

THOMAS ALLIES

THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND CLEARED
FROM THE CHARGE OF
SCHISM

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*The Church of England cleared from the charge of Schism Upon Testimonies
of Councils and Fathers of the first six centuries:*

Содержание

ADVERTISEMENT	4
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLEARED	8
FROM	
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	65

The Church of England cleared from the charge of Schism Upon Testimonies of Councils and Fathers of the first six centuries

ADVERTISEMENT

The writer of the following pages is more and more convinced that the whole question between the Roman Church and ourselves, as well as the Eastern Church, turns upon the Papal Supremacy, as at present claimed, being of divine right or not. *If it be*, then have we nothing else to do, on peril of salvation, but submit ourselves to the authority of Rome: and better it were to do so before we meet the attack, which is close at hand, of an enemy who bears equal hatred to ourselves and to Rome; the predicted Lawless One, the Logos, reason, or private judgment of apostate humanity rising up against the Divine Logos, incarnate in His Church. *If it be not*, then may we

take courage; for the position of the Church of England being tenable, all the evils within her pale, which we are now so deeply feeling, will, by God's blessing, be gradually overcome. As to practical abuses in her, who will venture to say they are so great as in the Roman Church of the tenth century, when the First See was filled successively by the lovers of abandoned women, who made and deposed Popes at their will? Our cause being good, all that we have to deplore of actual evil should lead to more earnest intercession, more continued striving after that love which breathes itself forth in unity, but should not shake the confidence of any obedient heart in our mother's title. When the Donatists made the crimes of individuals an excuse for breaking unity, St. Augustin reminded them, that the crimes of the chaff do not prejudice the wheat, but that both must grow together till the Lord of the harvest send forth his angels to make the separation.

The writer will not conceal that he took up this inquiry for the purpose of satisfying his own mind. Had he found the Councils and Fathers of the first six centuries bearing witness *to* the Roman supremacy, as at present claimed, instead of *against* it, he should have felt bound to obey them. As a Priest of the Church Catholic in England, he desires to hold, and to the best of his ability will teach, all doctrine which the undivided Church always held. He finds by reference to those authorities which could not be deceived, and cannot be adulterated, that while they unanimously held the Roman primacy, and the patriarchal

system, of which the Roman pontiff stood at the head, they as unanimously did not hold, nor even contemplate, that supremacy or monarchy which alone Rome will now accept as the price of her communion. They not only do not recognise it, but their words and their actions most manifestly contradict it. This is, in one word, his justification of his mother from the sin of Schism. If true, it is sufficient: if untrue, he knows of no other.

But should any opponent think these pages worthy of a reply, the writer warns him, at the outset, that he must in fairness discard that old disingenuous trick of using testimonies of the Fathers to the primacy of the Roman See in the episcopal and patriarchal system, in order to prove the full papal supremacy, as now claimed, in a system which is nearly come to pure monarchy. By this method, because the Fathers recognise the Bishop of Rome as successor of St. Peter, they are counted witnesses to that absolute power now claimed by the Roman pontiff, though they recognise other Bishops, in just the same sense, to be successors of the holy Apostles; or though they call every Bishop's see the see of Peter, as the great type and example of the episcopate. What such an one has to establish in order to justify the Roman Church, and to prove that the English and the Eastern are in Schism, is, that Roman doctrine, as stated by Bellarmine, which is really the key-stone of the whole system, that "Bishops succeed not properly to the Apostles," "for they have no part of the true apostolic authority," but that "all ordinary jurisdiction of Bishops descends immediately from the Pope," and that "the Pope has,

full and entire, that power which Christ left on the earth for the good of the Church."¹ Let this be proved on the testimony of the first six centuries, and if it be true, nothing can be more easy than to prove it, as the contradictory of it is attempted to be proved in the following pages, and all controversy will be at an end. We claim that it should be proved, for even De Maistre, who has put forward this theory with the least compromise, declares, "There is nothing new in the Church, and never will she believe save what she has always believed."²

¹ Bellarmin. de Rom. Pont. Lib. iv. 25; iv. 24; i. 9.

² De Maistre, du Pape. Liv. i. ch. i.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLEARED FROM THE CHARGE OF SCHISM

The course of events, for some time past, has been such as to force upon the most faithful sons of the Church of England the consideration of questions which they would rather have left alone, as long ago settled; for the nature of these questions is such, not to speak of their intricacy and painfulness, as almost to compel the student to place himself, as it were, *ab extra* to that community, which he would rather regard with the unreasoning and unhesitating instinct of filial affection. One of these questions, perhaps the first which directly meets and encounters him, is the charge of Schism brought against the Church of England on account of the events of the sixteenth century, and her actual state of separation from the Latin communion, which has been their result. Time was, and that not long since, when it might have been thought a sort of treason for one who ministers at the altars of the Church of England, and receives by her instrumentality the gift of Life, so much as to entertain the thought, whether there was a flaw in the commission of his spiritual mother, a flaw which, reducing her to the condition of a sect, would invalidate his own sonship. And certainly the treatment of such a question must be most painful

to any one, who desires to be obedient and dutiful, and therefore to be at peace. How can it be otherwise, when, instead of eating his daily portion of food in his Father's house, he is called upon to search and inquire whether indeed he have found that house at all, and be not rather a fugitive or an outcast from it. Such, however, is the hard necessity which is come upon us. Let no one imagine that it is our *choice* to speak on such subjects. We are in the case of a beleaguered soldier in an enemy's country; he may not think of peace; he must maintain his post or die; his part is not aggression, but defence: the matter at issue is the preservation of all that he holds dear, or extermination. The question of *schism* is a question of salvation.

But over and above the general course of events which forces us to reconsider this question, circumstances have taken place in the past year which we may boldly pronounce to be without a parallel in the history of the Church in England since she became divided from Catholic communion. Those who have followed with anxious sympathy that great restorative movement which, for twelve years, has agitated her bosom, – those who have felt with an ever increasing conviction, as time went on, and the different parties consolidated and unfolded themselves, that it was at the bottom a contest for the ancient faith delivered to the saints, for dogmatic truth, for a visible Church, in whom, as in a great sacrament, was lodged the presence of the Lord, communicating Himself by a thousand acts of spiritual efficacy, against the monstrous and shapeless latitudinarianism of the day;

against the unnumbered and even unsuspected heresies which have infected the whole atmosphere that we breathe; against, in fine, the individual will of fallen man, under cover of which the coming Antichrist is marshalling interests the most opposite, and passions the most contradictory; and further, those not few nor inconsiderable, we believe, who, by God's grace, owe to the teaching of *one man* in particular a debt they never can repay, – the recovery, perchance, of themselves from some form of error which he has taught them to discern, or the building them up in a faith whose fair proportions he first discovered to them, – these will feel with deeper sorrow than we can express the urgency of the occasion to which we allude. For how, indeed, could the question, whether the Church of England is fallen into schism, or be, as from the laver of their regeneration they have been taught to believe, a member of that one sacred Body in which Christ incarnate dwells, – how could this question be so forced upon their minds, as by the fact that her Champion, whom they had hitherto felt to be invincible, who had seemed her heaven-sent defender, with the talisman of victory in his hands, of whom they were even tempted to think

Si Pergama dextra

Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent,

that he, who fighting her battles, never met with his equal, unsubdued by any foe from without, has surrendered to his own doubts and fears; self-conquered, has laid down her arms, and has gone over to the camp opposed. Henceforth she has ranged

against her those powers of genius and that sanctity of life, to which so many of her children looked as to a certain omen of her Catholicity. They felt that she who bore such children, must needs be the spouse of God. It is no wonder that many others, of no mean name among us, and whom we could ill afford to spare, have had their doubts and disquietudes determined by such a fact as this. For the first time, I repeat, in the history of the Church of England have earnest and zealous children of hers, who desired nothing but their own salvation and the salvation of others, found no rest for the sole of their feet within her communion. Men who set out with the most single-minded purpose of defending her cause, nay, of winning back to her bosom alienated multitudes, of building her up in a beauty and a glory which she has not yet seen, and one, especially, who has been the soul of that great movement to restore her, – these have now, after years of hard fighting spent in her service, quitted her, and proclaim that all who value their salvation must quit her likewise.

These are some of the special circumstances which force upon the most reluctant the question of Schism. It was the privilege of other days to feed in the quiet pastures of truth. We have to seek the path to Heaven through the wilderness of controversy, where too often "the highways are unoccupied, and the travellers walk through byways." But it is a question which cannot be put off or thrust aside. No instructed Christian, who has any true faith or love, can bear the thought that he is out of the one fold of Christ. The question cannot be put off, for it will brood upon him in

his daily devotions and labours; a doubt as to the justice of his cause will paralyse all his exertions. It cannot be thrust aside; for the imputation of heresy on another has no tendency to answer the charge of schism against oneself. It must be met openly, honestly, and without shrinking. The charge of Schism touches immediately the Christian's conscience, for this reason, that, if true, it takes away from his prayers, his motives, his actions, his sufferings, that one quality which is acceptable to Almighty God. Here it is most true, that "all, which is not of faith, is sin: " he who does not believe, at least, that he is a member of the one Church, whatever outward acts he may perform, cannot please his Judge. In the words of one who himself gave his goods to feed the poor, and shed his blood for the testimony of Jesus,³ "if such men were even killed for confession of the Christian name, not even by their blood is this stain washed out. Inexpiable and heavy is the sin of discord, and is purged by no suffering. He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church; he can never attain to the kingdom, who leaves her with whom the kingdom shall be." "A man of such sort may indeed be killed, crowned he cannot be." Therefore the charge of Schism, when once brought before the reflecting mind, cannot be turned aside, – it must be met and answered: if it is not answered, at least to the conviction of the individual, it leaves upon the whole of his obedience the stain of insincerity, which is fatal. In this respect it is more pressing and imperious, more fatal, even than that of heresy. I observe this,

³ S. Cyprian de Unit. Ecc. 12.

because, in the comments I have seen on the painful departures of friends from among us, and in exhortations not to follow them, it has not seemed to be always recognised. When men leave us on the ground that we are in schism, surely all censure of them, and all defence of ourselves, is beside the mark, which does not meet and rebut this particular accusation. Under this no man can rest: it is useless, it is sinful, to ask him to rest, unless you can remove the imputation. To talk of "disappointment, or a morbid desire of distinction, or impatience under deficiencies, want of discipline, or sympathy in spiritual superiors," and such-like causes, as being those which have impelled a man to the most painful sacrifices, and "in the middle of his days to begin life again," is surely both untrue as regards the individual, and futile as to preventing others doing like him, when the ground of schism among others is alleged by himself, and is felt to lie at the bottom. Could we prove that the Church of England is clear both of enunciating heresy in her formularies, and of allowing it within her pale, it would in no respect answer this charge of schism against her, except so far as the *à priori* presumption, that she who is clear of the one would be clear of the other also. But it would remain to be met and answered specifically.

