing with their decision, which was true. But it was also true that in a higher sense he followed the judgment of Zosimus. Cf. Possidius, *Vita S. Aug.* cap. xviii.

pen, which for some years he devoted to this subject, for the settlement of which he claimed the decree of St. Innocent and the encyclical of St. Zosimus embodying and enforcing that decree.

St. Zosimus, in writing to the Africans concerning his decision to allow Coelestius a hearing, said: 'Although the tradition of the Fathers has attributed so great authority to the Apostolic See, that no one would venture to dispute concerning its judgment, and has always guarded the same by canons and regulations, and the current discipline of the Church up to this time, by its laws, pays due reverence to the name of Peter, from whom she traces her descent (for canonical antiquity by the judgments of all willed that such power should accrue to this Apostle, derived also from the very promise of Christ our God, that he could loose what was bound and bind what was loosed, an equal condition of power was given to those who obtained the inheritance of the see with his approval, for he has the care as well of all the Churches as in a special manner of this his own see. . . . Since, then, Peter is the head of such authority, and he has confirmed the subsequent desires of all our ancestors, that the Roman Church should be sustained by human *as well as* divine laws . . .), nevertheless, though such is our authority, that no one can withdraw himself from our judgment, we have done nothing which we have not of our own accord brought to your knowledge by our letters,' &c.

I produce this passage by way of showing the kind of teaching which Africa received from Rome, and which nowhere in St. Augustine's voluminous writings finds any contradiction: with which, on the contrary, his teaching, as seen above, fully harmonises.

We look in vain in the history of the Church of North Africa at this time for any disclaimer, any suggestion, that Rome was not the See of the Apostle Peter, and, as such, the inheritor of peculiar powers of jurisdiction. She assumed this position as in duty bound; she instinctively quoted the divine authority by which she acted, and Africa on the whole listened, applauded, co-operated, and obeyed. Such is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the facts quoted

above. So dependent was Africa on Rome, that when the Donatists boasted that some Easterns had written letters of sympathy, St. Augustine argued that these Easterns must have been Arians, because 'never would an Eastern Catholic [Church] write to the Bishop of Carthage, passing over the Bishop of Rome'¹—in other words, all ecclesiastical communication would come from the East through Rome.² And in this great contest with Pelagianism, Prosper, in his historical defence of St. Augustine against Cassian, writes, with the knowledge of a contemporary, that 'the Pope Zosimus of blessed memory added the strength of his own judgment to the decrees of the African Councils, and armed the right hands of all the prelates *with the sword of Peter* to the destruction of the impious.'

§ III.—*Apiarius, or the Dispute as to a particular Exercise of Papal Jurisdiction and the best Mode of Procedure in regard to the inferior Clergy.*

I. But a question arose as to the best method of exercising this jurisdiction of the See of Peter over the Church of North Africa. The course of appeal was in the case of bishops, first, to the province, next to a general synod, and then to Rome. But in regard to priests and deacons, the Africans drew up a canon in A.D. 418 to the effect that these 'inferior' clergy could appeal first to bishops in the neighbourhood then to the primate of a province, or to a national synod, but no further.³ Pope Zosimus had thought fit to disregard the mode of procedure afterwards laid down in this their canon, by admitting a priest named Apiarius to communion. He afterwards commissioned his legate, Faustinus, to impress upon the Africans that his procedure was not novel, but that its principle had been included in the Nicene canons. The

¹ *Con. Cresconium*, lib. iii. cap. 34, § 38.

² The communication about the Nicene canons was by agreement with Rome.

³ Just as in England there is no legal appeal in a criminal case from the verdict of a British jury; which is an instance of the truth that the right of access to the supreme authority is not an essential consequence of its supremacy. The authority, still supreme, may be exercised by an inferior court. It is, in a word, all a matter of arrangement.

Africans had not this canon in their own copies; they therefore asked leave to communicate with the East, and see if their copies tallied with those at Rome, and, indeed, they insisted that they ought to be allowed thus to assure themselves as to the gap in their own copies. Meanwhile, St. Augustine proposed that they should act in obedience to the regulations which Zosimus had included amongst the canons of Nicæa. They did not say that they would not obey, even if their own copies of the canons were found to be correct. They said they would consider the question further.

Now, without entering here into the question whether the canons of general councils were above the Pope or not, it is certain that the Popes regarded themselves as the custodians of these councils, and as bound in conscience to govern according to their requirements. It was, therefore, quite consistent with respect for the Pope's supremacy to plead that he was in this instance departing from the canonical regulations. A Catholic bishop now might do the same, if a case arose; and it may be added, that since the Church has a human side, a little warmth is wont to arise over such contentions when they are of great interest to the parties engaged.

It was, therefore, no failure in obedience, or respect, on the part of the African Fathers, to say what they did on this occasion. The failure would have been in resisting the Papal decision if, after common consultation, it did not harmonise with their own judgment. To this pass, however, matters never came. History deserts us just when we should have wished her to speak; we only know that the Church in North Africa eventually settled down to the arrangement which Zosimus called that of a Nicene canon.

II. But this is to anticipate. The copies of the Nicene canons from the East arrived in 419,¹ and we hear nothing more of

¹ There was no sort of infallibility about the version of the canon that Atticus sent from Constantinople; nor is it at all certain that the Alexandrians possessed the canons intact. Neither of them ever acted as though the African contention were vital. And, indeed, the Africans put in a saving clause as to clinging to their own custom, viz. 'if they should be strictly observed by you in Italy.' They imply that they would be guided by Italian custom. Antioch did not send her canons. Cf. note at the end of Appendix II., p. 474.

the matter until four years afterwards, when the same scandalous priest came on to the scene, again appealed to Rome, and was again unhappily absolved. This was under Celestine. Meanwhile the Papal legate had succeeded in making himself obnoxious to the Africans, and they seem to have made an effort to do away with legates *a latere* for ever. They accordingly wrote a letter in which they entreated St. Celestine to send no more legates. They also 'earnestly entreat' ¹ him to allow matters to be terminated (they are alluding to the case of the priest Apiarius, not to the case of bishops) where they arose. They cannot suppose that Almighty God would give wisdom to one man (in allusion to Faustinus, who had 'opposed the whole assembly of bishops') over against innumerable bishops; and to drag cases all the way to Rome involved the impossibility of having the proper array of witnesses, and as for legates *a latere*, no canon provides for such.

The letter in which these statements occur differs in tone from any other communication from the African Church: it is evidently written with a tinge of bitterness; but one or two points are worthy of special notice. First, they do not ask St. Celestine not in any case to admit persons excommunicated at a distance (*e.g.* in Africa) to communion, nor do they ask him under no circumstances to reverse the judgments of the Africans; they only ask him not to do this 'too readily, hastily, and unduly.' They do not oppose the principle of Papal jurisdiction, but urge, as they had every right to do, great care in its exercise. Secondly, they give a reason why the presence of a legate *a latere* is to be deprecated. It is not that he represents a false principle of jurisdiction, but that it leads to pride. Faustinus had evidently been lording it over Africa. They had borne with him so far, for it was not contrary to their faith to be ruled from Rome, but they trust St. Celestine—nay, they are sure they can rely on him—not to send any more, 'lest we should seem to introduce the smoky pride of the world.' These 'executors' of the Papal mandates were apt, as we learn from St. Augustine, to be accompanied

¹ 'Impendio deprecamur.'