Moreover, I must confess that this is a point on which I, for one, cannot write in the spirit of a controversialist. I must state, to the best of my poor ability, and to the utmost reach of my limited discernment, not only the truth, but the whole truth. I cannot keep back points which tell against us. Gibbon charges

Thomassin with telling one half the truth, and Bingham the other half, in their books upon the ancient discipline of the Church. Whether this be true or not, I cannot, in my small degree, do likewise. I have found Bishop Beveridge, in his defence of the 37th Article, quote, in several instances, part of a paragraph from ancient Fathers, because it told for him, and omit the other part, because it told against him. And, in considering the celibacy of the clergy, it is usual to find Protestant writers enlarging on the fact, that St. Peter was married; and that the Greek Church has always allowed its parish priests to be married; while they keep out of view that St. Peter's marriage preceded his call, and that the Eastern Church never allowed those who were already in holy orders, to marry, but only to keep those wives which they had taken as laymen. Or again, in deference to the circumstances of the English Church, writers conceal the fact, that the whole Church of the East and West, on the authority, as to the first point, of the express Word of God itself, has never allowed a person who married twice, or who married a widow, to be in holy orders at all. I have observed Bingham, when he treats of celibacy, alluding triumphantly to the biography of St. Cyprian, by Pontius, to prove that an ancient saint, martyr, and bishop, of the third century, was a married man; but taking care to leave out the express notice of Pontius, that, from his conversion, he lived in continence. Those who wish to see on the Roman side another sort of unfairness alluded to in the Advertisement may look to the 6th Chapter of the 1st Book of De Maistre, on the Pope,

where they will find a host of quotations to prove the Supremacy, which only prove at the outside the Primacy; and by far the greater number of them might be paralleled by like expressions which are addressed to other bishops, but of which fact no mention is made. They are assumed in a sort of triumphant strain to prove the point in question, while, to the student of antiquity, their weakness, or, sometimes, their irrelevancy, only proves the reverse. This sort of disingenuousness is so common on both sides, that it may be said to be the besetting sin of controversialists. If, however, there be any question in which perfect candour is requisite, it is surely this of schism. Would it not be a most miserable success to be able to deceive oneself, or others, as to whether one is or is not within the covenant of salvation? The special pleader in such a case is surely the most unhappy of all men; for he deprives himself of the greatest of blessings. He seems to win his cause, while he most thoroughly loses it; for if a man be indeed out of the ark of Christ's Church, what benefit can one possibly render him equal to that of bringing him within it? I write, then, with the strongest sense of responsibility on this subject, and shall not be deterred from making admissions, if truth require them, which seem to tell on the other side, and which have accordingly been shrunk from, or slurred over, by our defenders in former times.

And this leads to another consideration. The charge of Schism against the Church of England is, that by rejecting the Papal authority in the sixteenth century, she lost the blessing of

Catholic communion, and ceased to belong to that One Body to which salvation is promised. Now, in such a matter, the Church of England must be judged by principles which have been, from the first, and are still, recognised by all Christendom. Whatever obedience we may owe, in virtue of our personal subscription, to articles or other formularies, drawn up in the sixteenth century, it is obvious they can decide nothing here. What I mean will be best shown by an example. Suppose a person were to take the 6th Article, and set upon it a meaning, not at all uncommon in these days, viz. that the Church of England therein declares, that Holy Scripture is the sole standard of faith; and that every man must decide for himself, what is, or is not, contained in Holy Scripture; and that he, searching Holy Scripture for the purpose, can find nothing whatever said about the Papal authority; – it is obvious, that such a mode of arguing would be utterly inadequate either to terminate controversy, or, one would think, to quiet any troubled conscience: for whether or no this be the meaning of the 6th Article, the whole Greek and Latin Church would reject with horror such propositions as the first two put together, as being subversive of the very existence of a Church, and of all dogmatic authority. It is a valid argument enough to an individual to say, You have signed such and such documents, and are bound by them: but if he is in doubt whether the documents themselves be tenable, they cannot be taken to prove themselves. The decision of a province of the Church in the sixteenth century cannot be quoted to prove that that decision is right, for it is the very

thing called in question. It is the Reformation itself which is put on trial; it cannot appeal to itself as a witness; it must be content to bring its cause before a judge, whose authority all will admit, – and that judge, need we say, must be antiquity, and the consent of the undivided Church. And the Church of England, it must be admitted, has not shrunk from this appeal. Her often-quoted canon enjoins her ministers, in that part of their duty wherein most is left to their private judgment, "to teach nothing which they wish to be held and believed religiously by the people, save what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and what the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops, have collected out of that very doctrine." Thus she spoke in the year 1571. The Church had then passed through fifteen centuries of a chequered, but superhuman, and most marvellous existence. Her continuous life implies a continuity of principles, ruling her from the beginning; and any controversy which affects her well-being, as does that concerning the integrity or loss of a great member, must be judged according to those principles. The present position of the Church of England may be merely a provisional one, I firmly believe that such is the fact; but if she is to claim the allegiance of her children as a part of the Catholic Church, it must be proved that such her position is tenable upon the principles which directed that Church when undivided. In short, I propose honestly, though briefly, to meet this imputation of schism by an appeal to the authority of the first six centuries: an authority, which no Roman Catholic can slight or refuse.

Let us go back to the first period at which the universal Church, emerging from the fires of persecution, is found acting as one body. United, indeed, it had ever been from the day of Pentecost, in charity, in doctrine, in sacraments, in communion. The Christian people, scattered throughout the wide precincts of the Roman empire, and speaking its various tongues, was one in heart and spirit – "A peculiar people," like none other: the Bread which they ate, and the Cup which they drank, made them One living Body. But so long as the Church was engaged in a fierce and unrelenting conflict with the Paganism and despotism of the empire, she could hardly exhibit to the world her complete outward organization. So, although in the intervals of persecution, important provincial councils had been held, and though it was felt to be necessary for discipline that local synods should take place twice every year, yet not until the year 325, at the Council of Nicea, does the whole Church meet in representation; the immediate cause of that assemblage being a heresy so malignant as to threaten her existence, and which could be repressed by no less energetic means. That is a strongly marked and important point in her existence, throwing light upon the centuries preceding, and establishing irremovable landmarks for those ensuing, at which we have full means for judging what her constitution and government were. As the decrees of the 318 Fathers established for ever the true doctrine concerning the Eternal Son, so do they offer an imperishable and unambiguous witness concerning the discipline and hierarchy

of the Church. What was schism then, is schism now; what was lawful and compatible with Christian Sonship and privileges then, is so now. What then is the view they present us with? We find the Bishops throughout the whole world recognised, without so much as a doubt, to be the successors of the Apostles, invested with the plenitude of that royal Priesthood which the Son of God had set up on the earth in His own Person, and from that Person had communicated to His chosen disciples, and so possessed of whatever authority was necessary to govern the Church. Thus spoke a fresh and unbroken tradition, so universal and so unquestionable that no other voice was heard beside. Thus the Episcopal power may be safely recognised as of divine appointment: in truth it is scarcely possible to have stronger evidence than we have of this. One of the most learned of those who are opposed to us on the charge of schism, thus sums up the decisions "of all the Fathers and all the Councils of the first ages." "The Bishop represents Christ, and stands in his place on earth. As therefore the Priesthood of Christ embraces all sacerdotal authority and complete power to feed the flock, so that while we may indeed distinguish and define the various powers included in that fullness and perfection, yet it is a great crime to dis sever and rend them in any way from each other, just as we distinguish without dividing the attributes and perfections of the Godhead itself; so the Episcopate in its own nature contains the fullness of the Priesthood, and the perfection of the Pastoral office. For Christ received the perfection of the Priesthood from His

Father, when He was sent by Him. Moreover the perfection of the Priesthood, or both the Episcopal powers, (*i. e.* the Sacerdotal and the Pastoral,) He gave at once to His Apostles when he sent them as He himself was sent by the Father. Lastly, that same perfection they transmitted to Bishops, sending them as they themselves were sent by Christ." "Whence Bishops are Fathers by the most noble participation of divine Fatherhood which is on earth; so that here that expression of Paul is true – 'From whom every Fatherhood in heaven and earth is named.' For no greater Fatherhood is there on the earth than the Apostolical and the Episcopal." *Thomassin*, Part I. Liv. i. ch. 2.

And, viewed in itself, this power was sovereign and independent in every individual Bishop, who was the spouse of the Church, the successor of the Apostles, and of Peter, the centre of unity; able, moreover, to communicate this authority to others, and to become the source of a long line of spiritual descendants. But was this power in practice exercised in so unmodified a form? Would there not have been not only imminent danger, but almost certainty, that a power unlimited in its nature, committed to so large a body of men, who might become indefinitely more numerous, yet were each independent centres of authority, instead of tending to unity would produce diversity? Accordingly we find, together with the apostolical authority, admitted to be lodged in the Episcopal body in general, a preponderating influence exercised by certain sees, viz. by Rome in the West, and by Alexandria and Antioch in

the East. Under these leading Bishops are a great number of metropolitans; and others, again, like the Bishops of Cyprus, have their own metropolitan, but are not subordinate to either of the three great sees. Next to these, rank the Bishops of Ephesus, Cesarea, and Heraclea, who preside respectively over the provinces of Asia, Cappadocia, and Thrace, and were afterwards called Exarchs. And the source of this preponderating influence is to be traced to the fact that the Apostles laid hold of the principal cities, and founded Churches in them, which became centres of light to their several provinces, and naturally exercised a parental authority over their children. The three great Bishops, though not yet called Patriarchs, or even Archbishops, seem to have exercised all the power of Patriarchs. No general Council would be binding without their presence in person, or by deputy, or their subsequent ratification. Moreover, among these, the Bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter, has a decided preeminence. What the extent of that preeminence was, had not yet been defined; but it is very apparent, and acknowledged in the East as well as in the West. It does not seem, indeed, that his authority differed in *kind*, but only in *degree*, from that of his brethren, especially those of Alexandria and Antioch. The Apostolical Canons, more ancient than the Council of Nice, and representing the whole East, say: – "The Bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them, and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent; but each may do those things only which concern his

own parish, (*i. e.* diocese,) and the country places which belong to it. But neither let him (who is the first) do anything without the consent of all, for so there will be unanimity, and God will be glorified through the Lord Jesus Christ." Canon 34. The Council of Nicea mentions the sees of Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome in precisely similar terms: – "Let the ancient customs be maintained, which are in Egypt and Libya, and Pentapolis; according to which the Bishop of Alexandria has authority over all those places. For this is also customary to the Bishop of Rome. In like manner in Antioch, and in the other provinces, the privileges are to be preserved to the Churches." Canon 6. That is, as it would seem, let the Bishop of Alexandria have the power to consecrate Bishops in the three provinces of his Patriarchate, for the Bishop of Rome does the same in his, *i. e.* in the suburbicarian provinces, or in Italy, south of the province of Milan, and in Sicily. This precedence or prerogative of Rome, to whatever extent it reached, was certainly, notwithstanding the famous 28th Canon of Chalcedon, not either claimed or granted merely because Rome was the imperial city. It was explicitly claimed by the Bishop of Rome himself, and as freely conceded by others to him, as in a special sense successor of St. Peter. From the earliest times that the Church comes before us as an organized body, the germ at least of this preeminence is observable. From the very first, the Roman Pontiff seems possessed himself, as from a living tradition which had thoroughly penetrated the local Roman Church, with a consciousness of some peculiar influence

he was to exercise on the whole Church. This consciousness does not show itself here and there in the line of Roman Pontiffs, but one and all, whatever their individual characters might be, seem to have imbibed it from the atmosphere which they breathed. St. Victor, and St. Stephen, St. Innocent, St. Leo the Great, and St. Gregory, are quite of one mind here. That they were the successors of St. Peter, who himself sat and ruled and spoke in their person, was as strongly felt, and as consistently declared, by those Pontiffs who preceded the time of Constantine, and who had continually to pay with their blood the price of that high preeminence, as by those who followed the conversion of the empire, when the honour of their post was not accompanied by so much danger. We are speaking now, be it remembered, of the feeling *which possessed them*. The feeling of their brother Bishops concerning them may have been less definite, as was natural: but, at least, even those who most opposed any arbitrary stretch of authority on their part, as St. Cyprian, fully admitted that they sat in the See of Peter, and ordinarily treated them with the greatest deference. This is written so very legibly upon the records of antiquity, that I am persuaded any one, who is even very slightly acquainted with them, cannot with sincerity dispute it. I cannot think Mr. Newman has the least overstated the fact when he says, "Faint they (the ante-Nicene Testimonies to the authority of the Holy See) may be one by one, but at least they are various, and are drawn from many times and countries, and thereby serve to illustrate each other, and form a body of

proof. Thus, St. Clement, in the name of the Church of Rome, writes a letter to the Corinthians, when they were without a Bishop. St. Ignatius, of Antioch, addresses the Roman Church, and it only out of the Churches to which he writes, as 'the Church which has the first seat in the place of the country of the Romans.' St. Polycarp, of Smyrna, betakes himself to the Bishop of Rome on the question of Easter;" (but the Pope, St. Anicetus, and he, not being able to agree as to the rule of keeping Easter, agreed to retain their several customs; a fact which is as much opposed to the present notion of the Roman Supremacy, as any fact can well be.) "The heretic, Marcion, excommunicated in Pontus, betakes himself to Rome. Soter, Bishop of Rome, sends alms, according to the custom of his Church, to the Churches throughout the empire, and, in the words of Eusebius, 'affectionately exhorted those who came to Rome, as a father his children.' The Montanists, from Phrygia, come to Rome to gain the countenance of its Bishop. Praxeas, from Africa, attempts the like, and for a while is successful. St. Victor, Bishop of Rome, threatens to excommunicate the Asian Churches. St. Irenæus speaks of Rome, as 'the greatest Church, the most ancient, the most conspicuous, and founded and established by Peter and Paul,' appeals to its tradition, not in contrast, indeed, but in preference to that of other Churches, and declares that 'in this Church every Church – that is, the faithful from every side, must meet,' or 'agree together, *propter potiolem principalitatem*.' 'O Church, happy in its position,' says Tertullian, 'into which

the Apostles poured out, together with their blood, their whole doctrine.' The Presbyters of St. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, complain of his doctrine to St. Dionysius, of Rome; the latter expostulates with him, and he explains. The Emperor Aurelian leaves 'to the Bishops of Italy and of Rome' the decision, whether or not Paul, of Samosata, shall be dispossessed of the see-house at Antioch. St. Cyprian speaks of Rome as 'the See of Peter, and the principal Church, whence the unity of the Priesthood took its rise, ... whose faith has been commended by the Apostles, to whom faithlessness can have no access.' St. Stephen refuses to receive St. Cyprian's deputation, and separates himself from various Churches of the East. Fortunatus and Felix, deposed by St. Cyprian, have recourse to Rome. Basilides, deposed in Spain, betakes himself to Rome, and gains the ear of St. Stephen."⁴

It must be observed that the *extent* of this authority, in the Chief See, has not been defined; but, whatever it was, it did not interfere with the divine right of the Bishops to govern each in his own diocese. They derived their authority by transmission from the Apostles, as the Bishop of Rome from St. Peter; the one was as much recognised as the other. They were not his *delegates*, but his *brethren*. Frater and Co-episcopus *they style him*, as he styles them, for hundreds of years after the Council of Nicea; owing him, indeed, and willingly rendering him the greatest deference, but never so much as imagining that their authority was derived from him. This fact, too, lies upon the

⁴ "Development," &c. p. 22.

face of all antiquity, and is almost too notorious to need proof. If, however, any be wanted, it is found in the names which Bishops bore both then, and for a long time afterwards, and in their mode of election and their jurisdiction. For their names: "It must first be confessed," says a very learned Roman Catholic, who, in his humility, shrunk from the Cardinalate offered to him for his services to the papal see, "that the name of Pope, of Apostle, of Apostolic Prelate, of Apostolic See, was still common to all Bishops, even during the three centuries which elapsed from the reign of Clovis to the empire of Charlemagne;" and he adds presently: "These august names are not like those vain and superficial titles with which the pride of men feeds itself; they are the solid marks of a power entirely from Heaven, and of a holiness altogether Divine."⁵ Indeed, the view which every where prevailed was that so admirably expressed by St. Cyprian: "Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur."⁶ "The Episcopate is one; it is a whole in which each enjoys full possession." St. Isidore, of Seville, says: "Since also the other Apostles received a like fellowship of honour and power with Peter, who also were scattered throughout the whole world, and preached the Gospel; whom, at their departure, the Bishops succeeded, who are established throughout the whole world in the seats of the Apostles."⁷ But Pope Symmachus

⁵ Thomassin, Part i. lib. i. ch. 4. De l'ancienne discipline de l'Eglise.

⁶ St. Cypr. de Unit. 4. Oxford Tr.

⁷ Quoted by Thomassin, *ut sup.*

(A.D. 498-514) has expressed the equality and unity of the Episcopate and Apostolate between the Pope and all Bishops, by the highest and most sacred similitude which it is possible to conceive. "For inasmuch as after the likeness of the Trinity, whose power is one and indivisible, the priesthood is one in the hands of various prelates, how suits it that the statutes of the more ancient be broken by their successors?"⁸ We are told by the same author: "Pope Hormisdas (A.D. 514-523) prescribed, and all the Bishops of the east subscribed, after the Patriarch John of Constantinople, a formulary of faith and of Catholic Communion, where, among other remarkable points, this is worthy of particular attention: – that as all Churches make but one Church, so all the thrones of the Apostolate, and all the Sees of the Episcopate, spread through all the earth, are but one apostolic see, inseparable from the see of Peter." This is the view of St. Augustin, expressed again and again in his writings, especially when he is explaining those remarkable words of our Lord to St. Peter, on which Roman Catholics ground the *scriptural* proof of his Primacy. "For it is evident that Peter, in many places of the Scriptures, represents the Church, (*personam gestet Ecclesiæ*) chiefly in that place where it is said, 'I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.' What! did Peter receive those keys, and Paul not receive them? Did Peter receive

⁸ Ibid.

them, and John and James not receive them, and the rest of the Apostles? Or are not those keys in the Church, where sins are daily remitted? But since in meaning hinted, but not expressed, (*in significatione*), Peter was representing the Church, what was given to him singly, was given to the Church. So, then, Peter bore the figure of the Church: the Church is the body of Christ."⁹ So St. Chrysostom: "But when I speak of Paul, I mean not only him, but also Peter, and James, and John, and all their choir. For as in a lyre there are different strings, but one harmony, so, too, in the choir of the Apostles, there were different persons, but one teaching; since one, too, was the Musician, even the Holy Spirit, who moved their souls. And Paul signifying this, said: 'Whether, therefore, it were they or I, so we preach.'"¹⁰ How little, on the one hand, the pre-eminence of St. Peter's see derogated from the apostolicity of other Bishops, or, on the other hand, their distinct descent and jurisdiction hindered them from paying due deference to the Chief See, is apparent likewise in these words of St. Jerome: "But, you say, the Church is founded upon Peter; although, in another place, this self-same thing takes place upon all the Apostles, and all receive the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, *and the strength of the Church is consolidated equally upon them*: nevertheless, for this reason, out of the twelve one is selected, that, by the appointment of a

⁹ S. Aug. Tom. v. 706, B.

¹⁰ S. Chrys. Tom. ii. 594, B.

head, the occasion of Schism may be taken away."¹¹ Thomassin doubts whether at the Council of Nicea, or even at that of Antioch, sixteen years afterwards, the name even of Archbishop was yet in use; the highest title used in those two Councils being that of Metropolitan. St. Epiphanius quotes a letter of Arius to Alexander, of Alexandria, in which he only gives him the quality of Pope and Bishop, but nowhere that of Archbishop.

So much for the equality of the names of Bishops in the fourth century, which recognises the essential equality and unity of their office. The laws in force respecting their consecration and jurisdiction are as decisive. Every Bishop, after being elected by the Clergy and people, and the assembled provincial Bishops, was consecrated by the Metropolitan of his province, except, indeed, in the Patriarchate of Alexandria, where the Primate, as we have seen, and not the Metropolitans under him, consecrated all Bishops. Where a Metropolitan had no immediate superior, in case of a vacancy, the Bishops of his own province consecrated him, as in the case of Carthage. Whatever might be the particular privileges of Patriarchs and Metropolitans, as a general rule, no one Bishop had direct jurisdiction in the diocese of another. The Bishops of the great sees, specially Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, announced their accession to each other, together with a profession of the orthodox faith. But as for any jurisdiction emanating from Rome to the great Bishops of the east, such a thing was never even imagined. Let us even rest the whole

¹¹ St. Jerome, tom. ii. 279, Vallarsi.

question on this important point, for it is absolutely necessary to the Papal theory; and I do not think any vestige of such a doctrine can be found in the first six centuries. At least, let it be shown; for, to assert it in the face of Canons which imply a system the very reverse of it, is merely begging the whole question. That in cases of difficulty, or disputed succession, or heresy, or schism, the voice of the Bishop of Rome would have great weight, is, indeed, indisputable. When the ship of the Church was in distress, whom should we expect to see at the rudder but St. Peter? Thus St. Jerome, himself baptized at Rome, naturally looks to Rome in this difficulty. Mr. Newman says:¹² "The divisions at Antioch had thrown the Catholic Church into a remarkable position; there were two Bishops in the see, one in connexion with the East, and the other with Egypt and the West, – with which, then, was Catholic Communion? St. Jerome has no doubt upon the subject. Writing to St. Damasus, he says: 'Since the East tears into pieces the Lord's coat, *and foxes lay waste the vineyard of Christ, so that among broken cisterns, which hold no water, it is difficult to understand where the sealed fountain and the garden inclosed is*, therefore by me is the chair of St. Peter to be consulted, and that faith which is praised by the Apostle's mouth, *thence now seeking food for my soul where of old I received the robe of Christ. Whilst the bad children have wasted their goods, the inheritance of the Fathers is preserved uncorrupt among you alone. There the earth from its fertile bosom returns the pure seed of the Lord a*

¹² Development, p. 279.

hundred fold: here the grain buried in the furrows degenerates into darnell and tares. At present the Sun of Righteousness rises in the West; but in the East that fallen Lucifer hath placed his throne. You are the light of the world: you the salt of the earth: you the vessels of gold and silver: but here the vessels of earth or wood await the iron rod and the eternal flame.' Therefore, though your greatness terrifies me, yet your kindness invites me. From the Priest the sacrifice claims salvation; from the Shepherd the sheep claims protection. Let us speak without offence: I court not the Roman height: I speak with the successor of the Fisherman, and the disciple of the Cross. I, who follow none as my chief but Christ, am associated in communion with thy blessedness; that is, with the See of Peter. On that rock the Church is built I know. Whoso shall eat the Lamb outside that house is profane... I know not Vitalis (the Apollinarian); Meletius I reject; I am ignorant of Paulinus. Whoso gathereth not with thee, scattereth; that is, he who is not of Christ is of Antichrist."¹³

Considering all the circumstances of the case, no one can wonder at St. Jerome's application. When it is remembered that the Roman See, up to that time, had been free from all suspicion of heresy, and that the Arian controversy was the one in question, and that he himself, of full manhood, had been baptized, and had lived at Rome, the force of his language is hardly surprising. His words certainly prove, what, I suppose, no student of antiquity can doubt, the Primacy of the Roman See: but could there be

¹³ The words in italics are left out by Mr. N.

a greater unfairness than to apply their bare letter to a state of things totally changed? or to consider expressions proving the *primacy* of Rome, as claimed in the fourth century, to prove equally a *supremacy* as claimed in the nineteenth, which is as different from the former as one thing can well be from another. This very St. Meletius, a man of pre-eminent sanctity of life, the ordainer of St. Chrysostom, dies, it would appear, out of communion with Rome, and has ever been accounted a saint in the Western as well as in the Eastern Church.

But to recur to the point of jurisdiction at the time of the Nicene Council. It is beyond question, both from the acts of that Council, and from the Apostolic Canons, which represent the Eastern Church in the second and third centuries, that, whatever the pre-eminence of Rome might consist in, there was no claim whatever to confer jurisdiction on Bishops out of the Roman Patriarchate, then comprising Italy, south of Milan, and Sicily. Even differences, any where arising, were to be settled in Provincial Councils. "It is necessary to know, that, up to the Council of Nicea, all ecclesiastical affairs had been terminated in the Councils of each Province; and there had been but very few occasions in which it had been necessary to convoke an assembly of several Provinces. The Council of Nicea, even, only speaks of Provincial Councils, and orders that all things should be settled therein."¹⁴ The testimony and conduct of St. Cyprian will illustrate the Roman Primacy, to which Mr. Newman claims

¹⁴ Thomassin, Part i. liv. i. ch. iii.

him as a witness. And such he is beyond doubt. In his fifty-fifth letter, which begins, "Cyprian to his brother Cornelius, greeting;" he complains bitterly to that Pope that Felicissimus and his party "dare to set sail, and to carry a letter from schismatical and profane persons to the see of Peter, and to the principal Church, whence the unity of the priesthood took its rise; nor consider that they are the Romans whose faith had been praised by the preaching of the Apostle, to whom faithlessness can have no access." This Mr. Newman considers a pretty strong testimony in his "cumulative argument" for the authority of Rome. It would be as well, however, to go on a little further, and see what was the cause of St. Cyprian's vehement indignation. It was, that Felicissimus ventured *to appeal to Pope Cornelius*, when his cause had already been heard and settled by St. Cyprian, at Carthage. "But what was the cause of their coming and announcing that a Pseudo-Bishop had been made against the Bishops? For, either they are satisfied with what they have done, and persevere in their crime, or, if they are dissatisfied, and give way, they know whither they may return. For, since it has been determined by all of us, and is both equitable and just, that the cause of every one be heard there where the crime has been committed, and *to every shepherd a portion of the flock is allotted, which each one rules and governs, as he is to give an account of his doings to the Lord*, it is certainly behoving that those over whom we preside should not run about, nor break the close harmony of Bishops with their deceitful and fallacious rashness, but should plead their

cause where they may find both accusers and witnesses of their crime; *unless to a few desperate and abandoned men the authority of the Bishops seated in Africa seem less*, who have already judged concerning them, and have lately condemned, by the weight of their sentence, their conscience, bound by many snares of crimes. Their cause has been already heard, their sentence already pronounced; nor is it becoming to the judgment of priests to be reprehended by the levity of a fickle and inconstant mind, when the Lord teaches and says, 'Let your conversation be yea, yea; nay, nay.'" Let any candid person say, whether he who so wrote to one whom he acknowledged as the successor of St. Peter, could have imagined that there was a Divine right in that successor to re-hear not only this, but all other causes; to reverse all previous judgments of his Brethren by his single authority; nay, more, to confer on all those Brethren their jurisdiction "by the grace of the Apostolic See."¹⁵

¹⁵ Of a passage in this letter, De Maistre says (Du Pape, liv. i. ch. 6): "Resuming the order of the most marked testimonies which present themselves to me on the general question, I find, first, St. Cyprian declare, in the middle of the third century, that heresies and schisms only existed in the Church because all eyes were not turned towards the Priest of God, towards the Pontiff who judges in the Church *in the place of Jesus Christ*." A pretty strong testimony, indeed, and one which would go far to convince me of the fact. Pity it is, that when one refers to the original, one finds that St. Cyprian is actually speaking of himself, and of the consequences of any where setting up in a see a schismatical Bishop against the true one. After this, who will trust De Maistre's facts without testing them? The truth is, he had taken the quotation at second hand, and never looked to see to whom it was applied. It suited the Pope so admirably that it must have been meant for him. But I recommend no one to change their faith upon the authority of quotations which they do not test.

Another letter of St. Cyprian to another Pope, St. Stephen, will set forth both his view of the Primacy, and of the Episcopal relation to it. He wishes St. Stephen to write a letter to the people of Arles, by which their actual Bishop Marcian, who had joined himself to the schismatic Novatian, might be excommunicated, and another substituted for him. This alone shows how great the authority of the Bishop of Rome in such an emergency was. But the tone of his language is worth considering. It is just such incidents as these which are made use of by Roman Catholic controversialists in late times to justify the full extent of Papal power now claimed.¹⁶ "Cyprian to his brother Stephen, greeting. Faustinus, our colleague at Lyons, dearest brother, hath more than once written to me, signifying what I know has certainly been reported to you also, both by him, and by the rest of our brother-Bishops, in that province, that Marcian of Arles, has joined himself to Novatian, and has departed from the unity of the Catholic Church, and from the agreement of our body and priesthood... This matter it is our duty to provide against and remedy, most dear brother, we, who considering the Divine clemency, and holding the balance of the Church's government, so exhibit to sinners our vigorous censure as not to deny the medicine of Divine goodness and mercy to the restoration of the fallen and the healing of the wounded. Wherefore it behoves you to write a very explicit letter to our fellow Bishops in the Gauls, that they may not any longer suffer our order (*collegio*

¹⁶ Epist. 67. De Marciano Arelatensi.

nostro) to be insulted by Marcian, obstinate, haughty, the enemy both of piety to God, and of his brethren's salvation... For, therefore, most dear brother, is the numerous body of priests joined together in mutual concord, and the bond of unity, that *if any one of our order* attempt to make a heresy, and to sever and lay waste the flock of Christ, the rest may fly to the rescue, and, like useful and merciful shepherds, collect the Lord's sheep into a flock... For, although we are many shepherds, yet we feed one flock; and we ought to collect and cherish all those sheep which Christ sought with His own blood and passion... For we must preserve the glorious honour *of our predecessors*, the blessed Martyrs, Cornelius and Lucius," (the last Popes,) "whose memory we indeed honour, but which you much more, most dear brother, who are become their successor, ought to distinguish and preserve by your weight and authority. For they being full of the spirit of God, and made glorious martyrs, determined that reconciliation was to be granted to the lapsed, and set down in their letters, that, after a course of penitence, the advantage of communion and peace was not to be refused them. *Which thing we all have everywhere entirely determined.* For there could not be in us a difference of judgment in whom there is One Spirit." Now, might it not be stated, that St. Cyprian wrote to Pope Stephen, to request him to depose Marcian, Bishop of Arles? But how much is the inference from this fact modified by the language of Cyprian himself? It is just such a letter as an Eastern Primate would have written to the Patriarch

of Alexandria, or of Antioch, to request his interference at a dangerous juncture. It bears witness, not to the present Papal, but to the Patriarchal, system. It tallies exactly with the spirit of him who wrote elsewhere, to the lapsed, "Our Lord, whose precepts and warnings we are bound to observe, regulating the honour of the Bishop, and the constitution of his Church, speaks in the Gospel, and says to Peter, 'I say unto thee that thou art Peter,' &c. Thence, according to the change of times and successions, the ordination of Bishops and the constitution of the Church has descended, *so that the Church is established upon the Bishops, and every act of the Church is directed by the same, its governors.* This being established by Divine law,"¹⁷ &c. It is evident that, if the see of Peter, so often referred to by St. Cyprian, means the local see of Rome, it also means the see of every Bishop who holds that office, whereof Peter is the great type, example, and source.

But it was reserved for a more celebrated controversy, fully to bring out St. Cyprian's view of the relation of the Bishop of Rome to the rest of the Episcopal body: I mean, of course, the controversy whether heretics should be admitted into the Church by rebaptization or by the imposition of hands. I most fully believe, be it observed, that Cyprian acknowledged the Roman Primacy, that he admitted certain high prerogatives to be lodged in the Roman Pontiff, as St. Peter's successor, which did not belong to any other Bishop. It is this very thing which makes his conduct the more remarkable. He took a very strong view on

¹⁷ S. Cyp. Ep. 29.

one side of the controversy in question: and St. Stephen took an equally strong one on the other. St. Stephen, we all know, turned out to be right. That fervent Pontiff, it may be remarked, when St. Cyprian would not give up his view, seemed inclined to treat him much as St. Gregory the Seventh did a refractory Emperor, or St. Innocent the Third, the dastard tyrant John. This may be very satisfactory to the modern defenders of Papal omnipotence, but St. Cyprian's conduct is not so at all. St. Cyprian called a Council of Bishops of the provinces of Carthage and Numidia; they attended to the number of seventy-one, and decided that heretics should be rebaptized. St. Cyprian informs the Pope of the decision of himself and his colleagues. After saying that they had found it necessary to hold a council, he proceeds —¹⁸"But I thought I ought to write to you and confer with your gravity and wisdom concerning that especially which most belongs to the authority of the priesthood, and to the unity alike and dignity of the Catholic Church derived from the ordering of a Divine disposition... This, most dear Brother, we have brought to your knowledge on account both of the honour we share with you, and of our single-hearted affection, believing that what is both religious and true is acceptable to you also according to your true religion and faith. But we know that some are unwilling to give up an opinion they have once imbibed, nor easily change their mind; but, without interruption to the bonds of peace and concord with their colleagues, retain certain peculiarities which have once

¹⁸ Ep. 73.

grown into usage among themselves." (Such is the manner in which St. Cyprian mentions a judgment deliberately expressed by a Pope on a matter of high discipline, which involved a point of faith.) "In which matter we too do violence and give the law to no one, inasmuch as *every Bishop has the free choice of his own will in the administration of the Church, as he will give an account of his acts to the Lord.*" St. Stephen received this decision of the African Council so ill, that he would not even see the Bishops who brought it, nor allow the faithful to offer them common hospitality. So important in his eyes was the matter in dispute. St. Cyprian reports his answer in a letter to his Brother-Bishop Pompeius, in which he says, ¹⁹"Although we have fully embraced all that is to be said concerning the baptizing of heretics, in the letters of which we have sent to you copies, most dear Brother, yet, because you desired to be informed what answer our Brother Stephen sent me to our letters, I send you a copy of his rescript, after reading which you will more and more mark his error, who attempts to assert the cause of heretics against Christians and against the Church of God. For amongst other either proud or impertinent or inconsistent remarks, which he has written rashly and improvidently, &c... But what blindness of mind is it, what perverseness to refuse to recognise the unity of the faith coming from God the Father and the tradition of Jesus Christ our Lord and God... But since no heresy at all, nor indeed any schism, can possess outside (the Body) the sanctification of saving baptism,

¹⁹ Ep. 74.

why has the harsh obstinacy of our Brother Stephen burst forth to such a degree?" &c... "Does he give honour to God, who, the friend of heretics and the enemy of Christians, deems the priests of God, maintaining the truth of Christ and the unity of the Church, worthy of excommunication?" St. Stephen had inflicted this on the African prelates, until they should give up their judgment on the point in question... "Nor ought the custom, which has crept in *among certain persons*, to hinder truth from prevailing and conquering. For custom without truth is but old error."... "But it is hurried away by presumption and contumacy that a person rather defends his own perverseness and falsity than accedes to the right and truth of another. Which thing the blessed apostle Paul foreseeing, writes to Timothy and warns, that a Bishop must not be quarrelsome, nor contentious, but gentle and teachable. Now he is teachable, who is mild and gentle to learn patiently. For a Bishop ought not only to teach, but also to learn, because he teaches better who daily improves and profits by learning better." Even as we copy this language used concerning a Pope by a great Bishop and Martyr of the third century, who elsewhere writes, ²⁰"That our Lord built His Church upon Peter alone, and though He gave to all the apostles an equal power, yet in order to manifest unity He has by His own authority so placed the source of the same unity as to begin from one;" we feel the contrast to be almost overpowering with the tone in which the first Patriarch of the Latin Church, however good his cause

²⁰ De Unit. Ecc. Oxf. Tr.

might be, would now venture to address the Supreme Pontiff. Towards the conclusion of this letter he says, instead of admitting that the Pope's judgment terminated the matter – "This now the priests of God ought to do, preserving the Divine precepts, so that if in anything truth has been shaken and tottered, we may return to the fountain-head of the Lord, and to the evangelical and apostolical tradition, and that the rule of our acting may spring thence, whence its order and origin arose."

After receiving the Pope's rescript, and his excommunication, St. Cyprian convoked another Council of the three provinces of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, which was held at Carthage on the 1st of Sept. 256. It was attended by eighty-five Bishops, among whom were fifteen Confessors, beside Priests and Deacons, and a great part of the people. St. Cyprian opened it, observing: "It remains for us each to deliver our sentiments on this matter, judging no one, nor removing any one, if he be of a different opinion, from the right of Communion. *For no one of us sets himself up to be a Bishop of Bishops, or by fear of his tyranny compels his colleagues to the necessity of obedience, since every Bishop according to his recognised liberty and power possesses a free choice, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another. But let us all await the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who singly and alone has the power both of setting us up in the government of His Church, and of judging our proceedings.*"²¹ The Bishops delivered their judgments *seriatim*,

²¹ Op. St. Cypr. p. 329. ed. Baluz.

finishing with St. Cyprian, and unanimously ratified what they had agreed upon before, that heretics should be admitted into the Church by baptism, and not merely by the imposition of hands: and thus an African Council of the third century treated a judgment of the Pope, and his sentence of excommunication until they altered their practice.

But these last words of St. Cyprian are so remarkable in themselves, and have such a bearing on the present Papal claims, that they deserve further notice. Now, lest we should imagine that St. Cyprian was hurried away by the ardour of his defence of a favourite doctrine, and his sense of the Pope's severity, into unjustifiable expressions concerning the rights of Bishops, it so happens that we possess the comment of the greatest of the Fathers on these very words. St. Augustin, writing 140 years after, and fully agreeing with the judgment of Pope Stephen, as had the whole Church finally, quotes the whole passage. "'It remains for us each to deliver our sentiments on this matter, judging no one, nor removing any one, if he be of a different opinion, from the right of communion.'²² There he not only permits me without loss of communion further to seek the truth, but even to be of a different judgment. 'For no one of us,' saith he, 'sets himself up to be a Bishop of Bishops, or by fear of his tyranny compels his colleagues to the necessity of obedience.' What can be more gentle? What more humble? Certainly no authority deters us from seeking what is the truth: 'since,' he

²² Tom. ix. p. 110.

says, 'every Bishop according to his recognised liberty and power possesses a free choice, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another:' certainly, I imagine, in those questions which have not yet been thoroughly and completely settled. For he knew how great and mysterious a sacrament the whole Church was then with various reasonings considering, and he left open a freedom of inquiry, that the truth might by search be laid open... I cannot by any means be induced to believe that Cyprian, a Catholic Bishop, a Catholic Martyr, and the greater he was the more in every respect humbling himself, that he might find grace before God, did, especially in a holy Council of his colleagues, utter with his mouth other than what he carried in his heart, particularly as he adds – 'But let us all await the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who singly and alone has the power both of setting us up in the government of His Church, and of judging our proceedings.' Under appeal then to so great a judgment, expecting to hear the truth from his colleagues, should he offer them the first example of falsehood? God avert such a madness from any Christian, how much more from Cyprian. We possess then a free power of inquiry, admitted us by Cyprian's own most gentle and true language."

Who can conclude otherwise than that St. Augustin in the year 400, as St. Cyprian in the year 256, was utterly ignorant of any such power as is now claimed for the See of Rome, under cover of that original Primacy to which both these great saints have borne indubitable witness? For the words of St. Cyprian,

attested and approved by St. Augustin, contain the most explicit denial of that power lodged in the see of Rome as distinct from an Œcumenical Council, by which alone, if at all, the Church of England has been declared schismatical and excommunicate.

These are Bishops of the West speaking, but the East also must give its voice. St. Dionysius of Alexandria, and many other Eastern Prelates, among the rest Firmilian, Metropolitan of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, supported St. Cyprian on the question of rebaptization. The latter had been informed of St. Stephen's strong judgment and decided proceedings in the matter, who had threatened to separate the Bishops of the East also from his communion, if they did not comply with his rule. Firmilian wrote a long letter to Cyprian, which contains very remarkable expressions. He alludes in it more than once to the Primacy of St. Peter, and to that of Stephen as descending from him.²³ "But what is the error, and how great the blindness of him (*i. e.* the Pope) who says, remission of sins can be given in the meetings of heretics, nor remains in the foundation of the one Church which was once fixed by Christ upon the rock, may be hence understood, because to Peter alone Christ said, Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and again, in the Gospel, when on the Apostles alone Christ breathed and said, Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose ye retain, they are retained. *Therefore the power of*

²³ S. Cyp. Ep. 75.

remitting sins was given to the Apostles and the Churches which they, being sent by Christ, set up, and to the Bishops who have succeeded them by ordination in their stead... And here I am justly indignant at this so open and manifest folly of Stephen, because, glorying as he does in the rank of his Episcopate, and maintaining that he holds the succession of Peter, upon whom the foundations of the Church were laid, he introduces many other rocks, and sets up new buildings of many Churches, while he affirms, on his own authority, that Baptism is in them... Nor does he perceive that the truth of the Christian rock is clouded over by him, and in a manner abolished, who thus betrays and deserts unity... You Africans can say against Stephen, that, when the truth became known to you, you relinquished an erroneous custom. But we join custom also to truth, and to the custom of the Romans oppose a custom indeed, but that of truth, holding from the beginning this which has been delivered down from Christ, and from the Apostles." He had said before, "One may know that those who are at Rome do not in all things observe what has been delivered down from the beginning, and vainly allege the authority of the Apostles, even by this, that in celebrating Easter, and in many other sacred rites, one may see there is among them certain variations; nor are all things there kept as they are kept at Jerusalem; just as in very many other provinces also, according to the diversity of places and names, there are variations; nor yet on this account have the peace and unity of the Catholic Church ever been departed from. Which now Stephen has dared to do,

breaking peace towards you, which his predecessors always kept with you, in reciprocal love and honour; casting, too, shameful reproach (infamans) on the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, as if they had handed this down, &c." The letter concludes with an apostrophe to Stephen, which only a regard to truth induces us to quote, so painful is its vehemence, though it proves *ex abundanti* the point we are upon: "And Stephen is not ashamed to assert this, that remission of sins can be given through those who are themselves in all their sins... But thou art worse than all heretics; for whilst many, acknowledging their error, come to thee thence to receive the true light of the Church, thou assistest the errors of those so coming... Nor understandest that their souls will be demanded at thy hand, when the day of judgment is come, who to the thirsting hast denied the Church's draught, and hast been the cause of death to those who would live. And moreover thou art indignant! See with what ignorance thou venturdest to censure those who strive for the truth against falsehood. For who had most right to be angry at another; he who supports the enemies of God, or he who argues for the truth of the Church against him who supports God's enemies? except that it is evident that the ignorant are also passionate and wrathful, whilst, through lack of wisdom and discourse, they readily betake themselves to passion, so that it is of none other than thee that Holy Scripture says, 'The passionate man prepares quarrels, and the wrathful man heaps up sins;' for what quarrels and dissensions hast thou caused through the Churches of the whole world! But how great a sin

hast thou heaped upon thyself, *when thou didst cut thyself off from so many flocks; for thou hast destroyed thyself. Do not be deceived. Since he is the true schismatic who has made himself an apostate from the communion of the Church's oneness; for whilst thou dost fancy that all can be excommunicated by thee, thou hast excommunicated thyself alone from all...* This salutary advice of the Apostle how diligently hath Stephen fulfilled! preserving humility of feeling and lenity, *in his first rank*, (primo in loco.) For what could be more humble or gentle, than to have disagreed with so many Bishops throughout the whole world, breaking peace with one and the other on various grounds of discord, now with the Eastern, as we are sure you are aware, now with you in the South; episcopal deputies from whom he received with such patience and mildness, that he did not even admit them to an interview; moreover, so mindful of the claims of charity and affection, that he charged the whole brotherhood, that no one should receive them into his house?" &c.

Concerning this remarkable history, Fleury says:²⁴ "It is not known what was then the issue of this dispute. It is certain that it still continued under Pope Saint Sixtus, successor of St. Stephen: this is seen by the letters that St. Dionysius of Alexandria wrote him; and it does not appear that St. Cyprian or Firmilian changed their mind." (So that St. Cyprian died under excommunication from Pope Stephen.) "Still St. Cyprian is counted among the most illustrious martyrs, even in the

²⁴ Liv. VII. sec. 32.

Roman Church, which names him in the Canon of the Mass, in preference to Pope St. Stephen; and the Greeks, in their Menologium, honour the memory of Firmilian. With reason, since we shall see him preside over the first Council of Antioch, against Paul of Samosata; and the Fathers of the second Council, writing to the Pope, name Firmilian, of happy memory, as they do Dionysius of Alexandria. Why the error of St. Cyprian and St. Firmilian hurt not their sanctity is, that they always preserved on their part the unity of the Church, and charity, and that they maintained in good faith a bad cause, which they believed good, *and upon which there had not yet been a decision received by unanimous consent of the whole Church.* Thus St. Augustin speaks of it, *not counting as a final decision the decree of Pope St. Stephen, though true in its matter, and clothed with all the force that he could give it. No one of the ancients has accused these holy Bishops of obstinacy for not having obeyed this decree.* The decision of Pope St. Stephen respecting the baptism of heretics has prevailed, because it was the most ancient and the most universal, and consequently the best... At length this question was entirely set at rest by the authority of the universal Council, that is to say, at the latest, at the Council of Nicea." Most fair and just: St. Cyprian and St. Firmilian may have innocently erred in such a matter; but what of the way in which they treated the Pope? Could they be ignorant of the constitution of that Church of which they were Primates, Saints, and one a Martyr? If his decision was final, must they not have known it? If his

primacy involved their obedience, must they not have rendered it? But if they were his deputies, as the present Roman claim would have it, who can express their rashness? Had they been right, and the Pope wrong, according to the present tenets of the Latin Church, obedience had been better than sacrifice. In truth, they would have anticipated the noble submission of the Archbishop of Cambrai, and yielded at once to the chair of St. Peter, whatever had been their conviction as to the truth of their views; but the Archbishop of Carthage, the sternest defender of ecclesiastical unity and discipline which even the Church of the Fathers produced, knew not that he had any such duty towards the See of St. Peter.

Nay, and St. Augustin knew it not either. It was no more the belief in his day than in St. Cyprian's. The Donatists alleged against him in the question of Baptism the authority of Cyprian in this great Council of Carthage. This leads him to make a very important statement – "You are wont to object against us Cyprian's letters, Cyprian's judgment, Cyprian's Council: why do you assume the authority of Cyprian for your schism, and reject his example for the peace of the Church? But who is ignorant that canonical holy Scripture, as well of the Old as of the New Testament, is contained in its own certain limits, and is so preferred to all subsequent letters of Bishops, that no doubt or discussion at all can be held concerning it, as to whether that be true or right, which is acknowledged to be found written in it: but that the letters of Bishops which either have been or are written

after the confirmation of the canon, may be reprehended both by the reasoning, peradventure more full of wisdom, of some one in that matter more skilled, and by the weightier authority and more learned judgment of other Bishops, and by Councils, if haply there has been in them any deviation from the truth, and that Councils themselves, holden in particular regions or provinces, yield, beyond all question, to the authority of plenary Councils, which are made out of the whole Christian world: and that former plenary Councils themselves are often corrected by subsequent ones, when by some practical experience what has been hidden is laid open, and what lay concealed is recognised, without any puffing up of sacrilegious pride, without any haughty exhibition of arrogance, without any strife of livid envy, with holy humility, with Catholic peace, with Christian charity."²⁵ Here, where, in a *dignus vindice nodus*, we should have expected some mention of the Chief See, and St. Peter's rights, all is referred to the voice of Bishops in Council, – that See, in which, according to Bellarmine, the plenitude of all the power resides which Christ left in His Church, is not even spoken of. He proceeds – "Wherefore holy Cyprian, the more exalted, the more humble," (in a matter for which he was excommunicated by the Pope, and in which, if the present Papal theory be true, his conduct was to the last degree insolent, and unjustifiable,) "who so loved the example of Peter as to say, – 'Showing, indeed, an instance to us of concord and patience, that we should not

²⁵ Tom. ix. 97. G.

pertinaciously love our own opinion, but should rather count for our own any useful and sound suggestions, which at times are made by our brethren and colleagues, if they be true and lawful:' he sufficiently shows that he would most readily have corrected his judgment, had any one pointed out to him that the Baptism of Christ might be given by those who had gone out (from the Church) in the same manner that it could not be lost when they went out: on which point we have already said much. Nor should we ourselves venture to make any such assertion, were we not supported by the unanimous authority of the whole Church: to which he too, without doubt, would yield, if the truth of this question had at that period been thoroughly sifted, and declared, and established by a plenary Council. For if he praises and extols Peter for having with patience and harmony suffered correction from a single younger colleague, how much more readily would he himself, with the Council of his province, have yielded to the authority of the whole world, when the truth was laid open? because, indeed, so holy and so peaceful a soul might most readily agree to one person (*i. e.* the Pope), speaking and proving the truth; and this, perhaps, was really the fact, but we know not. For not all which at that time was transacted between Bishops could be committed to posterity and writing, nor do we know all which was so committed. For how could that matter, involved in so many clouds of altercations, be brought to the clear consideration and ratification of a plenary Council, unless first for a long time throughout all the regions

of the world it had been thoroughly tried, and made manifest by many discussions and conferences of Bishops on the one side and on the other? But wholesome peace produces this, that when obscure questions have been long under inquiry, and, through the difficulty of ascertaining them, beget various judgments in brotherly discussion, until the pure truth be arrived at, the bond of unity holds, lest in the part cut off the incurable wound of error should remain." He considers Pope Stephen here, even when he was right, as one of many *brethren*, who had a right to be deferentially heard, but no more. As in another place, arguing with these same Donatists, he distinctly considers the case of the judgment of the Roman Pontiff being erroneous. "The Donatists,"²⁶ says he, "chose with a double purpose, to plead their cause with Cœcilian before the Churches across the sea; being doubly prepared, that if they could by any skilfulness of false accusation have overcome him, they might to the full satiate their desire: but if they failed in this, might continue in the same perversity, but still as if they would have to allege, that they had suffered in having bad judges: this is what all wrong suitors cry, though they have been overcome by the plainest truths: as if it might not be answered them and most justly retorted, – Let us suppose that these Bishops who judged at Rome," (Pope Melchiades and his Council,) "were not fair judges; there still remained a plenary Council of the universal Church, where the cause might have been tried even with those very judges, so that

²⁶ Tom. ii. 96. F.

had they been convicted of false judgment their decision might be reversed."

Nay, it appears, the cause of the Donatists, after being decided by Pope Melchiades, was reheard, and that, not by a plenary Council, but by other Bishops of the West, deputed by Constantine. "Know,"²⁷ says St. Augustin, "that your first ancestors carried the cause of Cœcilianus before the Emperor Constantine. Demand this of us, let us prove it to you, and if we prove it not, do with us what you can. But because Constantine dared not to judge in the cause of a Bishop, he delegated the discussion and terminating of it to Bishops. This took place in the city of Rome under the presidency of Melchiades, Bishop of that Church, with many of his colleagues. They having pronounced Cœcilianus innocent, and condemned Donatus, who had made the schism at Carthage, your party again went to the Emperor, and murmured against the judgment of the Bishops in which they had been beaten. For how can the guilty party praise the judge by whose sentence he has been beaten? Yet a second time the most indulgent Emperor assigned other Bishops as judges, at Arles, in Gaul, and from them your party appealed to the Emperor himself, until he too heard the cause, and pronounced Cœcilianus innocent, and them false accusers." Did he who wrote these words mean to censure Constantine for granting a second hearing after the judgment of Pope Melchiades?

"Basilides," says Mr. Newman, "deposed in Spain, betakes

²⁷ Tom. ii. 299. C.

himself to Rome, and gains the ear of St. Stephen." This, however, is only half the case. It comes to the knowledge of St. Cyprian that he has done so. Let us take Fleury's account.²⁸ "As Basilides and Martial still endeavoured to force themselves back upon their sees, Felix and Sabinus, their legitimate successors, went to Carthage with letters from the Churches of Leon, Asturia, and Merida, and from another Felix, Bishop of Sarragossa, known in Africa as attached to the faith, and a defender of the truth. These letters were read in a Council of thirty-six Bishops, at the head of whom was St. Cyprian, who answered in the name of all by a letter addressed to the Priest Felix, and to the faithful people of Leon and Asturia, and to the Deacon Lœlius, with the people of Merida." In this letter he says, "Wherefore,"²⁹ according to Divine tradition, and Apostolic observance, that is to be kept and observed, which is observed by us also, and generally throughout all the provinces, that in order rightly to celebrate ordinations, the nearest Bishops of the same province should meet together with that people for whom the head is ordained, and the Bishop should be chosen in the presence of the people, which is most fully acquainted with the life of every one, and has observed the conduct of each individual from his conversation. And this we see was observed by you in the ordination of our colleague Sabinus, so that, according to the suffrage of the whole brotherhood, and

²⁸ Fleury, liv. vii. 23.

²⁹ Ep. 68. S. Cypriani.

the judgment of the Bishops, who were either present, or had sent you letters about him, the Episcopate was conferred upon him, and hands laid upon him in the place of Basilides. Nor can it invalidate a rightful ordination, that Basilides, after the detection of his crimes and the laying bare his conscience even by his own confession, going to Rome deceived our colleague Stephen, who was far removed and ignorant of the thing as it was really done, that he might make interest for an unjust restoration to that Episcopate from which he had been rightfully deposed. It comes to this, that the crimes of Basilides have been rather doubled than wiped away, since to his former sins, the crime of deceit and circumvention has been added. *Nor should he be so much blamed, who through negligence was overreached*, as the other execrated, who fraudulently deceived. But if Basilides could overreach men, God he cannot," &c. If the appeal of Basilides to Stephen proves the Roman Primacy, what does the subsequent appeal of the people of Leon, Asturia, and Merida, to Carthage, prove? And if the restoration of Basilides by Stephen, proves that he possessed that power, what does the subsequent pronouncing of that restoration void by Cyprian and his brother Bishops, without even first acquainting Stephen, prove?

In truth, all the acts of St. Cyprian's Episcopate, of which we have given several in illustration, are an indisputable assurance to the candid mind that he treated the Roman Pontiff simply as his brother, – his elder brother, indeed, – holding the first see in Christendom, but, individually, as liable to err as himself.

And it is equally clear that St. Augustin, a hundred and forty years later, did not censure him for this. What we have seen, is this. In the matter of Fortunatus and Felicissimus, Cyprian rejects with vehement indignation their appeal to Rome: in the case of Marcian of Arles, he writes as an equal to Pope Stephen, almost enjoining him what to do: in the question of rebaptizing heretics, he disregards St. Stephen's judgment, and the anathema which accompanies it; and how strong St. Firmilian's language is we need not repeat, who declares that St. Stephen's excommunication only cut off himself: in the case of Basilides, he deposes afresh one whom Stephen had restored.

Such are the illustrations afforded by the preceding century to what we have stated was the unquestioned constitution of the Catholic Church at the time of the Council of Nicea; viz. that while the three great Sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch exercised a powerful but entirely paternal influence on their colleagues, that of Rome having the undoubted primacy, not derived from the gift of Councils, or the rank of the imperial city, but from immemorial tradition as the See of St. Peter; yet, at the same time, the fullness of the priesthood, and with it all power to govern the Church, were acknowledged to reside in the whole Episcopal Body. "The Bishop," says Thomassin, quoting with approbation a Greek writer, as representing the doctrine of the early Fathers, and of the universal Church since, "is the complete image in the Church on earth of Him who in the holy Trinity alone bears the name of Father, as being the first principle

without principle, and the fruitful source of the other Persons, and of all the divine perfections... The Bishop communicates the Priesthood, as He who is without principle in the Godhead, and is therefore called Father."³⁰ The Apostolic Canons, and those of the Council of Nicea, are the legislative acts bearing witness to this order of things: the conduct and words of St. Cyprian, St. Firmilian, and St. Augustin, which we have instanced, and an innumerable multitude of other cases, exhibit it in full life and vigour; while, on the other side, there is absolutely nothing to allege.

The history of the Church during the three hundred years following the Nicene Council is but a development of this constitution. The problem was, how to combine in the harmonious action of One organized Body those Apostolical powers which resided in the Bishops generally. The Patriarchal system was the result. As the Church increased in extent, her rulers would increase in number. This multiplication, which would tend so much to augment the centrifugal force, was met by increased energy in the centripetal: the power of the Patriarchs, and specially of the Bishop of Rome, grew. It is impossible, in my present limits, to follow this out, but I propose to give a few specimens, as before, in illustration.

In so vast a system of interlaced and concurrent powers as the Church of Christ presented, differences would continually arise; and in so profound a subject-matter as the Christian

³⁰ Liv. i. ch. 2, sect. 5.

revelation, heresies would be continually starting up: to arrange the former, and to expel or subjugate the latter, the Bishops, says Thomassin, having already more than once appealed to the Christian Emperors for the calling of great Councils, saw the danger of suffering the Imperial authority to intervene in ecclesiastical causes, and sought to establish a new jurisprudence on this head.³¹ "The Council of Antioch (A.D. 341), and that of Sardica (A.D. 347), which were held almost at the same time, – the one in the East, the other in the West, – set about this in a very different manner, aiming, however, at the same end. The Council of Antioch ordered that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, who should have been condemned by a provincial Council, might recur to a larger Council of Bishops; but that if they carried their complaints before the Emperor they could never be reestablished in their dignity." "One must in good faith admit, that this regulation had much conformity with what had been practised in the first ages of obscurity and persecution, for it was in the same way that extraordinary Councils had been held, such as were those of Antioch against Paul of Samosata, Bishop of that great city. It was the Metropolitans and Bishops of the neighbourhood who assembled with those of the Province where the flame of a great dissension had been kindled. The Council of Sardica, urged by the same desire to break through the custom which was introducing itself, of having recourse to the Emperor for judgment of spiritual causes of the Church, bethought itself

³¹ Liv. i. ch. 3, sect. 8.

of another means, which was not less conformable to the practice of the preceding centuries, and which had, beside that, much foundation in the Holy Scriptures. For Jesus Christ, having given the Primacy, and the rank of Head, to St. Peter, above the other Apostles, and having given successors as well to the Apostles, to wit, all the Bishops, as to St. Peter, to wit, the Roman Pontiffs; moreover, having willed that His Church should remain for ever one by the union of all Bishops with their Head, it is manifest, that if the Bishops of a province could not agree in their Provincial Council, and if the Bishops of several provinces had disputes between each other, the most natural way to finish these differences was to introduce the authority of the Head, and of him whom Jesus Christ has established as the centre of unity of His universal Church."

Accordingly, at the Council of Sardica, attended by St. Athanasius, then in exile, and about a hundred Western Bishops, after the secession of the Eastern or Arian portion, Hosius proposed, "If two Bishops of the same province have a disagreement, neither of the two shall take for arbitrator a Bishop of another province: if a Bishop, having been condemned, feels so assured of his right, that he is willing to be judged anew in a Council, *let us honour, if you think it good, the memory of the Apostle St. Peter*: let those who have examined the cause, write to Julius, Bishop of Rome; if he thinks proper to order a fresh trial, let him name judges; if he does not think that there is reason to renew the matter, let what he orders be kept to. The Council

approved this proposition. The Bishop Gaudentius added, that, during this appeal, no Bishop should be ordained in place of him who had been deposed, until the Bishop of Rome had judged his cause."³²

"To make the preceding Canon clearer, Hosius said, 'When a Bishop, deposed by the Council of the province, shall have appealed and had recourse to the Bishop of Rome, if he judge proper that the matter be examined afresh, he shall write to the Bishops of the neighbouring province to be the judges of it; and if the deposed Bishop persuade the Bishop of Rome to send a priest from his own person, he shall be able to do it, and to send commissioners to judge by his authority, together with the Bishops; but if he believes that the Bishops are sufficient to settle the matter, he will do what his wisdom suggests to him.' The judgment which Pope Julius, together with the Council of Rome, had given in favour of Athanasius and the other persecuted Bishops, seems to have given cause to this Canon, and we have seen that this Pope complained that they had judged St. Athanasius without writing to him about it."

Such is the modest commencement of that power of hearing episcopal causes on appeal, which has been the instrument of obtaining the wonderful authority concentrated by a long series of ages in the see of Rome. However conformable to the practice of preceding centuries, as Thomassin says, this may have been, this power is here certainly *granted* by the Council,

³² Fleury, Liv. xii. xxix. Conc. Sard. Can. 3, 4, 7.

not considered as inherent in the see of Rome. And this one fact is fatal to the present claim of the supremacy. To use De Maistre's favourite analogy, it is as though the States General or Parliament conferred his royal powers on the Sovereign who convoked them, and whose assent alone made their enactments law. Accordingly, like the whole course of proceedings in these early Councils, it is incompatible with the notion of the Pope being the monarch in the Church. We may safely say, history offers not a more wonderful contrast in a power bearing the same name, than that here conferred on Pope Julius in 347, and that exercised by Pope Pius the Seventh in 1802. On the bursting out of the French revolution, out of a hundred and thirty-six Bishops more than a hundred and thirty remained faithful to God and the Church: some offered the testimony of their blood; the rest became confessors in all lands for Christ's sake, in poverty, contempt, and banishment. After ten years, the civil governor, who had lately professed himself a Mahometan, proposes to the Pope to re-establish the Church, but on condition of himself nominating to the sees, and those not the ancient sees of the country, but a selection from them, to the number of eighty. Thereupon the Pope requires those eighty Bishops and Confessors who still survived, and whom he acknowledged to be not only blameless, but martyrs for the name of Christ, to resign into his hands their episcopal powers. Of his own single authority he abolishes the ancient sees of the eldest daughter of the Western Church, constitutes that number of new sees

which the civil power permits, and treats as schismatics those few Bishops who disobey his requisition. I do not presume to express any blame of Pope Pius; I simply mention a fact. But it seems to me, certainly, that those who would entirely recognise the power and precedence exercised by Pope Julius, are not necessarily schismatics because they refuse to admit a power not merely greater in degree, but different in kind, and to set the High Priesthood of the Church beneath the feet of one, though it be the First of her Pontiffs.

The restrictions under which, according to the Council of Sardica, the Pope could cause a matter to be reheard, are specific. Much larger power is assigned in the fourth General Council, that of Chalcedon, to the see of Constantinople, in the ninth Canon, which says, "If any Bishop or Clergyman has a controversy against the Bishop of the province himself (*i. e.* the Metropolitan), let him have recourse to the Exarch of the diocese, or to the throne of the Imperial city of Constantinople, and plead his cause before him."

But, between these two Councils of Nicea, A.D. 325, and Chalcedon, 451, the whole Patriarchal system of the Church had sprung up, and covered the provinces of the Roman Empire with as it were a finely reticulated net. The system may be said to be built on two principles, recognised and enforced in the Apostolic Canons, and consistently carried out, from the Bishop of the poorest country town up to the primatial see of Rome. These principles are, "the authority of the Metropolitan

over his Bishops in important and extraordinary affairs, and the supreme authority of Bishops in the ordinary government of their particular bishoprics. With this distinction, that the Metropolitan even cannot arrange important and extraordinary affairs but with the counsel of his suffragans, whilst every Bishop conducts all the common and ordinary affairs of his Diocese without being obliged to take the advice of his Metropolitan."³³ This latter principle, it will be seen, expresses the essential equality and unity of the High Priesthood vested in Bishops by descent from the Apostles, to which St. Cyprian bears such constant witness, so that it may be said to be the one spirit which animates all his government: while the former, leaving this quite inviolate, builds together the whole Church in one vast living structure. For as the Bishops of the province have their Metropolitan, and their spring and autumn Councils under him, so the Metropolitan stands in a like relation to his Exarch, or Patriarch; and of the five great Patriarchs of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, who are found at the Council of Chalcedon to preside over the Church Catholic, that of Rome has the unquestioned primacy, and is seen at the centre, sustaining and animating the whole. "The most important of all the powers of Metropolitans, Exarchs, and Patriarchs, was the election of Bishops, the confirmation and consecration of Bishops elected. For all the other degrees of authority were founded on this one, which rendered the Metropolitan the Father, Master, and

³³ Thomassin, Part I. liv. i. ch. 40. sect. 2.

Judge of all his suffragans."³⁴ "And so that famous Canon of the Council of Nicea, (the 6th,) which seems in appearance only to confirm the ancient right of the three first Metropolitans of the world to ordain the Bishops of all the provinces of their dependence, establishes in effect all the rights and all the powers of the Metropolitans, because it establishes the foundation on which they all rest. 'If any one be made a Bishop contrary to the sentence of his Metropolitan, the great Synod declares that he should not be a Bishop.' Nothing is juster than to found the right of a holy and paternal rule on the right of generation. For by ordination the Bishops engender not children indeed, but Fathers, to the Church." This system continued unimpaired in the whole Church, at least to the time of St. Gregory the Great. It offers, I think, an unanswerable refutation to what must be considered the strongest argument of the Roman Catholics for the Supremacy, that there could be no unity in the Church without it, as a living organized body; history says, there *was*

³⁴ Idem, ut supra.

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